Treasures of Laos

Trip Code: SGLP

Version:

CULTURE	SELF-GUIDED	LEISURELY 1



HIGHLIGHTS

- Immerse yourself into UNESCO-listed Luang Prabang, the pearl of Laos
- Discover the flavours of Laos on a traditional cooking class
- Bathe in the aquamarine pools of the Kuang Si Waterfalls
- Explore the foothills and countryside around Vang Vieng on foot
- Relax surrounded by wild nature in Oudomxay

AT A GLANCE

- 9 days sightseeing
- 2 guided excursions
- Cooking class
- Daily departures
- Join at Luang Prabang / End In Vientiane

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE

Introduction

Landlocked between big name destinations such as Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and China, Laos receives comparatively fewer visitors than its neighbours; however, it has an unassuming wealth of culture and alluring natural beauty to reward those who make the sojourn. Spending time in Laos, you will feel like you have stepped back in time to a slower and simpler life, shaped by beatific Buddhist philosophy. Everything in Laos runs at a laid back tempo of its own - embrace the change of pace, succumb to slow travel, let go of any stresses, and make your soul feel all the lighter for it.

On this self-guided holiday, you will have the opportunity to discover the historical gem that is Luang Prabang, rejuvenate in wild nature within the forested mountains of the north, and journey through the plains of the Mekong River, along which the majority of the country's population reside. Your self-guided adventure through the northern heart of the country utilises the modern Laos-China Railway that connects the capital Vientiane to Boten, on the border with China. Travelling independently with the guidance of a self-guided travel app, you decide on the pace of your explorations on your holiday in Laos. With a carefully balanced itinerary combining self-guided discovery, guided experiences and optional activities that you are free to choose as you prefer, this is your holiday your way.

Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is perfect for you if you enjoy the freedom of travelling independently from a group, while having the ease of holiday planning and logistics taken care of for you. With your self-guided travel app, you will have a local guide in your pocket to help you along your way as you explore the sights, tastes and culture of Laos at your own pace. On your self-guided walking tours, you can go at your own pace and linger at any sights as you wish, or even take a tuk-tuk if you would like a break from walking. The itinerary also incorporates some timely free days to give you a chance for some rest and relaxation, or alternatively additional activities are available if you prefer to be active.

Itinerary

Version:

Holiday Information

What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided travel app
- Self-guided assistance throughout
- An airport transfer on arrival
- An airport transfer on departure
- Transfers and train journeys as described in the program
- Guided street food tour in Luang Prabang
- Guided excursion to Kuang Si Waterfalls
- Cooking class in Ban Nongxay

What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Luang Prabang
- Travel from Vientiane
- Visas (if applicable)
- Any transport required on self-guided excursions
- Entrance fees and tickets on self-guided excursions
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

GPS Travel App

This holiday is led by a self-guided travel app, which contains the personalised details of your complete holiday itinerary. This includes the GPS-led routes for you to follow on your self-guided walking tours, as well as attractions, coffee stops and points of interest in the towns and cities along the way. The app does not need to have Wi-Fi connection to work, you simply follow the instructions we provide you to download the app to your personal smartphone device before you leave home and you are ready to go.

Alongside the self-guided app, you will also have support from our local self-guided assistant with a welcome briefing on arrival in Luang Prabang. Our local partners can be easily reached by phone, text or on WhatsApp at any point during your holiday and they will be happy to assist you.

While the travel app is running, your phone battery charge can be consumed faster than normal, so we strongly recommend that you pack a power bank with you just in case you require it.

Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for most of our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, so please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking or cycling holiday for your family, a centre-based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a day's walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool, or visiting museums is calling instead.

Please discuss this further with our Sales Team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts in Luang Prabang and ends in Vientiane. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you.

For this trip, we have included a pick up transfer from Luang Prabang International Airport to take you to your hotel in Luang Prabang on Day 1 of the itinerary. A driver will be waiting to meet you upon exiting the airport.

At the end of the trip, a transfer is included on Day 10 to take you from your hotel in Vientiane to Vientiane (Wattay) International Airport.

Please ensure you inform our customer sales and support team as early as possible of your flight times so that we can arrange your transfers for you.

Meal Plan

This trip is arranged on a bed and breakfast basis to give you the most flexibility during your holiday. In Luang Prabang, you also have two lunches and one evening with street snacks included during your guided excursions and cooking class.

Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide for special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your meals with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

While Lao cuisine may not be as well-known internationally as that of its neighbours, it has a unique identity and we think that makes the gastronomic discovery even more exciting. Lao food is full of complex flavours and fragrances utilising local herbs and chilies, and infused with a subtle hint of smoke from the ubiquitous means of cooking over charcoal. The Mekong River and its myriad tributaries flows the length of the country and affords this landlocked nation a bounty of fish. And, as to be expected, rice is a staple and is consumed at all meals, particularly sticky rice known as *khao niao*.

Unmissable dishes to sample include *laab*, a dish of minced meat that positively sings with flavour from a clever blend of fish sauce, zingy lime juice and fresh herbs; the fiery green papaya salad known as *tam mak hoong*; and *mok pa*, a deliciously fragrant dish of fish wrapped in a banana leaf and steamed.

French colonial legacy melds into modern-day Lao culture, especially in Vientiane, with fresh baguettes assimilated into everyday cuisine and readily available at bakers, street stalls and restaurants alike.

Accommodation

For this holiday, we have chosen a selection of typically 3* standard hotels, all offering rooms with air conditioning and private bathrooms. Rooms are on twin or double sharing basis, with breakfast included. Single rooms can also be arranged at a supplementary cost. All hotels offer Wi-Fi connectivity and serve up a buffet breakfast with a mix of traditional Laotian cuisine alongside more familiar international fare. Some hotels even have pools if you wish to cool off after a day of exploration, or simply spend a relaxed afternoon with a book.

For the first four nights in Luang Prabang, your base will usually be a charming hotel with rustic styling, in a quiet area just a short way from the centre of town.

In the mountainous Oudomxay province, you will stay three nights at a remote eco-tourism resort nestled amid the rainforest, on the banks of the Nam Kat River. At this secluded location, you will have a riverside bungalow with views out to the lush rainforest. The resort is well equipped with amenities such as a pool, wellness facilities, fitness centre and a shop. The hotel also offers various additional activities and excursions that you can book directly on arrival, or you might simply like to relax by the pool or in the gardens, and bask in the peaceful surroundings.

In Vang Vieng, nestled in the valley of the Nam Song River, you will stay two nights in a comfortable hotel with views over the verdant karst peaks that surround this small town.

Finally, in the modern-day capital of Vientiane, positioned on the mighty Mekong River and the border with Thailand, you will stay in a modern hotel close to the river, a perfect base for exploring the city as well as being conveniently located for the airport.

We have carefully balanced comfort and amenities with accommodation that reflects the character of the destination. Tourism in Laos is still up and coming and accommodation could be perceived as a slightly lower standard when compared to its more developed neighbours Vietnam or Thailand.

Accommodations are subject to availability and can change. Any alternatives offered will be of a similar standard.

It is possible to extend your stay with additional nights in Luang Prabang and/or Vientiane if you would like a little more time to soak in the beauty of Laos and do some further exploration. Just contact our Sales team for further information.

Additional Information

Please note that train stations in Laos operate airport-style security checks. Any sharp objects, flammable materials (including aerosols), explosives or hazardous materials, and any controlled substances are not permitted on the trains and may be confiscated. Any liquids such as shampoo, sun cream etc should be in containers under 100ml.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a day pack for your daily essentials. Luggage with wheels may be useful for this holiday.

For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Please note that train stations in Laos operate airport-style security checks. See the Additional Information section for more details.

General Information

Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders.

A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required**,** and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

For other nationalities, please refer to your own Government website for the latest information.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates *(see Health & Vaccinations below),* **and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check the FCDO for the latest advice for **each country visited** before travel.

Most nationalities including UK and USA passport holders require a visa for entry into Laos. A visa on arrival is available at all major ports.

You can also speed up your arrival process by applying and making payment online for an e-visa through https://laoevisa.gov.la/index. Applications must be made at least 5 days in advance (no more than 60 days before arrival). The e-visa is single entry only and is accepted at major entry points, and is valid for a stay of up to 30 days.

Visa conditions can change regularly so please check the latest advise with your nearest consulate.

Effective from 1st September 2025, Laos will replace the traditional paper-based immigration forms for all foreign travellers with the **Lao Digital Immigration Form (LDIF)** – a **mandatory online form** that must be completed prior to both **arrival** and **departure**.

The LDIF must be submitted within 3 days before arrival, and again within 3 days before departure. A QR code will be generated after submission, which travellers must present to immigration officers.

Visit the official Department of Immigration website for more information and to submit your registration: https://immigration.gov.la/en/home

Health & Vaccinations

Vaccinations:

You should be up to date with the routine vaccinations recommended in the UK for overseas travel.

You must also contact your doctor or travel clinic to check if there are specific vaccinations or other preventive measures that you need for the area you are visiting, in good time before you are due to depart.

Please ensure you are looking at the recommendations for all countries visited on your holiday plus recommendations for any borders you cross.

On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dental check-up.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents including vaccinations and health certificates.

Please check the FCDO and Travel Health Pro. For all of your intended destinations for up-to-date advice.

Severe Allergies:

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips.

Currency

The unit of currency in Laos is the Lao Kip.

Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided holiday is that you decide the pace, however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday would be a good idea. The walking tours in the itinerary are typically gentle and allow many opportunities for stops.

Climate

Being a tropical country, Laos has a warm climate, with a dry season running from October to April, and the rainy season from May to September. Temperatures are generally warm or hot year round, typically averaging around 31C during the day and a relatively more comfortable average of around 21C at night. The hottest time of the year is usually between March and June. The north of the country, being at a higher altitude, will feel a little cooler than Vientiane, located the humid basin of the Mekong valley.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's **'Travel Aware'** campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. All other nationalities should check their government websites for relevant information.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

Love Began in Laos: The Story of an Extraordinary Life - Penelope Khounta

One Foot in Laos - Dervla Murphy

Voices from the Plain of Jars: Life Under an Air War - Fred Branfman

Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our Travel Insurance page for further information and to get a quote.

Equipment Information

Equipment List

- Comfortable walking shoes

- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight travel trousers/shorts
- Lightweight loose-fitting shirt / shawl to cover shoulders for temple visits
- Scarf / neck buff
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Rain protection
- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)
- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (unlocked to accept an additional SIM card)
- Power bank
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Hand sanitiser

- Toilet paper (in case these are not available at public conveniences)
- Face mask (you may be asked to wear a mask in train stations and on the trains)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Swimsuit
- Small travel towel
- Sandals
- Insect repellent
- Headtorch & batteries

*Please dress respectfully and modestly when visiting temples and religious sites. Loose fitting clothing that covers shoulders and knees are best. Avoid wearing clothing with religious themes (e.g. images of Buddha or Hindu deities).

**If you plan to book the optional cycling activity on Day 3, you may wish to pack a pair of padded cycling shorts for your comfort. Helmets rated to EN1078 safety standard are provided locally for this activity.

***Please note that there will be airport-style security checks when entering train stations. Dangerous and flammable items will be confiscated. Please do not take items such as spray cans of deodorant, spray shampoos, knives, alcohol, flammable mosquito sprays etc.

Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons in twin or double occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers - contact our Sales Team for a quote.

When considering your travel dates, you might like to investigate any seasonal opening times of attractions and points of interest.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights' accommodation before or after your self-guided trip - ask our Sales Team to find out more about this.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

Our Sales Team will also be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights from your nearest regional airport (where possible). Flight prices are subject to change depending on availability and seasonality. Flight prices will only be confirmed to you when all services have been arranged and confirmed for your requested dates.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Named as one of the best countries to visit in Lonely Planet’s Best in Travel 2025.Get ahead of the curve and get under the skin of this beguiling country on our exclusive itinerary in Laos, blending self-guided discovery with guided experiences and authentic cultural immersion.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 30/10/2026 and the trip is subject to change