



Viengchampa

"Your expert ground handler in Laos"

Heritage Trail (8days/7nights) Luang Prabang-Xiengkhuang-Viengxai

Our Heritage Trail programme gets you off the beaten track to Xiengkhuang and Hua Phan provinces. Xiengkhuang is most famous for the Plain of Jars, a mysterious collection of stone jars said to be about 2500 years old scattered across the vast plains surrounding Phonsavan. Nobody is too sure of their origin, but it makes for a fascinating tour. The area is also home to the Hmong people, and Xiengkhuang is the best province to visit the villages of this interesting tribe. Further east lies the remote province of Hua Phan, close to the Vietnam border. Anyone venturing this far is in for a treat; breathtaking mountainous scenery, colourful ethnic minority tribes and last but not least, the mysterious underground city at Vieng Xai.

Day1. Arrival - Luang Prabang

Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Luang Prabang has been claimed by UNESCO to be 'the best preserved city in South East Asia'. The rest of the day is at leisure. Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meals: _/_/_

Day2. Luang Prabang – City Tour - Pak Ou Caves

After breakfast, your short city tour starts with a visit to **Wat Xiengthong**, with its roofs sweeping low to the ground, representing the classical Luang Prabang style. We then board a cruise upstream on the Mekong River, which gives us a panoramic view of the tranquil countryside. Our first stop is the village of **Ban Muangkeo** where we start a short trek to reach the mysterious **Pak Ou Caves**, two linked caves crammed with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues of various shapes and sizes left by pilgrims. En route, we stop at the village of **Ban Xanghai**, where the local specialty of rice wine is produced. We then return to Luang Prabang by car. We have also the option to visit the weaving textile and Sa paper making villages of **Ban Xangkhong** and **Ban Xienglek**. Afterwards we return to Luangprabang continue visit a visit to **Wat Visoun**, known as 'The Water Melon Stupa' due to its shape. Next we visit the excellent **Arts and Ethnology Centre** which gives us a further insight into the ethnic mix and culture of Laos. Late this afternoon stretching your legs climb **Mount Phousi**, which offers a spectacular sunset and a panoramic view over Luang Prabang and the Mekong River. Afterwards, strolling through the night market (open between 5pm-10pm) setting in downtown selling a large variety of local textiles and ethnic handicrafts.

Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meals: Breakfast/_/_

Note: during rainy season (May-September) the itinerary is subject to change due to the weather conditions, an alternative programme is available.

Day3. Luang Prabang – Hmong Experience and Kuang Si Waterfall

An optional early start gives you the fantastic opportunity to participate in the daily morning ritual of saffron-clad monks **collecting offerings of Alms** from the faithful residents. This procession is very unique in Laos, being the only Buddhist nation still preserving the tradition. Afterwards, we have the option of visiting the local morning market, before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast we visit the **Royal Palace Museum** which hosts a range of interesting artifacts and a guided audio tour (*closed on Tuesday*). We also stop at **Ock Pop Tock**, a silk weaving

centre. Here you will be given a guided tour and the silk weaving process will be explained. Next we drive to **Ban Thinkeo**, a Hmong village and start trekking with the villagers. Your guide will explain to you the common use of the plants for the Hmong people. You will go to the garden and cut some vegetables and herbs with the local people. We then continue to **Kuang Si Waterfall**, where you will enjoy a picnic lunch overlooking the beautiful multi tiered falls. You also have the opportunity to cool off in the turquoise blue pools. Afterwards you return to Luang Prabang in time to catch the sun setting over the Mekong.

Overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/_

Note: during rainy season (May-September) the itinerary is subject to change due to the weather conditions, an alternative programme is available.

Day4. Luang Prabang – Xiengkhuang (Road)

We start early this morning, around 8am for the drive to Xiengkhuang, famous for the 'Plain of Jars'. The road follows a twisty mountain route, and we make our first stop at **Houi Hei**, which offers great views of the surrounding mountains. We then continue **Ban Kiu Kam Pone, a Khmu village** to explore, before arriving in **Phou Khoun** for lunch. We continue on the road into Xiengkhuang province, reaching our highest altitude of the day 1500m above sea level, just after Phou Khoun. We have time to make a stop at **Ban Son Boom, a Hmong village**. Our final stops of the day are a reminder that this region played a major part during the Vietnam War – as we visit **a hidden Buddha Cave**, that served as an army hospital during the war and our final stop of the day, is an optional stop to visit an **old Russian tank**. We arrive at your hotel by early evening. *(The road journey today takes approximately 7-8hours including stops on the way)*

Overnight in Xiengkhuang.

Meals: Breakfast/_/_



The area is famous for the Plain of Jars and ethnic minorities including the Hmong

Day5. Xieng Khuang - Plain of Jars and surrounding

You have the option to start early this morning, visiting the interesting Central Market. We will also visit the Mines Action Group or **MAG** office to learn about the work they do in clearing land mines and unexploded ordnance in the area. We then transfer out to the picturesque **Jar Site 2**, and begin our 1 hour trek along the ridge to the impressive **Jar Site 3**, consisting over around 150 jars located on top of a hill, offering great views over the surrounding countryside. then driving out to the ancient town of **Muang Khoun**, the former provincial capital, where you can explore the ruins of a number of ancient pagodas in the Lanna style **That Fun stupa** and **Wat Phiawat**, a ruined temple containing a huge sitting Buddha. Return to Phonsavan on the way stop to visit **Jars site 1**, the largest site and biggest site left over more than 300 jars.

Overnight in Xiengkhuang.

Meals: Breakfast/_/_

Day6. Xiengkhuang – Sam Neua (Road)

We begin our long drive today starting early this morning along some fairly rough roads, but the journey is broken up with stops at Hmong and Khmu villages, including **Ban Nong Oln**, as well as time to admire the breathtaking scenery with a series of photo stops. Following lunch we visit **Hintang**. Here we can see the **mysterious menhirs** (standing stones). No one is quite sure who built them or why, perhaps burial sites or markers of some sort. We also stop at **Ban Sa Levy**, a Tai Phong weaving village. We arrive in Sam Neua early evening. *(The road journey today takes approximately 9-10hours including stops on the way)*

Overnight in Sam Neua.
Meals: Breakfast/_/_

Day7. Sam Neua – Viengxai

We begin the day with an optional short walk around Sam Neua town, including a visit to the weaving house showroom, this area is highly regarded for its weaving products. We take a walk along the river to visit the local **wet market**. We then set off on the short drive to **Viengxai Caves**. This is where the Pathet Lao leaders lived during the "Secret War". We start our fascinating audio tour, that includes a visit to the Kaysone Phomvihane Cave, and the Prince Soupanouvong Cave. We finish with the artillery cave that offers stunning views, over the surrounding countryside.

In the afternoon, we take an **easy walk** to some of the little visited caves and an opportunity to take in the beautiful limestone karst scenery. We return to Sam Neua by late afternoon where you will overnight.

Overnight in Sam Neua.
Meals: Breakfast/_/_

Day8. Sam Neua – Na Meo border gate to Vietnam

We leave Sam Neua early this morning and head east towards the Vietnam border, passing through some Black Tai villages as well as some nice views of the limestone karst scenery. We reach the border by late morning where your tour in Laos ends. *(The road journey today takes approximately 3hours)*

Meals: Breakfast/_/_

END OF SERVICES

Hotels quoted in above package

Location	3Star
Luang Prabang	Mekong River Side (Superior Room)
Xiengkhoung	Auberge Plain des Jarres (Standard Bungalow)
Sam Neua	Chittavanh Hotel (Standard Room)

**** Prices please contact directly sales@viengchampatour.com ****