

Culturally Curious Itinerary

2 Weeks in Northern Laos



Laos is a bit of a hidden gem in South East Asia. Most people traveling in the region, spend a day or two in Luang Prabang on their way between Thailand and Vietnam. However, there is some incredible history here, and I highly encourage you to explore what this country has to offer.

Day 1-2: Take a slow boat from **Huay Xai** to Luang Prabang. If you are coming from Thailand into Laos, nothing is more relaxing than taking the slow boat along the Mekong River to Luang Prabang. You'll get to watch some beautiful scenery float by and settle into the slower way of life here.

Day 3: Luang Prabang. Wake up early and walk up to Phou Si that overlooks the city. Watch the lines of orange-robed monks as they wind their way through the streets collecting the morning alms from devotees. Head back down and rent a motorbike to head out to the Tad Kueng Si waterfall. Bring your swimsuit and splash around in the impossibly blue

waters and explore the trails that take you up to the top of the falls.

Day 4: Head to the bus station and make your way to **Luang Namtha**. Pack some motion sickness medicine if you tend to get queezy on twisty mountain roads. Once you arrive in Luang Namtha, stop by the various trekking outfitters and find a trek to join for the next two days.

Day 5-6: Trek through the hills of Northern Laos, enjoying the forest and views. You'll likely stay overnight in a hilltribe village, take this opportunity to play with some friendly kids and share some local drink, called lao lao, with your hosts.

Travel Tip: The easiest way to get around the country is by bus. Get to the bus stations early and prepare for long rides..



Day 7: Head back to Luang Prabang. Spend the evening strolling through the night market and pick up some souvenirs, like jewelry made from recycled bombs.

Day 8: Rent a motorbike again and head the opposite way out of town and spend the morning visiting the Buddha Cave. Come back to the city in the afternoon and visit some of the temples throughout the city or relax along the riverbank.

Day 9: Hop on a bus to **Phonsovan**. Once you arrive, go to the UXO Museum to learn about the Secret War that the United States waged on the region and its lasting effects on the people here. Make arrangements for a tour of the Plain of Jars for the next day.

Day 10: Go on a tour of the Plain of Jars. These ancient limestone jars are a bit of a history mystery and super interesting to see. You'll also see the lasting effects of the Secret War on the landscape, such as huge craters and markers indicating areas that haven't been cleared of unexploded ordinance yet.

Day 11: Travel to Vang Vieng. After you find a place to stay, quickly change into



your swim suit and rent a tube to go for a float down the river. Stop off along the way as often as you like to grab a drink or just enjoy the water.

Day 12: The scenery around Vang Vieng is pretty spectacular. Sign up for a caving tour to check out some of the natural limestone caves. Some have Buddhist shrines, some you'll have to swim through, and others are just fun to crawl around in. After exploring the caves, you'll get to kayak down the river back to the main part of town.

Day 13: Go to Vientiane and stroll through the colonial streets to Patuxai and Phra That Luang Vientiane. Watch the sunset over the Mekong.

Day 14: Pick something that most interests you: a tour of the Beer Lao brewery, a museum, temples?