

## ITINERARY

Day 1: Thursday, 20 June 2013

Phnom Penh – Bangkok – Luang Prabang

Welcome to Laos. Upon arrival in Luang Prabang meet your guide and driver in the Luang Prabang Airport.

From the airport, you will be privately transferred to your hotel located just on the outskirts of the old city. Settle into your room for the night.

Overnight at La Residence Phou Vao - Luang Prabang

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Day 2: Friday, 21 June 2013

Luang Prabang.

After breakfast, you will visit the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, a private, nonprofit entity located in a historic building in Luang Prabang. You will be given a 30-minute guided tour through the centre, where you will receive an in-depth overview of Laos' many diverse ethnic minorities, which you may visit on some of your following days here.

This visit will be followed by an afternoon walking (with vehicle support) tour of historic Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage City. Begin by visiting a couple of the over 30 exquisite Buddhist temples in town including perhaps Wat Wisunalat, Wat Aham and the monastery of Wat Thammothayalan.

At sunset, if you are feeling up to it, climb to the summit of Phousi Hill for a beautiful view over the town which sets among impressive mountains and the confluence of the Nam Khan and mighty Mekong Rivers.

Then continue to freshen up before being treated to the refined grace of a private baci ceremony at the small village of Ban Khomkhuang. These gentle villagers, led by their Nai Ban (village chief) offer visitors tidings of good luck and fortune for their life and travels by gently tying cotton cords

symbolizing luck, friendship and good health around your wrists. The baci ceremony will be held at a private family home and will take from 30 minutes up to one hour.

After the ceremony, return to your hotel with the rest of the evening at leisure.

Overnight at La Residence Phou Vao - Luang Prabang

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Day 3: Saturday, 22 June 2013

Luang Prabang.

You will be picked up from your hotel at 8am and will head out for your 'Rice Experience'. Learn how rice is traditionally grown and produced in 13 very interactive steps! All the steps are explained and demonstrated by the charming local employees and your active involvement will make for a fun and educational experience – the most spectacular of which involves plowing the paddy field with a buffalo named Susan!

After learning so much about this Lao staple, the last part of the experience of course has to be a tasting! Sticky rice accompanied by a traditional dipping sauce, rice crackers and a couple of other local products made from the grain.

There are also other activities going on around you – traditional trades plied outside of the rice season. A blacksmith forges blades for reaping the harvest, and storage baskets are woven from natural materials. A stroll around the organic vegetable gardens is a pleasant way to finish off. Transfer back to your hotel to freshen up.

Then transfer to the Living Crafts Centre for a delicious Lao lunch. Spend the afternoon in a stunning Mekong riverside garden. Prepare natural dyes and dye your own silk scarves. The workshop looks at silkworms, natural dyes and weaving techniques. The afternoon's program is interactive and full of fascinating information; a unique and entertaining opportunity to learn about silk weaving. Meet the silkworms with an introduction to silkworms and the types of silk they produce. After preparing the dye sources, dye white scarves in the chosen colors. Try weaving and spinning on our demonstration looms. Then stroll around the garden, enjoy a cocktail, nibble on some tasty fried silkworms. Watch the sun dip behind the mountains on the Mekong.

Overnight at La Residence Phou Vao - Luang Prabang

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Day 4: Sunday, 23 June 2013

Luang Prabang.

The bells of the town's monasteries toll at dawn when golden lines of monks emerge to receive their morning rice from the townspeople. If you rise early, you will have the opportunity to respectfully witness this sacred ritual typical of old Laos-long lines of barefoot monks weaving through the streets on their alms rounds.

*In keeping with our respectful stance regarding local cultures, please observe this sacred ritual from a respectful distance. We also encourage that if you must take photographs that it does not interfere with this highly revered ritual.*

Afterwards, visit the Morning Market and see an array of meats, vegetables and spices the locals use in their cooking. Return to your hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, depart through Laos' scenic countryside to the Pak Ou Caves, a mystical pilgrimage site perched high above the Mekong River 27 miles outside of Luang Prabang. On arrival in Ban Pak Ou, a boat will ferry you across the river to reach the Pak Ou caves.

Peering into dark corners, your eyes gradually adjust to reveal the serene faces and figures of more than 3,000 Buddha images, some inlaid with semi-precious stones. That these remain undisturbed in this remote site in one of the world's poorest countries is a testament to the devotion of the people. Return by boat to Luang Prabang, cruising along the Mekong. On the way back, enjoy the lush river life along the Mekong while sipping a drink and tasting some Lao snacks.

Stop at two riverside villages along the way. In Ban Xang Khong, the weaving of prized Lao textiles still takes place on ancient wooden looms. Some villagers are also engaged in mulberry paper production. The villagers of Ban Xang Hai produce Lao Lao, a rice whisky. Try a swig of this potent drink – if you dare!

Travel south of town to the Kuang Si Waterfall. At the falls, crystal water cascades into idyllic turquoise pools. Bring a bathing suit if you would like to swim! Also take time to visit the nearby Sunbear Refuge to learn more about the poaching of these endangered creatures.

Overnight at La Residence Phou Vao - Luang Prabang

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Day 5: Monday, 24 June 2013

Luang Prabang – Bangkok – Yangon

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your late morning flight to Bangkok and onward flight to Yangon.

Arrival in Yangon Meet your guide and driver, transfer to your hotel.

Overnight at The Strand Hotel

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Day 6: Tuesday, 25 June 2013

Yangon

So what's behind the golden façade of the Shwedagon Pagoda? During this interactive half day tour we take you through the back door and show you the full history of the pagoda, the daily life of all people living in the immediate surroundings of the pagoda and a deeper insight in the Buddhist religion and how the spiritual belief is mixed with the belief in nats – the Myanmar spirits. An intriguing half day tour starting from the bottom of the hill and passing the workshops, markets and monasteries which will be useful or even essential to understand more of the country during the rest of your journey. The tour includes offerings to monks and the pagoda, a visit to a fortune teller and a Burmese lunch.

A program to REALLY help the local population in Myanmar and donate something directly to the people who need it most. Khiri Travel would like to take you to a local orphanage in Yangon with over 100 orphans who live, play and study at a simple compound in Yangon taken care of by local staff. The orphanage has just enough money to feed everybody a simple meal with steamed rice, some fish paste and maybe a small spoon of vegetables. A healthy meal including lots of nutrition is simply not possible to give daily and you are going to change that today! Together with a translator you visit a

colourful local vegetable market to buy fruits or vegetables and after that visit an orphanage to meet the head teacher. In the kitchen of the orphanage you will help cleaning and cutting the fruits or vegetables for the children and help serving all the kids. When returning back to your hotel and you can proudly say that you have truly made a contribution to some of the people who need it most. You not only provided them a healthy meal, you also put a smile on their face and made them feel happy, knowing that somebody from overseas cared enough for them to spend a small part of their holiday budget and time to offer a healthy meal for a day.

Overnight at The Strand

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Day 7: Wednesday, 26 June 2013

Yangon – Bagan

Morning transfers to the Airport, fly to Bagan

A full day tour by car, with an experienced guide through Bagan will show you the best known temples of the area. We start the day climbing a pagoda to get a first impressive view over the whole area. From here the guide plans his way to some of the other amazing temples that have been here for hundreds of years. Places like the Ananda, Dhammayangyi, Sulamani, and Thatbyinnyu will certainly impress you. Lunch will be taken at a local restaurant and around 4pm we continue the tour by horse cart to Pyathagyi pagoda for sunset with some refreshing drinks served! Oh... we forgot to mention the best part of this tour; whenever you see a temple you like, just ask your guide to stop to have a look at it – simply pick your own favourite temple.

Overnight at Aureum Palace Hotel

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Day 8: Thursday, 27 June 2013

Bagan

We *love* Bagan, even more than Angkor Wat, not just because of the beauty of each temple and not just because of the lack of hordes of tourists. We like Bagan most because of the stunning landscape of ancient temple ruins that seem to be spread around randomly in between toddy palms and bamboo huts. During this half day tour on a bike, your guide will show you some of the most spectacular sceneries of ancient temples and the best of all is that you can stop any time, any minute to make some beautiful pictures.

Minnanthu is probably the favourite temple area amongst frequent Bagan visitors and you know why? It's quiet, it's a beautiful area and the temples here are often completely deserted. The guide brings you by car to this forgotten part of Bagan and will spread out a blanket and serve you a great picnic lunch in this historical setting before or after visiting 2 or 3 ancient temples ruins in this area.

Overnight at Aureum Palace Hotel

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Day 9: Friday, 28 June 2013

Bagan – Mandalay

Morning transfer to the airport, fly to Mandalay. Transfer to hotel.

This tour is the perfect introduction to Mandalay. We start at 2 pm with the Mahamuni pagoda and have a look at this century's old Buddha statue originating from Mrauk Oo. It is a very lively temple compound where men are sticking gold leaves to the Buddha statue. The Mahamuni is also an excellent place to shop around for the perfect Buddha statue (bronze or wood). Can't find what you are looking for? Find a marble statue at the next stop which is the marble carving street. The old capital of Amarapura is a very quiet village nowadays where you only hear the sound of the weaving machines. We walk through the famous Mahagandayon monastery complex with hundreds of monks, visit one of the small weaving factories and walk over U-Bein Bridge and take a boat ride before heading back to your hotel.

Or vice versa when arriving from airport: start with Amarapura and then visit Mahamuni.

The rest of the day car and guide are available for additional visits

Overnight at the Hotel Red Canal

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Day 10: Saturday, 29 June 2013

Mandalay

Mandalay and the other former royal capitals around it have all been capital cities for a while for one major reason: they are all situated on the Ayeyarwaddy River (Irrawaddy). Feel the breeze of the river and imagine how it must have been to arrive by boat in Mingun or at the court of Ava. From the jetty in Mandalay we go upstream to Mingun and visit the Mingun Pagoda with the big crack caused by an earthquake and the giant bronze bell. We take a leisurely boat cruise for about 3 hours downstream to Ava. A simple lunch packed in rattan baskets will be served while cruising down. Arriving in Ava, horse carts are ready to take us around this magnificent site with various ancient temple ruins that used to be majestic buildings during the 400 years that Ava was the capital. Return to Mandalay by car. An ideal excursion if you don't take the boat from Mandalay to Bagan since the most interesting part of the long boat ride is covered in this shorter cruise.

Overnight at the Hotel Red Canal

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Day 11: Sunday, 30 June 2013

Mandalay – Heho – Kalaw

Transfer to airport for flight to Heho On arrival transfer to Kalaw.

Your guide specialized in Elephant conservation will meet you in Kalaw and take you for a rewarding day in the forest surrounding Kalaw encountering elephants, their mahouts and hill tribe people living in the surrounding.

*Very recently some young tourism professionals originating from Kalaw decided to set-up a project in Kalaw that is focused on protecting the nature, elephants and traditions of local people living in an area close to Kalaw. In a big part of this private protected forest the nature can grow undisturbed creating a natural habitat for animals that could otherwise be easily hunted down and killed. The project includes creating a natural environment for some Myanmar elephants from this part of the world and helping the local population to grow out of the vicious circle of poverty through education and micro finance.*

*We start early morning with a half day trekking through the forest and help preparing lunch with local hill tribe people in a traditional village. After lunch it is time to help the mahout washing and feeding the elephant. Walk back in the afternoon to the main road and continue by pick-up truck back to Kalaw town.*

Overnight at the Amara Resort

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Day 12: Monday, 1 July 2013

Kalaw – Inle Lake

Transfer to Inle lake for sightseeing.

Inle Lake in southern Shan State is a vast natural lake surrounded by traditional Shan villages. On the lake itself the Intha people have been living for many centuries in village built entirely on stilts on the lake. Today we will take you by private motorboat around the lake to discover the natural beauty of the lake, visit the floating gardens, see some of the famous leg rowers and have some tea at a local family's house. On and around the lake traditional markets are held in different villages according to a 5-day rotating schedule and today we will take you to ..... to visit a colourful; market frequented by Shan and PaO people living nearby. We will certainly also visit a local cheroot factory (where the Burmese cigars are made), floating tomato gardens, Phaung Daw Oo Pagoda, Intha Heritage house where the Burmese cats are bred and if wanted we visit a weaving factory. Lunch is included.

Overnight at the Inle Princess Resort

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Day 13: Tuesday, 2 July 2013

Inle Lake

In the south of the lake the ruins of Indein are certainly worth a visit. Partly covered by vegetation the area looks like a "pagoda forest". We will walk about 1 hour to enjoy a fantastic view over the lake and visit the primary school in Tha Ley village. A home-made cooked lunch is served in a local house. We continue towards the Nam Pan village for a very interesting trip going local with a small canoe. Whenever you are tired peddling yourself we continue by motorboat back to your hotel.

Overnight at the Inle Princess Resort

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Day 14: Wednesday, 3 July 2013

Heho – Yangon – Bangkok – Onward

Transfer to the Heho Airport, fly back to Yangon.

