



SECRET  
RETREATS

**LOUNGING ALONG THE MEKONG**  
**9 Days/8 Nights – Starting from 2,400USD per person**  
**(Based on double occupancy)**

Discover 3 regions of Laos through a unique itinerary designed by Secret Retreats in cooperation with Asia Safari. With no access to the sea, Laos' culture, myths and pace of life are intimately related to the Mekong. This program will give you an insight into Laos:

- the capital, Vientiane, converting itself from a colonial peaceful town into an Asian dynamic modern city.
- the hills of the North populated by many semi-nomadic tribes who migrated for most from Yunnan and Myanmar - Ikhos, Khamu, Hmong...
- the eternal and spiritual UNESCO town of Luang Prabang, which still lives today at the rhythm of its monasteries.

Day 1

Vientiane

You are welcomed by your local English-speaking guide at Vientiane Airport. Transfer to Asara hotel in "style" with a 1960's classic Mercedes Benz (once owned by the Thai Royal Family). After checking-in, you have time to relax after your journey or take a stroll around the capital. We will guide you and recommend places.



Night at Ansara

Day 2

Vientiane

After breakfast, you begin your tour of the capital, once again "in style." In Vientiane, you are a world away from the other noisy & polluted capitals of SE Asia. The city has more of the feel of a provincial capital with around half a million inhabitants living on the banks of the Mekong. You will find a city with different facets: old colonial style houses, a jumbled collection of Chinese buildings, golden Buddhist temples and bustling markets. In the north of the city sits That Luang, the national monument with its 45m high golden stupa. Your tour will also include Wat Sisaket, Wat Phra Kéo and Phatouxay (the Lao "Arc de Triomphe").

Dinner and overnight stay at Ansara | B

Day 3

Vientiane – Muang La

Transfer to Vientiane Airport for your mid-morning flight to Oudomxay. On arrival, you set off to Muang La Resort where you take a late lunch. Sitting between mountains and a river, the resort comprises just 10 rooms and benefits from a nearby thermal spring. A haven of peace and tranquillity with a massage pavilion facing the river, a traditional scented sauna and two hot water baths filled with naturally salty water from the spring, the resort is without doubt the "Pearl of Northern Laos."

After lunch, you go on to discover the rural way of life in the village of Pak La which sits next to the resort. As you stroll through the village, you have time to enjoy the marvellous views across the River Nam Pak, the terraced rice fields and the extraordinary salt mines. You learn how the Khamu people live in harmony with their natural surroundings. (Stroll of around 2-3 hours).

Dinner & overnight stay at Muang La Resort | B, L, D

## Day 4

Muang La

Waterproof shoes are advised

After breakfast, you walk for around 30 mins. along the banks of the Nam Pak to the Khamu village of Wang Wanh, where the villagers make sacks from the fibres of the local plants. You will be welcomed by a local family in their rice fields surrounded by the hills and you immerse yourself in the traditional way of life of the villagers. Accompanied by your local guide, you also learn about their work in the fields, with their faithful friend - a water buffalo. From choosing the right seeds, planting the seeds, transplanting cuttings to the crucial stage of the harvest; you learn all about the life of the local farmers. After your interesting morning, it's time to relax and enjoy lunch in the farm 'sala,' giving a 360° panorama of the wonderful countryside in the valley.

After lunch, you cross the Nam Pak on a bamboo raft to go to the Khamu village of Vieng Kham. The villagers are well-known for their weaving skills creating wonderful silks and sarongs. You continue on to the village of Muang La to visit the local school and the temple of Chiao Pha Kham Sing which houses a sacred statue of Buddha and is now a place of pilgrimage. You return to the resort in the middle of the afternoon to relax and reflect on the wonderful memories of your day in the Lao countryside.

Dinner & overnight stay at Muang La Resort | B, L, D



## Day 5

Muang La

The route may be changed so as not to disturb village life

You leave the resort in a 4x4 to meet two typical Lao communities, the Ikhos and the Hmong people. Your route offers stunning views as you climb to 1000m above sea level. The first village is an isolated Ikhos community and you take lunch in the village which offers more magnificent views. The Ikhos people originate from Yunnan Province in China and also from Tibet and their way of life is largely unchanged by modern ways.

After lunch, you continue on to the Hmong village of Ban Tauser (a short trek of around 45 minutes). The Hmong people originate from the high steppes of Tibet. Livestock (pigs, buffaloes etc.) plays an important part in village life and consequently the villagers give a great deal of care and attention to their animals. The path leading to the isolated village gives you another chance to enjoy stunning views of the surrounding countryside and a few minutes from the village is a viewpoint with a 360 degree panorama on the region. You return to the resort at the end of the day.

Dinner & overnight stay at Muang La Resort | B, L, D



You set off by road for Muang Khua, the start point of your cruise on the magnificent Nam Ou. On the way, you stop to visit a village of the Tai Dam people and learn how they produce the rice alcohol "Lao Lao" using traditional methods. After around 2½ hours (including stops), you arrive in Muang Khua and embark on your private river cruise boat. The descent of the Nam Ou to Nong Khiaw is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful river journeys in the region. From the comfort of your boat, you discover numerous villages on the banks of the river and magnificent limestone cliffs rising majestically from the water's edge. During the Vietnam War, the caves in the cliffs served as a refuge for the local people during the American bombardments. You take a barbecue picnic lunch on one of the riverside beaches and arrive in Nong Khiaw at the end of the afternoon. On your arrival, you transfer to a private minibus to Luang Prabang. You arrive in the evening and check-in at Satri House.

Overnight stay at Satri House | B, L



*The Alms Ceremony demands a certain level of respect & we ask that you follow the instructions of your guide.*

At first light (before breakfast) you witness the Daily Alms Ceremony where the monks pass through the old part of the city receiving donations of rice from the local people - it's a truly unforgettable sight. After breakfast, you visit the National Museum housed in the former royal palace of Luang Prabang. Your tour continues with Wat May & Wat Manorum, which is believed to have been built in 1375 by King Sam Sen Thai. You then go to Wat That Louang which was the crematorium for high dignitaries and members of the royal family.

In the afternoon, you continue to Wat Xieng Thong, one of the most beautiful temples in the city, at the northern end of the peninsula. Wat Aphay follows, once known as the Monastery of Hay Padek (Padek is a strong tasting fish paste used in Lao cuisine). Then Wat Phraphoutthabat, the Monastery of Buddha's footprint and Wat That, the Monastery of the Stupa. Your tour concludes with Wat Sieng Mouane & Wat Choum Khong, the last examples of the Xieng Khouang style of architecture. At the end of the afternoon you climb to the summit of Mount Phou Si to enjoy the stunning views and the sunset. On your descent, you can visit the Night Market in Luang Prabang where the local villagers sell their handicrafts and silk goods.

Overnight stay at Satri House | B



## Day 8

Luang Prabang

After breakfast, you cross the Mekong to visit a village where pottery is made. On the way you stop in the small village of Ban Xieng Maene, Wat Long Khoun - the Monastery of Blessed Song which houses an ornate, carved wooden relief & Wat Chom Pet which sits on a hill overlooking the Mekong. You have time to relax and enjoy the beautiful panorama over Luang Prabang.

After lunch, you set off by boat for the caves at Pakhou. A cruise of around 90 minutes brings you to the point where the River Nam Ou flows into the Mekong. This is also where you find the famous caves of Pakhou: Tham Ting & Tham Phoum. Carved into the side of a hill, the caves contain hundreds of statues of Buddha in all shapes & sizes which have been left by pilgrims to these sacred caves over the course of many centuries. You return to Luang Prabang by boat and enjoy the sunset over the Mekong.

Overnight stay at Satri House | B

## Day 9

Luang Prabang

If you have some free time after breakfast, browse around the peninsula before your transfer to Luang Prabang Airport (15 minutes by car from Satri House).

**Included:** 8 nights' Accommodation, 8 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 3 dinners flight from Vientiane to Oudom Xai, services of guide and driver, private transportation, entries fees and activities listed in program.  
**Excluded:** International flight, visa fees, travel insurance, tips, all drinks with meals and other items of personal expenditure.

We can suggest an extension for 2 more days in Siem Reap, Cambodia, with a stay at The Samar, or a stay in Bangkok at either Cabochon or Chakrabongse Villas.

For more information and reservations, please contact us at [dream@secret-retreats.com](mailto:dream@secret-retreats.com).



More impressions of Laos