



Laos and Cambodia Unveiled

Classic Tour | 18 Days | Moderate

Vientiane – Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang – Siem Reap – Battambang –
Phnom Penh

Embark on an epic adventure through the undiscovered beauty of Laos to captivating Cambodia where you will confront a tragic past in Phnom Penh and find your inner explorer amongst the magnificent temples of Angkor.

- Explore the colonial charm of Vientiane
- Admire the architecture of Luang Prabang's temples
- Cruise the languid Mekong River to explore the Pak Ou Caves
- Discover awe-inspiring Angkor
- Explore colonial Battambang
- Learn about Phnom Penh's harrowing past at Tuol Sleng



Laos and Cambodia Unveiled tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or local tour guides
- Visa fees for UK and EU passport holders (except for Laos, please see visa section below for further information)
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Classic Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of South East Asia on an excellent value group tour whilst travelling with like-minded people. The tours are on a fully-inclusive basis so you'll travel with the assurance that all your arrangements are taken care of. You will be accompanied by our dedicated and professional National Escorts and local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Moderate Tours:

'Laos and Cambodia Unveiled' is a **moderate** tour. This means that the itinerary requires a good level of fitness.

- On several days there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time.
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats often without assistance.

Of course, our National Escort and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Laos and Cambodia Unveiled

Days 1-2: Vientiane

You will be met at Vientiane airport in the arrivals hall by your Local Guide and/or National Escort from Wendy Wu Tours. Together with all other group members who may be arriving at a similar time travel to your hotel for check in.



Destination Information

Vientiane - Vientiane, Laos' laid-back capital, mixes French colonial architecture with Buddhist temples such as the golden, 16th-century Pha That Luang, a national symbol. Along broad boulevards and tree-lined streets are notable shrines including Wat Si Saket, which features thousands of Buddha images, and Wat Si Muang, built on a Hindu shrine. Many bakeries, cafes and villas seem straight out of 19th-century Paris.

Day 3: Vientiane

Nestled in a languid bend in the Mekong, Vientiane is a delightfully quaint city, more a friendlier backwater than the chaotic capital. Spend your day exploring Wat Si Saket, and Wat Phrakeo before visiting COPE – an organisation helping survivors of land mines. Continue your sightseeing at That Luang Stupa and the Patuxai Victory Monument, resembling Paris' Arc de Triomphe. Sightseeing today involves around 2 to 3 hours on foot. Tonight enjoy dinner and a traditional performance showcasing Lao music and dance.



Destination Information

Wat Si Saket - Wat Si Saket is a Buddhist wat built in 1818 on the order of King Anouvong (Sethathirath V.) Wat Si Saket was built in the 'Siamese style' of Buddhist architecture, with a surrounding terrace and an ornate five-tiered roof, rather than in the Lao style. This may have kept it safe, since the armies of Siam that sacked Vientiane following Anouvong's rebellion in 1827 used the compound as their headquarters and lodging place. It may be the oldest temple still standing in Vientiane. The French colonial government restored Wat Si Saket in 1924 and again in 1930. Wat Si Saket features a cloister wall with more than 2,000 ceramic and silver Buddha images.

COPE - Cooperative Orthotic & Prosthetic Enterprise is a non-profit organisation sourcing walking aids and prosthetic limbs for survivors of land mines.

That Luang Stupa - A gold-covered large Buddhist stupa in the centre of Vientiane. Since its initial establishment, suggested to be in the 3rd century, the stupa has undergone several reconstructions as recently as the 1930s due to foreign invasions of the area.

Patuxai Victory Monument - Patuxai means Victory Gate or Gate of Triumph. and, is a war monument in the centre of Vientiane. It was built between 1957 and 1968. The Patuxai is dedicated to those who fought in the struggle for independence from France.

Day 4: Vientiane – Vang Vieng

After breakfast, drive approximately 3 and half hours to Vang Vieng. On the way stop for a couple of hours at Nam Ngum Lake and enjoy a short cruise. This evening enjoy dinner at your hotel and soak up the atmosphere on the Song river banks.



Destination Information

Vang Vieng - A town in Vientiane Province about four hours bus ride north of the capital. The town lies on the Nam Song River. The most notable feature of the area is the karst hill landscape surrounding the town.

Day 5: Vang Vieng

Today venture into the Tham Chang cave, sightseeing here involves approximately 1 hour on foot over uneven surfaces, and climbing steps to get up to the cave. Later enjoy an easy walking tour on the banks of the Nam Song River.



Destination Information

Tham Chang Cave - Tham Jang is a cave just to the southwest of Vang Vieng, Laos. The cave is reached by crossing a bridge that spans across the Nam Song River. You will need to then climb a long flight of steps to the entrance. A spring is located about 50m inside the cave. The cave was used as a bunker in the early 19th century during the Chinese-Ho invasion.

Day 6: Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang

After breakfast, return to Vientiane for lunch and travel to the airport for your 45 minute flight to Luang Prabang. On arrival check in to your hotel and have dinner at a local restaurant.

Destination Information

Luang Prabang - The capital of Luang Prabang Province in northern Laos, lies in a valley at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers. It's known for its many Buddhist temples, including the gilded Wat Xieng Thong, dating to the 16th century, and Wat Mai, once the residence of the head of Laotian Buddhism.

Day 7: Luang Prabang

This morning visit Wat Xieng Thong and Wat Visoun. Later, board a boat to cruise the mighty Mekong up to the sacred caves of Pak Ou, known for the hundreds of miniature Buddha sculptures that reside within. Return to Luang Prabang visiting local villages to witness the daily life of the local people and their cottage industries.



Destination Information

Wat Visoun – Rebuilt in 1898 following fire due to Black flag Haw raiders, restoration commenced to rebuild the once oldest wooden temple in Luang Prabang from more sturdy bricks and stucco. The highlight here is a 34.5-metre-tall Lotus Stupa.

Wat Xieng Thong - A Buddhist temple (wat), located on the northern tip of the peninsula of Luang Prabang, Laos. Wat Xieng Thong is one of the most important of Lao monasteries and remains a significant monument to the spirit of religion, royalty and traditional art. There are over twenty structures on the grounds including a sim, shrines, pavilions and residences, in addition to its gardens of various flowers, ornamental shrubs and trees.

Pak Ou Caves – Near Pak Ou (mouth of the Ou river) the Tham Ting (lower cave) and the Tham Theung (upper cave) are caves overlooking the Mekong River, 25 km to the north of Luang Prabang, Laos. They are a group of two caves on the west side of the Mekong River, about two hours upstream from the centre of Luang Prabang. The caves are noted for their miniature Buddha sculptures. Hundreds of very small and mostly damaged wooden Buddhist figures are laid out over the wall shelves. They take many different positions, including meditation, teaching, peace, rain, and reclining (nirvana).

Day 8: Luang Prabang

This morning visit the National Museum. Drive 1 hour to Kuang Si Waterfall and the Bear Rescue Centre. En route, stop at Ock Pop Tok weaving centre for a visit. Sightseeing at the waterfall will involve around 1 hour of light walking and on the way up to the waterfall you follow a bush walking track which has a slight upward gradient. It is possible to take a swim in the river near the falls and if you wish to do this, please remember to bring along your swimsuit and a towel. Changing rooms are available on site.



Destination Information

National Museum – Built in 1904 in the French colonial era, the original building was the Royal Palace but was later converted into a museum.

Kuang Si Waterfalls - A three tier waterfall about 29 kilometres south of Luang Prabang. The falls begin in shallow pools atop a steep hillside. These lead to the main fall with a 60 metres cascade. The falls are accessed via a trail to a left of the falls. Water collects in numerous turquoise blue pools as it flows downstream. The many cascades that result are typical of travertine waterfalls. There are walkways and bridges for your enjoyment. Most of the pools are open to swimming.

Day 9: Luang Prabang – Siem Reap

Rise early this morning to view Takbat, a Buddhist ceremony before visiting the impressive Wat mai and climbing the Phousi Hill for panoramic views of the city. Continue to visit the impressive Wat Mai and local market. Later fly 1 and a half hours to the fascinating city of Siem Reap and wander the Angkor Night Market.



Destination Information

Phousi Hill - A 100m high hill in the centre of the old town of Luang Prabang. It lies in the heart of the old town peninsula and is bordered on one side by the Mekong River and on the other side by the Nam Khan River. The hill is a local religious site, and houses several Buddhist shrines. Halfway up the hill, overlooking the Nam Khan is Wat Tham Phou Si, a Buddhist temple. At the summit of the hill, overlooking the town and surrounding countryside, is Wat Chom Si, which is also a Buddhist temple and is a tourist highlight of Luang Prabang.

Siem Reap - Siem Reap is a bustling tourist destination due to its proximity to both the ancient Khmer national capital city of Angkor as well as Tonle Sap Lake. Angkor Wat is one of the main attractions and is the world's largest religious monument, in addition to being the spiritual and cultural heart of Cambodia.

Day 10: Siem Reap

Spanning from the 9th to 15th century, the Angkor complex with over 1,000 temples was the seat of the thriving Khmer Empire. UNESCO manages the complex and to enter, your group will drive approximately 6km out of town to the main entrance gate to get your entrance passes, which you must carry with you. If you choose to climb at any site, you must be able to climb and descend without assistance. Begin at the city of Angkor Thom and the enigmatic Bayon, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King, before continuing to the



temple of Ta Prohm, enveloped in a labyrinth of jungle. This afternoon is devoted to the fascinating and awe-inspiring Angkor Wat.

Please note: The Central Tower of the Angkor Wat is closed on Buddhist holidays and on all other days the complex has a limited number of visitors allowed at any given time, under regulations from UNESCO. If you wish to visit this tower, you will be required to wait in the queue alongside all other visitors. The ability to do this will be determined upon the groups' schedule.

Destination Information

Angkor Thom - This fortified city is flanked by a row of 54 stone figures on each side, which leads you through a 23-meter imposing stone entrance gate to the various temples inside.

Bayon - Beautifully crafted central towers, decorated with four opposing faces representing King Jayavarman VII. Bayon's stone galleries display extraordinary bas-reliefs incorporating over 11,000 figures.

Elephant Terrace and Terrace of the Leper King -Giant viewing platforms used for public ceremonies, which served as a base for the King's grand audience hall.

Ta Prohm - Swallowed by the jungle where Strangler Figs and Kapok Trees have entwined themselves around the ruins. Undoubtedly, the most atmospheric ruin at Angkor with several towers, closed courtyards and narrow corridors to explore.

Angkor Wat - Surrounded by a 190-meter moat and taking 30 years to build, Angkor Wat represents the Khmer civilisation at its grandest. With its fascinating decorative flourishes, extensive bas-relief and multiple tiers, it is the best-preserved temple within the complex.

Day 11: Siem Reap

Today explore the less visited Beng Mealea, a mysterious temple completely overrun by the jungle where you will explore on foot for approximately an hour and half. In the high water season, you will also visit Kompong Khleang a unique village on stilts. In the lower water season, you will visit Chong Kneas floating village. Return to Siem Reap via a Cambodian artistry assembly - Les Artisan D'Angkor before arriving back at your hotel this evening. Tonight enjoy dinner while watching an Apsara dance performance.



Destination Information

Beng Mealea - Dating from the 11th century, this sprawling temple covers over one square kilometre. Largely overrun by vegetation and constructed in a distinctly Angkor Wat-style, Beng Mealea precedes and may even have served as a 'prototype' for Angkor Wat.

Tonle Sap - The Tonle Sap is the largest fresh water lake in Southeast Asia. During the rainy season, it can swell from 3,000sq km to 7,500sq km. Locals have built floating villages on the Tonle Sap, which include schools, restaurants, markets, and even a medical clinic.

Artisan D'Angkor - Established in 1998, this community workshop teaches the unique arts of painting, silk weaving, wood and stone carving in traditional Cambodian style to local young people.

Day 12: Siem Reap

Today travel to Preah Khan Temple, Banteay Srei and explore Banteay Samre before climbing to the summit of Pre Rup Temple to view the sunset over the paddy fields.

Destination Information

Banteay Srei - A Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva and considered by many to be the 'Jewel in the Crown' of Angkorian art. The temple is cut from stone of a pinkish hue and contains some of the finest stone carvings in the world.

Banteay Samre - Built approximately halfway through the 12th century, Banteay Samre is decorated with many intricate and well-preserved carvings of Hindi Mythological stories and Buddhist depictions.

Pre Rup Temple - A popular place to view the sun setting as the view over the rice fields is spectacular. Pre Rup was built by Rajendravarmān II and may have been an early royal crematorium.

Day 13: Siem Reap - Battambang

Travel approximately 3 hours to Battambang, stopping at the Puok District to visit the National Silk Centre. Learn about silk creation and the harvesting of mulberries before continuing to Battambang.



Destination Information

National Silk Centre - A fascinating way to learn about Cambodian silk. Here you will witness silk creation and the growing and harvesting of mulberries.

Battambang - Cambodia's second largest city. Situated on the banks of the Stung Sangke River, Battambang possesses some of the grandest and best-preserved colonial architecture and scenic countryside.

Day 14: Battambang

Climb to the top of Phnom Banan to reach the Prasat Banan Temple to admire the breathtaking view. In the afternoon, visit 'La Maison de Coco' and learn how to make rice paper, and visit the Bat Caves at Phnom Sampov.



Please note rice paper making is seasonal, when this is not available you will still see the rice paper as well as visiting an orphanage school and a tailors' workshop.

Destination Information

Prasat Banan Temple - Located on the top of a small hill, the temple was built in the 11th century and consists of 5 towers.

La Maison de Coco - A non-governmental organisation which runs projects to give skills and support to the local people.

Day 15: Battambang – Phnom Penh

Today drive approximately 4 to 5 hours to the capital, Phnom Penh, stopping en route for a couple of hours to explore Udong and Kampong Chhnang Province to see traditional handmade pottery and climb Touch Hill to admire the surroundings. There are approximately 415 steps to climb to reach the top of Touch Hill.



Destination Information

Phnom Penh - The capital of the Kingdom of Cambodia is built around four river arms formed by a sharp curve in the Mekong River near the junctions of the Bassac and the Tonle Sap tributaries. This charming city has a pleasant blend of oriental and colonial architecture, but reminders of a troubled past are also evident.

Day 16: Phnom Penh

Enjoy a sightseeing tour of Phnom Penh today, sightseeing will be around 3 hours of leisurely walking this morning. Explore sites such as the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and Wat Phnom. Sightseeing at Wat Phnom involves a climb of 30 metres high and on ladders up to the hilltop temple. Visit the Tuol Sleng Museum and enjoy dinner this evening.



Destination Information

The Royal Palace - Built in 1866 by the French these ornate buildings are the official residence of the reigning Cambodian royal family and King Sihamoni. View the Throne Hall and Silver Pagoda.

Silver Pagoda - This concrete and marble structure includes a floor with over 5,000 silver tiles each weighing 1kg. Famous artefacts include a 90kg solid gold Buddha made in 1907 and an Emerald Buddha said to be made of baccarat crystal.

Wat Phnom - Home to a hilltop temple that carries the cities namesake. Locals flock here to pray for good luck and success.

Tuol Sleng Museum - This former school was used by the Khmer Rouge as a detention and torture centre in the late 1970s. Today this building houses paintings and photographs of the victims. You can see the crude cells built in the classrooms and the torture devices used to extract confessions by the regime.

Days 17 - 18: Depart Phnom Penh

Today, if time permits, there will be an optional tour to the Killing Fields (to be paid for locally; approximately US\$10 – US\$15pp). This particular killing field is the site of the brutal executions of more than 17,000 men, women and children. Many who had first suffered interrogation and torture at S21 and buried in mass graves. The large pits have all but gone, but a stupa filled with skulls and bones is a chilling memorial. Transfer to the airport to board your flight back to the UK, arriving the next day.

Laos and Cambodia Unveiled Travel Information

Visas

Cambodia: A visa is required for entry into Cambodia. Standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost. We will require your passport, completed visa application forms, and 2 passport photos, taken within the last 6 months, to process your visas. We will require all this information 8 weeks prior to departure. As per our standard visa processing service, passports will usually be returned within 4 weeks of your tour's scheduled departure. In rare cases you may be required to provide further information or documentation to the Cambodian Embassy; if this is the case we will notify you as soon as possible.

Laos: The cost of a Laos visa is not included as there is no Laos consulate in the UK. However, visas are very easy to obtain upon arrival in Laos and will cost \$35, you will need to bring a passport photo for the visa. Your guide will assist you with this process.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in South East Asia

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in most local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

Your itinerary has been carefully crafted to introduce you to a range of local dishes and we hope that you enjoy the culinary adventure ahead. All meals (excluding drinks) are included in our fully inclusive group tours from dinner on the day of your groups' arrival until breakfast on your day of departure. When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In Thailand and some other countries in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Southeast Asian cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and South East Asia. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

Transport

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in South East Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Development in South East Asia

Although South East Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

Cambodia and Laos public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Cambodia and Laos Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. In Cambodia: Khmer New Year is 13th – 17th April every year, the King's birthday is 14th - 16th May and the Water festival is between 4th – 7th November. In Laos: International Women's Day is 8th March, Laos New Year Holiday is 14th – 17th April.

Group Size

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 28 travellers in each group although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

Tipping Policy

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and South East Asia is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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