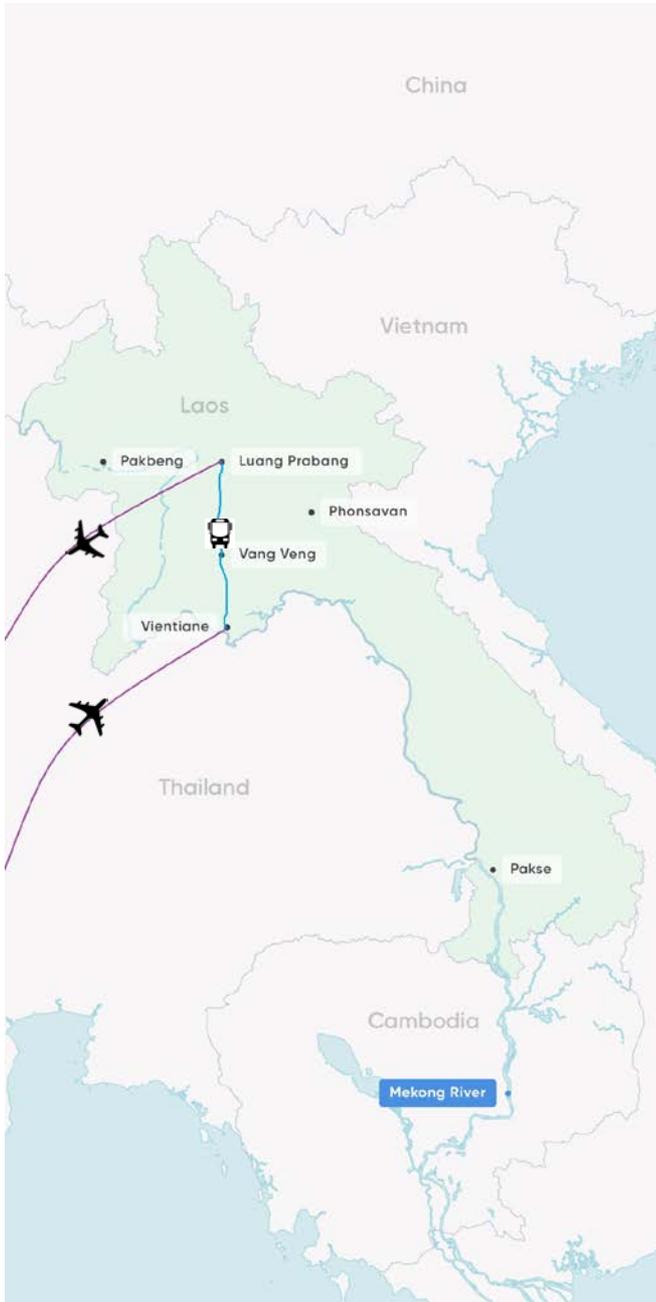


Laos: Week Without Walls (6 days)



Departs anytime (2018-19)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's particular aims, learning objectives and budget.

Please contact us detailing any changes you'd like to make.

A bastion of tranquility amid the bloated development of its neighbours, Laos brings together the best of Southeast Asia in one bite-sized destination.

This 6-day educational trip of Laos has been specifically designed for students looking to experience the enchanting, temple-strewn country only relatively recently opened to exploration by foreign travellers.

Beginning in the Laotian capital of Vientiane, we will enjoy a thorough overview of this serene capital before travelling to the far-flung, French-inspired town of Luang Prabang. En route we will also visit remote prince of Vang Vieng, famous for its rivers and sublime karst landscapes.

The journey includes interaction with elephants, cycling, a highly enjoyable 'great race' activity as well as time spent with Laotian high school students to learn of their lives and aspirations for the future, and enjoy a river cruise on the Mekong River.

This trip is further intended to be of educational value and will include several activities to leave students with irreplaceable memories and images from this ever-changing, and always surprising Tiny Asian Nation.



Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Laos (Vientiane)



On arrival in Vientiane, we will be greeted at the airport by our tour leader. We begin with a meeting to talk about the upcoming days' activities, followed by a short group meeting to discuss our program over the coming days. Following this we will set out to explore this gracious city.

From its sleepy tuk-tuk drivers to its delightful river front, this former French trading post is relaxed to say the least. Eminently walkable, the historic old quarter of Vientiane entices all who visit with its glittering temples and statues as well as its boulevards lined with frangipani and tamarind.

The Laotian way of life is very slow paced, something that we will quickly

discover as we set out this afternoon for a tour of this friendly city.

Later today we will visit the Lao's People's Army Museum to learn of the recent history of this tiny nation, the French colonial period, and the turbulent conflict that engulfed this region in the 1960s and '70s.

Dinner tonight will be a feast of Laotian specialties at one of the city's many riverside restaurants, whilst watching the sunset over the Mekong River. (dinner). **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Vientiane Vang Vieng



After breakfast, we will set out for a short tour of Laos's charming capital city, beginning with a visit to a vocational training centre for women. On-site, we will see how hand-woven items are produced along with natural dyes and various weaving techniques in action (of which we will try our hand at ourselves!).

No visit to the capital city would be complete without taking in Wat Prakeo, home of the Emerald Buddha. The last sight is reserved for the Anousavari Monument, inspired by the French and dedicated to those who died during the recent wars.

Later today we will farewell Vientiane to travel to Vang Vieng in central Laos. En route we will be travelling past jagged limestone hills and magnificent plateaus –

typical of the topography in this remote corner of southeast Asia.

Tonight, we stroll through this sleepy town and learn about the impact tourism is having on this traditional and conservative part of the country as well as its environment. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 3

Vang Vieng



Like a rural scene from an old Asian silk painting, Vang Vieng crouches low over the Nam Song (Song River) with a backdrop of serene cliffs amid vivid green paddy fields that we will explore today by way of bicycle.

Our cycling trip will begin in town and quickly take us out amongst rural villages to experience life in the countryside. En route we will stop off at Cham cave to climb inside and learn about the peculiar ecosystems of Vang Vieng.

Today we will also enjoy a vigorous climbing / hiking activity to the mouth of a cave that will afford us terrific views of the surrounding hinterland. We continue by bicycles along an abandoned runway used during the Vietnam war era. As

we make our way to the Nam Song River, we will swap our bikes for kayaks, led by qualified and experienced kayaking instructors. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 4

Vang Vieng 🚗 Luang Prabang



Our full day bus journey north takes us through remote hinterland and onto the enchanting town of Luang Prabang, rich in French colonial character and the centre of Laotian Buddhism. En route we will visit a local school to learn of the educational system in Laos and have lunch with the local children. We will undertake a renovation project to assist the school in establishing much-needed vegetation in this beautiful yet still developing country.

On arrival, we will check into our hotel and stroll around the original part of the town, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Luang Prabang's main street comes alive each evening to the colour of local merchants selling their wares – time for which we will be able to experience after dinner this evening. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5

Luang Prabang (Student-initiated activities)

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to their overseas experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture. The activities we can include are many and varied. These may include: an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to local schools, great race activities, cooking classes, outdoor educational pursuits such as hiking, bike riding or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

OPTION 1:

Cooking Classes: For those who like to cook up a storm, Luang Prabang is the place to be. With a wide range of ingredients, herbs and spices, a market tour is essential to gain an understanding of all the produce and ingredients required before we begin cooking. Influences on the local dishes include royal cuisine, the French colonial period and ethnic minority specialties. We will cook traditional recipes with fresh local ingredients, meats and spices, often eaten by hand Laos style. This is a fun and hands on activity, accompanied by passionate chefs who are more than excited to guide you through!

OPTION 2:



UXO (Unexploded Ordnance!): Did you know Laos is the most heavily bombed country in the world per capita? More than two million tons of bombs were dropped on Laos between 1964 and 1973. An estimated 30 per cent of them did not detonate. Today we will visit Lao's fascinating UXO centre to learn of the painstaking efforts to the nation has gone to expunge this terrible legacy, as well as visit dwellings made from these artilleries.

OPTION 3:



Kayaking: The rivers and waterways of Laos provide a fantastic and safe venue to enjoy kayaking, an activity we will enjoy today under the guidance of our highly experienced water guides (*helmets & life jackets provided*). Traversing calm stretches of water past scenic waterfalls is one of the greatest experiences any student traveller to this country can enjoy. We may also enjoy a swim at the end of this activity in a quiet section of the river.

On our final evening, we will be guests to a traditional 'Baci' dinner blessing ceremony, accompanied by a display of traditional Laotian folk dancing. We will be invited to join the dance! Tonight, we have a short time to explore the city and have a final chance for shopping. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 6

Pak Ou Caves 🚢 Depart Luang Prabang ✈️

Boarding a boat, we cruise up the Mekong River to visit a religious site nestled on the banks of the river. Where the Nam Ou (Ou River) and Mekong River meet at Ban Pak Ou, two famous caves in the limestone cliff are



crammed with myriad Buddha images. In the lower cave a photogenic group of Buddhas are silhouetted against the stunning riverine backdrop. The upper cave is a five-minute climb up steps 50m into the rock face. En route back we will learn more about the importance of the Mekong River that spans 6 countries, acting as their vital water source. There are issues of upstreaming damming, fishing and illegal irrigation that we will discuss. We will arrive back in Luang Prabang in time for lunch and have a very short time for some final exploration before heading to the airport for our flight back home. Our tour leader will take care of all our onward travel arrangements and wave us farewell. (breakfast) **Flight details to be advised**

Summary

Grading

Moderate: Students will be required to be in good health to get the most out of this trip while any one of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day, particularly during the community project component of the trip. You will also be expected to be able to ride a bike and be able to participate in a light hiking activity. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

bus, boat, van, Kayak, bicycle

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Your Tour Leader

Your tour leader is probably the person who most influences the success of your trip. Thus, Student Educational Adventures employs our own team of meticulously trained student dedicated, local tour leaders - not foreigners, imported at your students' expense with no language skills or insight into your host culture.

These nationals are not only the best folk to show you their country. They are your teachers, translators and an enthusiastic purveyor of authentic experiences. They are there to facilitate your immersion into new cultures and are the bridge between you and the world of education and new experiences.

Your tour leader is always with your students throughout your trip and is thoroughly versed in safety protocols and duty of care responsibilities. This ranges from assisting in the most basic of health and safety measures to ensuring that teachers & students are always safe during our trips. All have been chosen because of their ability to deal with the needs and unique issues associated with escorting young people through this wonderful and at times, most foreign of regions.

Service Learning Program

All service-learning programs initiated by Student Educational Adventures are conducted after careful consultation with the local community and with the local People's Committees.

These projects are initiated based on a model of mutual learning and designed as an immersion experience. An understanding of the importance of an integrated approach to community development is useful to frame what students and teachers might see, learn or experience during a student immersion.

Laos Week without walls (6 days)

Inclusions

- All accommodation and transport, activities, and programs as described in the itinerary
- Student Educational Adventures Tour Leader throughout the tour
- Additional local guides where required
- Meals (+ drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- Pre-departure support, briefings & planning meetings for students and parents
- 24/7 in-country support
- Service-learning activity costs

Exclusions

- International flights to / from Laos
- Some meals
- Laos Visa (if required)