



# LAOS MADE EASY

The Compact Guide  
for Travel Agents





# An Introduction



Mekong River

**W**elcome to Laos, the untouched jewel of Southeast Asia! In a world where mass tourism is increasingly the norm, Laos remains a unique retreat, preserving its authenticity and charm. Your customers will find an impressive variety of travel experiences here: from the majestic mountains and dense forests in the north, to the gentle river landscapes and waterfalls in the south, and charming towns like Luang Prabang and Pakse that exude the timeless flair of old French Indochina.

Laos is not only safe, politically stable, and affordable, but also offers a tranquil atmosphere that feels like balm for the soul. The people are welcoming and live at a comfortable pace, creating an all-around paradise for those who visit.

It's time for Laos to step out of the shadow of its neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam. Discover this up-and-coming destination where authenticity still reigns.

## Important Basics for Travelling in Laos



### Choose the Best Travel Time

Tourism in Laos is notably seasonal, more so than in its neighbouring countries. From April to October, the country is quieter, while from November to February, some destinations may experience higher tourist traffic. We recommend the "green season" from April to October for your clients: nature is at its most vibrant, and prices are significantly lower.



### Flexibility is Key

Travelling by train or flight in Laos can be unpredictable, with last-minute changes potentially affecting the entire trip. This unpredictability is part of the country's charm and often leads to spontaneous, unforgettable experiences. However, preparing clients for this in advance helps manage expectations and avoid disappointment.



### Large Hotels are Rare

Most accommodations in Laos are small, which adds to the authenticity of the travel experience but also means limited availability, especially during high season. This is particularly true outside the major areas of Vientiane and Luang Prabang. For trips during peak season, it's advisable to plan well in advance and remain flexible with travel arrangements, given the infrequent flights and cruises between destinations.



### A Star Isn't Always a Star

The Lao star rating system differs from the European standard. It's better to suggest an average budget per night rather than relying solely on star ratings. For instance, some 3-star boutique hotels may not qualify for additional stars due to their size but offer services and prices comparable to 4- or 5-star establishments.



### Embrace the Tranquillity

Exploring the small towns and villages of Laos at a leisurely pace is an essential part of the experience. Avoid packing your clients' itineraries too tightly and ensure they have enough free time to discover and enjoy the local atmosphere on their own.





# FAQs: Answering the Most Important Questions to Travel Smart

## Is it worth planning a trip just to Laos?

Absolutely! Laos is a destination worth exploring on its own. The country offers a wealth of experiences that could easily fill several weeks of travel. We recommend a minimum of 12 days to truly appreciate its beauty. For clients who desire a beach experience, consider adding a beach extension in Thailand or Vietnam at the end of their Laos journey.

## What are the absolute must-sees in Laos?

Luang Prabang is the most visited city in Laos, much like Angkor Wat in Cambodia. However, while Luang Prabang's charm is undeniable, it's important not to overlook the rest of the country. Beyond the city, Laos offers incredible destinations such as the mountainous regions of Vang Vieng, Nong Khiaw, Oudomxay, Luang Namtha, and Pakbeng in the north. In the south, highlights include Pakse, the gateway to the Bolaven Plateau with its stunning waterfalls and coffee plantations, as well as Champassak and the 4,000 Islands region.

## What is the hotel offer in Laos like?

In cities like Luang Prabang, Vientiane, and Vang Vieng, you'll find a range of accommodations, from small B&Bs to 5-star hotels. In other regions, however, the options are more limited and simpler. Larger towns offer a variety of restaurants and eateries, where you can enjoy excellent food at low prices. Luang Prabang also has more upscale restaurants serving fusion, Lao, and international cuisine.

## Is Laos a suitable destination for women travelling alone?

Laos is a safe destination for solo female travellers. Women hold an important place in Lao society, participating in the workforce and social life just as much as men. According to the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2021, Laos ranks 36th out of 156 countries, second only to the Philippines in ASEAN. Women are well-respected in Laos, and this extends to female travellers.

## Getting there and travelling around – what is the infrastructure like in Laos?

Accessibility can be a challenge in Laos. The easiest way to reach the country from Europe is via connecting flights through Vietnam, Thailand, or Singapore, with Vientiane and Luang Prabang serving as the main international airports. Smaller cities like Xieng Khuang, Savannakhet, and Pakse also have airports, though flight availability can be limited and schedules unpredictable. A high-speed train now connects the main destinations in the north, from Vientiane to the Chinese border. Given the country's vastness and limited accommodation options between Vientiane and Pakse, domestic flights are recommended for southern travel. Alternatively, Pakse is just over two hours by car from Thailand's Ubon Ratchathani Airport, providing another option for return flights.

## Who is Laos the right destination for?

It's important to differentiate between combination trips and Laos-only vacations. Many travellers prefer to combine a visit to Luang Prabang with another country, as the city offers a peaceful retreat rich in culture, perfect for those seeking unique and extraordinary experiences. Luang Prabang often serves as a regional highlight when combined with the temples of Angkor in Cambodia and Halong Bay in Vietnam.

A Laos-only trip is ideal for those in search of authenticity and nature, who are open to making some compromises and embracing the country's spontaneity. Laos is a destination that rewards adventurous travellers looking to get off the beaten path and discover hidden gems.

## Which neighbouring countries are suitable for cross-country travel?

Some of the best connections to neighbouring countries include:

- A journey along the Mekong River between Chiang Rai in northern Thailand and Luang Prabang.
- A high-speed train between northern Laos and Kunming in China
- A road transfer between the 4,000 Islands region in southern Laos and Siem Reap in Cambodia.
- A scenic route from the mountain region of Nong Khiaw and Muang Ngoi to Dien Bien Phu in western Vietnam.





# The Real Laos: Expert Tips from Our Team

## A Cultural Highlight Frozen in Time

For Win, our Sales & Reservations Manager, the enchanting city of **Luang Prabang** is an absolute highlight. "This serene and historic heritage site holds a special place in my heart. Nestled on a peninsula between the Mekong and Nam Khan rivers, and surrounded by lush forested mountains, Luang Prabang was founded over 1,200 years ago and has been a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995. It's a stunning masterpiece and, for me, one of the true icons of Laos."



Old Town in Luang Prabang

## Nature's Hidden Masterpieces



Scenic View of a Forest in Nam Kat Yorla Pa

In the northern mountains of Oudomxai province lies the **Nam Kat Yorla Pa lodge**, a hidden gem in a nature reserve along the Nam Kat River. Guilhem, our General Manager, considers this region in northeast Laos to be one of the most pristine and beautiful natural destinations in the country. "The local Forestry Area Conservation Ecological Tourism (FACET) project is a trailblazer in sustainable ecotourism within the Nam Kat Yorla Pa protected area. The lodge serves as a perfect base for exploring wild waterfalls and discovering rare orchids. I always suggest pairing this destination with a visit to **Nong Khiaw**, a charming town on the Nam Ou River surrounded by spectacular limestone mountains. Luang Namtha National Park and Pakbeng, a small town along the Mekong, are also among my top recommendations for nature lovers."

## Elevating Adventures

Xay, our Sales & Reservations Manager, is an adrenaline enthusiast who loves adventure. "My top pick is the **Gibbon Experience**, where you can stay in the world's highest treehouses, soar across 15 kilometres of zip lines, and embark on wildlife spotting. Spending a night above the treetops is the ultimate thrill! Laos is also ideal for more traditional adventure sports like trekking, mountain biking, and kayaking. For an unforgettable experience, try ziplining over breathtaking natural sites like the Kuang Si Falls near Luang Prabang or the Liphis Falls in the 4,000 Islands region."



World's Highest Treehouse by Gibbon Experience

## Stay Like a Local



Eco Lodge in Nong Khiaw

On our tours in Laos, guests have the chance to stay in authentic Laotian accommodations. Bountham, our Contracting Manager, offers these tips, "Many old houses and villas from the colonial era have been meticulously restored and transformed into charming boutique hotels. These historical gems in Luang Prabang, Champassak, or Vientiane provide a window into Laos' rich past. Additionally, eco lodges, often minimalist and built with local materials, are common across the country. For those seeking simple yet comfortable lodging, especially in rural areas, these eco lodges are the perfect choice."

## Underrated Flavours of Laos

Sticky rice is the heart of Laotian cuisine, typically served with every meal and enjoyed by hand alongside meat, fish, or vegetables. One dish not to be missed — and a favourite of our Operations Manager Thongpout — is '**lap**', a flavourful salad made from herbs and minced meat or fish. Thongpout also has other culinary suggestions, "Luang Prabang is famous for its sausage, sometimes lightly fermented and seasoned with local herbs, usually grilled to perfection. It's a must-try! Another less common, but equally delicious, dish is '**nam khao**' — crispy rice with herbs, pork, and fish sauce. It might be a bit harder to find, but it's definitely worth the effort!"



Nam Khao





# In Best Hands: DTH Travel — Your Reliable Partner in Laos

22

## Local Offices

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14

## Countries in Asia

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We provide our clients with one of the highest insurance coverage rates in the industry. And our progressive approach ensures that we use the latest technologies to help streamline processes, facilitating faster turnaround times for our clients.

We have offices in 14 countries, including Laos, China, Hong Kong, Thailand, the Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, Cambodia, Myanmar, Bhutan, the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Japan. With over 65 years in the industry, DTH Travel is proud to have been repeatedly recognised as Asia's Leading Destination Management Company by the World Travel Awards for multiple years.

## Our Team in Laos



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Interested in more expert advice and learning about our services in Laos?  
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