

## ATTRACTIONS

### Night Market

This atmospheric market on the main road in the center of Luang Prabang sells a large variety of local textiles and ethnic Lao handicrafts. It opens every evening from 5:00 pm until 10:00 pm.



### Kuang Si and Tad Sae Waterfalls

There are several waterfalls around Luang Prabang. The largest and most dramatic ones are Kuang Si, about 30 kilometers southwest of the town and Tad Sae, 15 kilometers southeast. Both are perfect places for a swim or picnic and accessible by boat or car. There is a Bear Rescue center at Tad Kuang Si and elephants can be seen at Tad Sae.



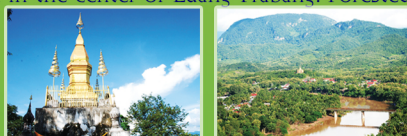
### National Museum

Built in a style inspired by European and temple architecture, the former king's palace houses a collection of royal and religious artifacts including the 'Pha Bang', the 14th century Buddha image from which Luang Prabang derives its name.



### Phou Si Stupa

Also known as Wat That Chomsi, this golden stupa is located at the top of Phou Si, the prominent hill in the center of Luang Prabang. Forested with Frangipani and Hibiscus, it provides magnificent views across the town.



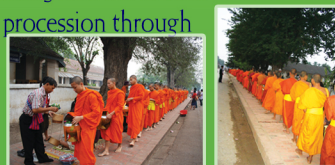
### Wat Xieng Thong

Luang Prabang's oldest and most magnificent temple is a prime example of the 'Luang Prabang' style of temple architecture. It is part of a complex which includes the royal barge house and several beautifully decorated shrines.



### Morning Alms Giving Ceremony

Every morning the people of Luang Prabang line the streets to offer food and pay respect to monks who form a procession through the town. This beautiful yet solemn religious ceremony is an important aspect of Lao life and heritage.



### Tam Ting ( PakOu Cave )

Carved into the rock at the confluence of the Mekong and Ou Rivers, 25 kilometers upstream from Luang Prabang is Tam Ting, a cave and shrine filled with Buddha images.



Tam Ting is easily accessible by boat and car.

## TRANSPORT INFORMATION

### By air

Luang Prabang is served by Lao Airlines, Thai Airways, Bangkok Airways and Vietnam Airlines, with regular service to Vientiane, Pakse, Siem Reap, Chiang Mai, Bangkok, Hanoi and Jinghong.

### By bus

**Southern bus station:** To Vientiane, Vangvieng, Xiengkhuang (Phonsavanh)

**Northern bus station:** To Oudomxai, Nongkhiaw, Pakmong, Nambak, Viengkham, HoauPhan and Luangnamtha, Bokeo, Phongsaly.

**Minivan station:** International route: to Hanoi, Vinh, Hue, Dienbienphu, Kounming, Jinghong, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Chiang Khong, Loei.

Domestick Route: to Luangnamtha, Nongkhiaw, Phonsavanh, Vangvieng, Vientiane.

**Slow boat:** To Houayxay, Pakbeng, Thasoung, Meuangkhuea, Nongkhiaw, Thadeu and Paklay.

## VILLAGES

**Ban Phanom**, a few kilometers from Luang Prabang town center is well known for its Tai Leu textiles and traditional wooden houses.

**Ban XiengMene**, across the Mekong from Luang Prabang is a good starting point for exploring the villages and temples in the area and has splendid views of the World Heritage Town.

**Ban Chan**, downstream from XiengMene is well known for its pottery and clay roof tiles used on traditional buildings in Luang Prabang.

**Ban XiengLek and Ban Xang Khong**, upstream from Luang Prabang are centers for traditional crafts including weaving, drum and mulberry bark paper making.



## FESTIVALS AND HOLIDAYS IN LUANG PRABANG

### January: BounKhoumKhao

After the rice has been harvested the BounKhoumKhao festival is held to give thanks to the spirit of the land and ensure the next harvest will be plentiful.

### BounPha Vet

This is a temple based festival where the story of Prince Vestsantara (the Buddha's penultimate life) is recited. The festival lasts 3 days.

### February: BounMakhaBousa

Held during the full moon this festival commemorates the speech given by Buddha to 1,250 enlightened monks.

### April: BounPimaiLao

This is the Lao New Year Festival held in mid-April for three days celebration of watering.



### May: Boun VisakhaBousa

This festival falls on the fifteenth day of the sixth lunar month and celebrates the birth, death and tatsahou (enlightenment) of Buddha.

### Boun Bang Fai

Held just before the rainy season, rockets are fired to tempt the gods to produce rain needed for rice. Held in MuangNan district it takes about 3 hours from the south of Luang Prabang city by road.



### July: BounKhaophansa

Held on the full moon, this festival marks the beginning of Buddhist lent, the three month period of monastic seclusion and meditation in the Wat (temple) during the rainy season.

### August: BounKhaopadabDinh

Held on the full moon, this festival is held during the ninth Buddhist lunar month and pays tribute to the Naga. The annual boat races are part of this festival.



### September: BounKhaosalak

This full moon festival involves the presentation of offerings to a specific monk (decided by a lottery system). The ritual brings merit to the givers.

### October: Boun Ock Phansa

This is a full moon ceremony ending the rainy season of monastic seclusion (lent). The festival also involves launching candle-lit offerings on the river at night.

### Boun Lai Heua Fai

This is a festival to ask the Naga (water spirits) to bring good luck. Lantern boats are paraded through town and at night launched onto the river, ceremonially set on fire as offerings to the spirits.



### December: Kin Chiang (Hmong Festival)

In December the province's various ethnic minorities, most notably the Hmong, celebrate the past year harvest and new lunar year with weeklong celebrations.

### Boun Pot Py or BounKreu (Khmu New Year)

This festival celebrates the previous year's harvest and welcomes in the New Year. It involves traditional singing, dancing as well as Khmu food and pottery alcohol.



## LUANG PRABANG

Luang Prabang in the north of Laos is renowned for its outstanding cultural and natural beauty. The old capital of the Lane Xang Kingdom and World Heritage Site lies on a peninsula at the confluence of the Mekong and Khan rivers, lush with palm trees and dense tropical foliage in a mountainous landscape. The town is one of the best preserved places in Southeast Asia and its beautifully restored temples, period buildings, traditional cultures and tranquil atmosphere make it a 'must see' for those visiting the region.

Luang Prabang provides a unique insight into traditional Lao culture. The people of the town continue to conduct rituals and ceremonies that have remained unchanged for generations and celebrate with colourful festivals throughout the year.

The town is small and its quiet laneways are made for walking or cycling. Of course both the Mekong and Khan rivers can be explored by boat. The surrounding mountains and valleys provide opportunities for exciting outdoor activities and to experience life in rural communities. For those who want to shop, Luang Prabang is the source of some fine handicrafts but above all it's a great place in which to simply relax and unwind.

