

The Jewel of Laos



Tessa Williams, one of Audley's Indochina specialists, defines the quiet pleasures to be found in Laos' ancient former capital.

Home of the first Lao Kingdom or Lan Xang, meaning Land of a Million Elephants, Luang Prabang was founded in the 14th century. Today, it still retains an air of antiquity and well deserves its UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

A feeling of peace and charming tranquillity pervades this small town

Wat Xieng Thong on the banks of the Mekong, is one of the most beautiful temples in South East Asia. With its intricate mosaic covered walls and beautiful gold painted figurines it is one

of many to see in Luang Prabang. However, it is not just beautiful temples which make Luang Prabang such a pleasant place to spend time. The whole atmosphere of this small town is unhurried and a feeling of peace and charming tranquillity pervades. Catch a glimpse of a monk in his bright saffron robes, walking slowly past with his alms bowls or creaking past on an old bicycle, and it will remind you just how untouched Laos is in contrast to some other parts of South East Asia.

The main street is a pleasant mix of small shops and cafes in colourful old buildings. It is easy to while away an afternoon watching the world go by from one of the pavement cafés. Watching the sunset over the mighty Mekong, be it from the town or from Phu Si temple,

is a further satisfying diversion.

Fortunately, the bygone feel of Luang Prabang does not extend to its hotels. There is a wide range of accommodation options from small boutique hotels to larger (by Lao standards!) hotels with impressive facilities. Yet each hotel, whether large or small, seems to complement the relaxed atmosphere of Luang Prabang and can only add to the charm of this beautiful Lao town.

Travel File

Luang Prabang is a 'must' on any tour of Laos and can be easily incorporated into Indochina itineraries. For further details please call our Indochina specialists on 01869 276 220

Considering a trip to the Galapagos Islands?

It's not surprising that the Galapagos Islands are on most peoples' wish list of places to visit. Nowhere else on the planet is there such a unique and diverse collection of animals, that literally have no fear of man. Within a few feet young sea lions play in the surf, blue-footed boobies perform their intricate mating dance and colonies of marine iguanas lie motionless against the volcanic rock. A trip to the Galapagos offers more than the flora and fauna; enjoying the sea air as you sail between islands and watching the tropical sun set, drink in hand, are also considerable pleasures.

Planning a trip to this fascinating archipelago can be quite daunting due to the sheer number of choices. What size boat should I choose? What's the difference in quality of the boats? When is the best time of year to visit? How long do I need to spend there? Can I combine a visit with other parts of South America? These and many others are questions we regularly hear and our Galapagos specialists are able to provide all the answers. To help with your planning we have produced a new guide to the Galapagos which aims to answer your many questions, provide honest and impartial advice and profiles the range of quality boats that we believe offer the best service in the Galapagos.



For a copy of our new guide to the Galapagos please call our specialists on 01869 276 210.