

!
x

Sorry! There are no remaining departures for "Laos & Thailand on a Shoestring" (AVRL), [but here are some similar trips](#).

!
x

This itinerary is valid for departures in 2017. To view the 2018 LAOS & THAILAND ON A SHOESTRING itinerary [click here](#).



Last Updated: February 12, 2021



Laos & Thailand on a Shoestring

12 days, Hanoi to Bangkok

Trip code AVRL

What's included

- Your G for Good Moment: Mekong River Homestay & Traditional Performance, Muang Pakbèng
- Your Discover Moment: Luang Prabang
- Your Discover Moment: Chiang Mai
- Slow boat up the Mekong
- Orientation walk of Luang Prabang
- Witness the giving of alms (Luang Prabang)

- Street food crawls
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

VALIDITY: Valid for all trips departing January 1st, 2017 and onwards

Itinerary



NOTE: Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

Day 1

Hanoi

Arrive at any time. Enjoy a street food crawl with the group and CEO.

Welcome to bustling Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Please arrive at our start point hotel before 6pm for an important group meeting.

Enjoy one of two street food crawls with the group and CEO while in Hanoi.



Today's Activities

ACTIVITY

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

Street Food Crawl

Luang Prabang

Bring your appetite and your wallet. The CEO will bring the group to the best spots to eat and teach everyone about the local street food. Yum!



Optional Activities - Day 1

Hoan Kiem Lake Walk

Hanoi

Take a break from city strolling and wander down by Hoan Kiem Lake. Walk along the water's vibrant shoreline for some prime people watching. See if you can spot one of the famous 100-year-old turtles, which may still live in the popular lake.

Temple of Literature (Văn Miếu) Visit

Hanoi

Visit this sprawling temple built to honour Confucius, sages, and scholars. Dedicated to learning, it housed the country's first university in 1076. Explore its five courtyards, containing various gates, altars, sanctuaries, shrines, the stelae of doctors, and the Well of Heavenly Clarity.

Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum Visit

Hanoi

Free-1USD

Tour the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum built in the square where Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence in 1945. Get in line to tour the grounds; queues of visitors come to pay their respects daily.

Tran Quoc Pagoda Visit

Hanoi

Visit one of the oldest pagodas in Vietnam located on the eastern shore of Tay Ho. Learn about Tran Quoc's history from the 17th-century stela found on site. View it later in the day, if you can – the tall structure is striking against the setting sun.

Day 2

Hanoi/Vientiane

A short flight brings the group to the capital city of Laos. Opt to visit temples, see the golden stupa of That Luang, or scour the markets.

Explore a bit of Hanoi in the morning before an afternoon flight to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. There is a wealth of cultural delights to discover - on foot, by bicycle or, for the less energetic, by tuk-tuk.

Visit Laos' most important national monument, Phat That Luang, or meander down the dusty riverside tracks to find villages full of friendly children, dogs and chickens. A visit to Vientiane's vibrant, colourful morning market (which incidentally is open all day!) is worthwhile, to find plenty of local treasures. A great way to round off the day is to enjoy a spectacular sunset over the Mekong.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Free Time

Hanoi

Explore Hanoi on foot, by bicycle or by tuk-tuk.

Plane

Noi Bai International Airport - Wattay International Airport

1h15m

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

Free Time

Vientiane

Set out and explore the capital of Laos.



Optional Activities - Day 2

Wat Pha That Luang Visit

Vientiane

1USD

See Laos' national symbol and most important sacred monument, Pha That Luang (Great Stupa), completely covered in gold leaf. Every November, devoted Buddhists come here to celebrate Vientiane's most important festival, Bun That Luang, with parades, music, and religious ceremonies.

National Museum Visit

Vientiane

4USD

Learn about the history, culture, and people of Laos at the National Museum, including the story of the Pathet Lao. See exhibits containing ancient items ranging from dinosaur bones to early Khmer sculptures.

Wat Sisaket Visit

Vientiane

1USD

Visit one of Vientiane's oldest and most fascinating temples featuring a cloister wall filled with thousands of Buddha images.

Buddha Park

Vientiane

1USD

Travel approximately half an hour from the city to visit Vientiane's famous Buddha Park, or Xieng Khuan as it is otherwise known. Marvel at the scale and detail of the hundreds of religious statues that inhabit the park, including a 40 metre high statue of Buddha. Please note that transportation to Buddha Park will cost an additional \$50.

Day 3

Vientiane/Vang Vieng

Enjoy the beautiful limestone karsts surrounding Vang Vieng. Free time to hike, bike, swim or go caving.

A picturesque drive north takes us to beautiful Vang Vieng. This quiet town is set along the Nam Song river amidst rice fields and limestone karsts.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Private Vehicle

Vientiane – Vang Vieng

3h-4h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Free Time

Vang Vieng

Set off and explore the beautiful Vang Vieng area, or relax to your heart's content.



Optional Activities - Day 3

Bike Rental

Vang Vieng

4USD

Rent a bike and explore the countryside.

Caving

Vang Vieng

Explore some of the many caves in the area. Some have lagoons for tubing in the dark or smooth terrain perfect for walking through. Ask your CEO for recommendations on which cave to visit for the best time.

Hiking

Vang Vieng

Set off along the banks of the river to explore nearby caves, countryside and meet local villagers to find out more about their way of life.

Swimming

Vang Vieng

Head to the river for a dip. There are also tube rentals available in the area if you'd rather spend some time floating around.

Day 4

Vang Vieng

Free time to explore Vang Vieng. Opt to explore some of the caves by bicycle or take an invigorating walk. In the evening, soak in the natural beauty of the countryside as the sun sets over the river.

Opt to pre-book the "Vang Vieng Adrenaline Bundle" on the checkout page ahead of time, to include this optional on your tour.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Free Time

Vang Vieng

Set off and explore the beautiful Vang Vieng area, or relax to your heart's content.



Optional Activities - Day 4

Bike Rental

Vang Vieng

4USD

Rent a bike and explore the countryside.

Hiking

Vang Vieng

Set off along the banks of the river to explore nearby caves, countryside and meet local villagers to find out more about their way of life.

Vang Vieng Adrenaline Bundle

Vang Vieng

Head North of Vang Vieng where you'll grab a kayak and depart downstream on the NamSong river. Passing greenery, mountain karst, and small rapids, you'll arrive at the Tham None cave. Adventure through the cave to the other side of the mountain where you will enjoy lunch before continuing on towards Vang Vieng. The last stop will be at the infamous Blue Lagoon; swim or hang out along the banks after an afternoon of adventure before heading back to the town.

Day 5

Vang Vieng/Luang Prabang

This morning travel from Vang Vieng to Luang Prabang. Get your bearings with a CEO-led orientation walk.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Private Vehicle

Vang Vieng - Luang Prabang

7h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Orientation With CEO

30m-1h

Enjoy a brief walk with your CEO. He/she will give you some tips on finding things like supermarkets, main squares, and ATMs. For more specific or in-depth information, an official guided tour is recommended.

Witness the giving of alms to the Buddhist monks and visit the night market. Opt to take a cooking class, visit temples or cool off at Kuang Si Waterfalls.

Traditional Laotian culture is to give daily alms to monks. Monks are only allowed to eat food which has been donated to them before noon. On one of your mornings here, you may decide to rise with the sun, and watch one of the most important religious ceremonies in Laos. This is simply an unforgettable Southeast Asian experience.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Kuang Si Waterfalls Excursion

Kuang Si Falls - Luang Prabang

Journey to this magnificent tiered waterfall, where relaxing is highly recommended. Opt for a dip in the turquoise waters and explore multiple picture-perfect pools, framed by the jungle landscape.



Optional Activities - Day 6

Phousi Temple Visit

Luang Prabang

20000LAK

Climb more than 300 steps to the top of Mount Phou Si for a panoramic view of the sunset over Luang Prabang. Ornate Buddhist shrines dot the pathway up and the glistening seven-tiered golden pagoda of Wat Chom Si awaits at the summit.

Royal Palace Museum Visit

Luang Prabang

60000LAK

The ornate rooms of this royal palace-turned-museum house the country's crown jewels, many religious artifacts, and a 50kg (110 lb) Buddha, cast of gold, silver and bronze. Gifts from visiting heads of state are on display, as are the beautiful silk screens crafted by the Queen.

Wat Visoun Temples Visit

Luang Prabang

20000LAK

Originally built in 1513 and still operational, Wat Visoun is Luang Prabang's oldest temple. Over the years invaders stole many of its priceless Buddha images, but this temple still offers some unusual

architecture like the domed lotus flower stupa, designed by a royal and affectionately called "The Watermelon Stupa."

Kuang Si Waterfalls Excursion

Kuang Si Falls - Luang Prabang

2.50USD

Journey to this magnificent tiered waterfall, where relaxing is highly recommended. Opt for a dip in the turquoise waters and explore multiple picture-perfect pools, framed by the jungle landscape.

Royal Ballet Theatre

Luang Prabang

15USD

Enjoy a traditional performance at the Royal Ballet Theatre and learn more about Laotian culture through the art of dance.

Cooking Class

Luang Prabang

35USD

Enjoy the sights and smells of fresh produce, local spices and exotic ingredients and learn the secrets of Laotian cuisine.

Wat Xieng Thong Visit

Luang Prabang

20000LAK

Once a royal temple where Kings were crowned, the importance of this 16th-century Buddhist temple as a religious monastery is not lost on visitors. Wat Xieng Thong stands resplendent among shrines, pavilions, chapels, towers and gardens, and its gilded wooden doors, mosaics, and ceiling displays are representative of typical Laos art and craft.

Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre Entry

Luang Prabang

35000LAK

Take an independent tour of the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC) to learn about the traditional arts and cultures of Laos's many diverse ethnic groups. Shop in the TAEC Boutique for authentic village-made handicrafts and relax with a drink at the museum café.

Ock Pop Tok Living Crafts Centre Visit

Luang Prabang

Free

Visit Ock Pop Tok "East Meets West" Living Crafts Centre on the banks of the Mekong River to learn from artisans about Laos handicrafts and the importance of woven textiles in Laos culture. Wander around the grounds for free, for opt to enjoy a drink in the cafe, join a workshop, or take an audio tour.

Day 7

Luang Prabang/Pak Beng

Cruise the Mekong on a long houseboat before arriving at a village homestay for the night.

We board our boat for the two-day journey up the mighty Mekong River making our way to Chiang Khong.



Meals included

Breakfast | Dinner



Today's Activities

Mekong River Slow Boat

Luang Prabang – Muang Pakbèng

8h-10h

Enjoy the ride down the Mekong River on our private boat (it's pretty comfortable and spacious, and there's a toilet on board). Have some fruit, tea, and coffee (free of charge); water and soft drinks are available for purchase.

ACTIVITY

G Adventures and the Planeterra Foundation have worked with a community in the Mekong River to help develop their homestay programs, providing a unique cultural experience for travellers and the local community.

Here you have the chance to stay overnight in a Mekong village to get a glimpse into rural daily life. Enjoy dinner with your hosts. Experience a traditional Khamu Cultural Performance, and enjoy the chance to dance with the locals.

Day 8

Pak Beng/Chiang Khong

Mekong River travel day. Cross into Thailand.

This morning we re-board our boat and continue our leisurely cruise along the river before arriving at the Laos/Thai border and crossing to Chiang Khong in the late afternoon.



Meals included

Breakfast | Lunch



Today's Activities

Mekong River Slow Boat

Muang Pakbèng - Ban Houayxay

8h-10h

Enjoy the ride down the Mekong on our private boat (it's pretty comfortable and spacious, and there's a toilet on board). Have some fruit, tea, and coffee (free of charge); water and soft drinks are available for purchase.

Border Crossing (Laos - Thailand)

Ban Houayxay - Chiang Khong

Ready for a little more ink in your passport? Grab your bags and get ready to check another country off your bucket list.

Day 9

Chiang Khong/Chiang Mai

Drive to Chiang Mai. Opt to visit Doi Suthep temple, catch a Thai boxing match or grab a bargain at the famous night market.

Departing Chiang Khong after breakfast, we drive to Chiang Mai where you have the afternoon free to explore this fascinating city, once the capital of the Kingdom of Lan.

Experience the flavours and scents of traditional northern Thai cuisine by pre-booking the Northern Thai Cooking Class.

Today's Activities

Private Vehicle

Chiang Khong - Chiang Mai

6h-7h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

Free Time

Chiang Mai

Get out and explore this bustling city in northern Thailand.

Optional Activities - Day 9

Massage

Lay back and soothe aching muscles with a famous local massage. Affordable and amazing, don't miss out.

Doi Suthep Temple Visit

Doi Suthep - Chiang Mai

50THB

Visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a golden Buddhist temple outside of Chiang Mai on the Mt Doi Suthep. Climb 300 steps to reach the temple and be rewarded with an unforgettable view. Admire the many Buddhist relics at this sacred temple and visit the white elephant shrine. Legend has it that the location of the temple was chosen after a white elephant carried a relic to the mountain and trumpeted three times before dying on the spot. Also, with a little luck, you may witness the chanting of the monks.

Northern Thai Cooking Class

Chiang Mai

Channel your inner chef with a home-style Thai cooking class. Take a trip to the market with your teacher and learn about regional flavours as you pick out fresh ingredients. Head back to the cozy kitchen for a hands-on lesson in whipping up delicious local favourites like hot and sour soup, green curry, and sticky rice.

Street Food Walk at Chiang Mai Night Market

Chiang Mai

Pick up a a souvenir at this shopper's paradise. Wander through the market to find music, food, and local artists selling handmade crafts.

Day 10

Chiang Mai/Bangkok

Free time in Chiang Mai. Overnight train to Bangkok.

Today, why not visit the magnificent temple of Doi Suthep standing watch over the city from the hills above, taking a bicycle ride in the countryside or embracing the bizarre by getting a massage from the training school at the local woman's prison! Explore the rural lanes of Chiang Mai in a tuk-tuk by pre-booking the Full Day Tuk-Tuk Adventure. Tonight we catch an overnight train to Bangkok.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Basic Overnight Train (beds)

Chiang Mai - Bangkok

12h-13h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

Note: Due to disruptions of Thai trains in the north during the monsoon season, trips running July through October may use alternative transport.



Optional Activities - Day 10

Doi Suthep Temple Visit

Doi Suthep - Chiang Mai

50THB

Visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a golden Buddhist temple outside of Chiang Mai on the Mt Doi Suthep. Climb 300 steps to reach the temple and be rewarded with an unforgettable view. Admire the many Buddhist relics at this sacred temple and visit the white elephant shrine. Legend has it that the location of the temple was chosen after a white elephant carried a relic to the mountain and trumpeted three times before dying on the spot. Also, with a little luck, you may witness the chanting of the monks.

Massage

Lay back and soothe aching muscles with a famous local massage. Affordable and amazing, don't miss out.

Chiang Mai Cycling Tour

Chiang Mai

1500THB

10-13km

This Chiang Mai half-day ride takes you on a memorable tour of the countryside's most interesting sights. You'll go beyond the city to see local Buddhist temples, markets, organic farms, rice paddy fields and more. Get a sense of how the locals live, stop when you want for photos, and check out the nature along the city's main river, the Ping.

Full Day Tuk-Tuk Adventure

Chiang Mai

Learn how to drive a classic Thai mode of transport - the tuk-tuk - then set off for a full-day Northern Thailand adventure like no other. With your very own guide, explore the rural lanes of Chiang Mai, drive past rice fields and temples as you weave through the countryside, and experience Thai hospitality at its finest over lunch and chatting with the locals. Drinking water throughout the day, as well as pick-up and drop-off at your hotel in Chiang Mai, is included. Please note that if you wish to drive the tuk-tuk, you must have a valid license (not required for backseat passengers).

Opt to visit Wat Pho and the Grand Palace, buy any last minute souvenirs or relax with a Thai massage.

We'll arrive early in the morning to Bangkok, Thailand's capital city. The day is free to explore the many sights of Bangkok. The Grand Palace, Wat Pho, National Museum, and Jim Thompson's House are just a few suggestions. A trip along the Chao Praya river and through the canals (or klongs) gives you a different perspective of daily life in this busy city.

In the evening, we'll say good bye and enjoy a Thai meal and perhaps a beer together to celebrate the end of an amazing journey.



Today's Activities

Free Time

Bangkok

Bangkok has so much to offer its visitors. Get out and explore!



Optional Activities - Day 11

Klong Riverboat Tour

Bangkok

Travel by longtail boat on the busy Chao Phraya River and through the small canals of western Bangkok's Thonburi district. Observe colourful scenes of everyday life along the river banks.

Wat Po Visit

Bangkok

This temple is known for its reclining Buddha, its feet covered with mother-of-pearl engravings of Buddhist symbols. Explore the large grounds and other compounds to see other Buddha figures, murals and the chedis that contain the ashes of Buddha. This is also the birthplace of traditional Thai massage.

Jim Thompson's House Visit

Bangkok

250THB

Tour the Jim Thompson House, a Bangkok museum that was once the home of American businessman Jim Thompson, the "Legendary American of Thailand." See his collection of Buddhist and secular art, amassed while building his silk company.

Grand Palace Visit

Bangkok

500THB

Visit the King's official residence (made up of many buildings, halls, lawns, gardens, and courtyards) on the banks of the Chao Phraya River and see the Temple of the Emerald Buddha. Please note the cost of this optional activity does not include the entrance fee.

National Museum Visit

Bangkok

200THB

See Thai artifacts on display from the Dvaravati, Srivijaya, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods as well as other Southeast Asian collections. Please note the cost of this optional activity does not include the entrance fee.

Day 12

Bangkok

Depart at any time.



Meals included

Breakfast



Today's Activities

Departure Day

Not ready to leave? Your CEO can help with travel arrangements to extend your adventure.

What's included

- Your G for Good Moment: Mekong River Homestay & Traditional Performance, Muang Pakbèng
- Your Discover Moment: Chiang Mai
- Your Welcome Moment: Meet Your CEO and Group
- Slow boat up the Mekong
- Your Discover Moment: Luang Prabang
- Orientation walk of Luang Prabang
- Witness the giving of alms (Luang Prabang)

- Street food crawls
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Explore vibrant Hanoi, revel in the shadows of limestone karsts, discover the serenity of Luang Prabang, float on the mighty Mekong, experience the beauty of scenic northern Thailand.

What are the main highlights of this trip?

Explore vibrant Hanoi, revel in the shadows of limestone karsts, discover the serenity of Luang Prabang, float on the mighty Mekong, experience the beauty of scenic northern Thailand.

Is there a disclaimer I should read before booking this trip?

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

Is there a travel disclaimer for my itinerary I should review before booking this trip?

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

What important notes should I be aware of before the trip?

LUGGAGE

There are some very long travel days on public buses.

As we frequently get on and off sometimes crowded local transport please note backpacks are much more suitable than suitcases for this style of trip. Also note that in some major cities in Vietnam, many hotel rooms do not have windows.

COMBO TRIP

Please note that this tour combines with other G Adventures tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with G Adventures, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another G Adventures tour, after your trip concludes.

What is the group leader like?

All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to see and do, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting - we think it's the best of both worlds.

How large will the group be?

Max 18, avg 12.

What meals are included in this trip?

9 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner

What are the meals like on this trip?

Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. While trekking in remote regions food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

What are the modes of transportation on my trip?

Train, local bus, air-con bus, slow boat, plane, walking.

What transportation will we take on this trip?

As the popularity of train travel in Thailand continues to grow domestically, some of the routes used on this tour do not have sufficient space during local public holidays, including New Year's, Songkran, etc. During these times of the year, alternative transport may be arranged for one or more of the train journeys within Thailand on this tour.

Are local flights included in the cost of the trip?

Hanoi to Vientiane Day 2.

Is there an extra cost for travelling solo?

We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

Where will we stay during the trip?

Simple hotels (twin-share) or hostels (multi-share) (9 nts), sleeper train (1 nt), local homestay (1 nt).

What kind of accommodation can I expect on this trip?

A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used on this trip. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home as service and efficiency can vary. In some areas we stay in simple local guest houses in stunning locations - rooms are small and simple and there may only be shared toilet facilities and showers.

Mekong River Homestay: Typically, the group is divided into two or more houses (depending on group size) in close proximity to each other. Sleeping arrangements are multi-share in the central living area of the homes - mattresses, blankets, pillows, and mosquito nets are provided. Bathroom facilities are shared.

Multi-share Accommodation: Multi-share same-sex accommodation is used on this tour, as such, if you are travelling with someone of a different gender you will not be in the same room. For private accommodation please see tours in our Classic Travel Style.

What is the joining hotel?

For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

What are the joining instructions?

When arriving at Noi Bai Intl Airport in Hanoi you have a choice of pre paid taxi or Vietnam Airlines shuttle bus to get you into the city. The airport is 35 km outside of the city and the drive should take between 40-50 minutes depending on traffic. The airport taxis are a safe and convenient way to arrive at your hotel. The cost is 16 USD and is paid directly to your driver upon arrival at the hotel. The other option is to take the Vietnam Airlines shuttle bus which drops everyone at the Vietnam Airlines office downtown, The cost of the tickets is 45000 Dong (approx 3 USD). From the Vietnam Airline office there are taxis that can take you to your hotel with the meter on about 2-4 USD.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, a G Adventures representative will be at the airport to meet you. There is a common scam at the airport for non-G Adventures' drivers to pretend they are working for the company. It is very important to confirm your name and booking number with your airport transfer representative. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call our local support line. If you are unable to make contact for whatever reason, please make your way to the joining point hotel via taxi.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day other than your welcome meeting in the evening, so you can arrive at any time.

A G Adventures Representative will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. A welcome note will be left for you in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the meeting time. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

What happens if I experience problems when arriving?

We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your CEO, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

Who should I contact in case of an emergency?

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) or our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

AIRPORT TRANSFER

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand

During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)

From outside Thailand: +66 2 508 8630

From within Thailand: 02 508 8630

After hours emergency number

From outside Thailand: +66 87 049 6074

From within Thailand: 087 049 6074

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100

Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000

Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000

Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618

Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307

Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

Are there any additional packing suggestions I should consider?

What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

What should be on my packing list?

Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Headphones (Noise-cancelling recommended)
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Health & Safety:

- Face masks (Clients will be only be required to wear a face mask where it is mandated by local regulations.)
- Hand sanitizer
- Pen (Please bring your own pen for filling out documents.)

Sleep Sheet and Pillow:

- Sleeping bag liner/sleep sheet
- Travel pillow

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear Note: Please pack clothing for the season in which you will be travelling. From Nov-Feb weather can be cold, so please pack warm clothing. From May-Oct it is the wet season, so please bring waterproof clothing.

When can I do my laundry on this trip?

Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

What are the visas and entry requirements for my trip?

All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

THAILAND - Most nationalities do not need a visa for Thailand for stays of 30 days or less but if you do they are available on arrival at Bangkok Airport. If staying in Thailand for more than 30 days, you will be required to obtain a tourist visa in advance. Only 15 day tourist visas are issued when entering Thailand overland.

VIETNAM - If you require a visa for Vietnam, they need to be arranged ahead of time (BEFORE your trip) as the processing time varies and they are not available upon arrival.

If you are entering Vietnam by land border, please apply for a regular visa for Vietnam. Many of the land borders we travel through do not accept the Vietnam E-Visa.

LAOS

Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx \$50. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. Please bring lots of visa photos with you.

What should I consider when planning my personal expenses and discretionary spending for this itinerary?

Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

What should I know about currency, credit cards, and exchanging money while on this tour?

During this tour the local currencies you will use are the Vietnamese Dong, Laos Kip and Thai Baht. As currency exchange rates in South East Asia do fluctuate, we ask that you refer to the following website for the most up to date daily exchange rates: www.xe.com for each of the above mentioned currencies. The best way to carry your money is in debit cards, withdrawing cash in local currencies from ATM machines. ATMs are found throughout South East Asia and will generally accept cards on the Visa and Mastercard networks. It is a great idea to travel with both a Visa and Mastercard if at all possible in case of loss or problems with one card, you will have a back up. Please note, your bank will charge a fee for overseas withdrawals. USD Cash is recommended for times when ATMs are not accessible. You should bring some cash with you for emergency situations (please refer to our trip dossier) but carrying only cash is a high safety risk. ATM card/s and some cash is the ideal mix. Travellers cheques can be tricky, timely and expensive to exchange. While we do not recommend that you bring them as your primary source of funds, it is great to have one or two cheques in case of emergency. Thomas Cook or American Express travellers' cheques in US currency are the easiest to exchange. Cash advances can also be made with some banks but are time consuming and tend to have high fees attached. Credit cards can be used at some upmarket restaurants, and at some larger stores if shopping for big items. If you are bringing US Dollars, please make sure that the notes are new and in good condition. Notes older than 2003, or with any tears or blemishes may not be accepted. Be fussy with your bank when buying cash!

How much emergency money should I bring on this trip?

Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$250 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

Do I need to pay a departure tax?

Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets in Thailand & Vietnam.

Should I be tipping on my trip?

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$1.5-\$3.5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

What activities are optional on this trip?

Hanoi

- Hoan Kiem Lake Walk
- Temple of Literature (Văn Miếu) Visit
- Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum Visit (Free-1USD per person)
- Tran Quoc Pagoda Visit

Vientiane

- Wat Pha That Luang Visit (1USD per person)
- National Museum Visit (4USD per person)
- Wat Sisaket Visit (1USD per person)
- Buddha Park (1USD per person)

Vang Vieng

- Bike Rental (4USD per person)
- Hiking
- Vang Vieng Adrenaline Bundle
- Caving
- Swimming

Luang Prabang

- Phousi Temple Visit (20000LAK per person)
- Royal Ballet Theatre (15USD per person)
- Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre Entry (35000LAK per person)
- Royal Palace Museum Visit (60000LAK per person)
- Cooking Class (35USD per person)
- Ock Pop Tok Living Crafts Centre Visit (Free)
- Wat Visoun Temples Visit (20000LAK per person)
- Wat Xieng Thong Visit (20000LAK per person)

Kuang Si Falls

- Kuang Si Waterfalls Excursion (2.50USD per person)

Chiang Khong

- Massage

Doi Suthep

- Doi Suthep Temple Visit (50THB per person)

Chiang Mai

- Northern Thai Cooking Class
- Street Food Walk at Chiang Mai Night Market
- Chiang Mai Cycling Tour (1500THB per person)
- Full Day Tuk-Tuk Adventure

Bangkok

- Klong Riverboat Tour
- Wat Po Visit
- Jim Thompson's House Visit (250THB per person)
- Grand Palace Visit (500THB per person)
- National Museum Visit (200THB per person)

Are there any health considerations I should know before travelling?

Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our CEO's are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

What do I need to know to about safety and security on my trip?

Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/

What are the trip specific safety considerations?

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

We do not recommend passengers to jump or dive into Kuang Sii Waterfalls in Luang Prabang, this may result in injury.

What rules should I know before joining this trip?

Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

Are there any things I should be aware of?

As Vietnam embraces capitalism with open arms it is also falling victim to some of the problems of the West. Some parts of city centres are now a favourite hangout for pickpockets. If doing some exploring on your own carry only the necessary minimum with you and use a well-hidden money belt. Valuables, including your passport, should be left in the hotel safe - organize this at reception. There is no need to get paranoid, just be cautious. Please do not buy gems in Bangkok unless you know what you are doing. Even if genuine you should not expect to be able to sell them at home. If you fall victim to a gem scam, we are unable to assist you.

Is travel insurance required for my trip?

Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

What is Planeterra?

Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

How should I dress to respect local customs during the tour?

In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples, mosques or other holy sites.

How can I share feedback about my trip experience?

Earn 5% off your next G Adventures Tour (up to \$100 USD)*

After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us and to thank you for your time, we are pleased to offer a 5% discount (up to a maximum of \$100 USD) off your next G Adventures holiday. All you need to do is submit the form within 4 weeks of the completion of your tour, and you'll be able to join the thousands of travellers who have taken 2, 3, 4 or even 10 or more tours with us!

Discount cannot be combined with other offers or applied to 'Independent' style trips. Maximum discount value is \$100 USD (or equivalent currency). Valid for new bookings only. G Adventures reserves the right to withdraw or modify this offer at any time without notice. Limited to one discount per person.

Does G Adventures have an email newsletter I can subscribe to?

Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at www.gadventures.com/newsletters/

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation – Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

How old must I be to join this trip?

Minimum age of 18 years for this trip.

Are international flights included in this trip?

No, international flights are generally not included in the price of your tour.

However, on some combo tours travelling between two different countries, international flights are included as part of the itinerary and price of the tour. Please speak to your GCO or booking agent for further details.

In addition, check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.

What should LGBTQ+ travellers know about safety and travel considerations on this trip?

The safety and well-being of all of our travelers is a priority at G Adventures and that includes our travelers who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community. We recognize that there are specific concerns and questions you may have about your adventure in terms of safety and security. We encourage you to visit our [LGBTQ+ page](#) for useful resources to ensure you feel safe and comfortable throughout the duration of your trip. The Equaldex tool linked on this page can be of particular help when deciding where you may want to visit next.

Dossier Disclaimer

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

Itinerary Disclaimer

While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.