

A traditional Japanese boat, possibly a ferry or a small cruise ship, is shown on a body of water. The boat has a white hull with a red stripe and a dark roof. It is moving from left to right, leaving a wake. The background features a range of mountains under a warm, orange-hued sky, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall scene is serene and picturesque.

AMANTAKA

Experience Guide

Experiences at Amantaka

Experiences are personal journeys. Our goal at Amantaka is to introduce you to Luang Prabang's deeply-rooted cultural heritage, natural wonders and contemporary attractions, and help you establish a personal connection with its warm and friendly people.

As part of the Unesco, Luang Prabang has 32 temples and 111 historic Lao-French buildings throughout the town, citing Luang Prabang as the best-preserved traditional town in Southeast Asia. The new construction is limited, and development must be in keeping with the spirit of the town. Luang Prabang is small in scale and easily explored either on foot or by bicycle that point out notable architectural landmarks and other distinctive attractions in town.

At Amantaka, tailor-made itinerary can be made to embrace your passions and interests. From a traditional Lao cooking class on our organic farm to a sunset cruise on the majestic Mekong, from a tour of the most sacred temples to a walk-through surrounding villages, our team at Amantaka are here to help you create your own journey into the heart of this fascinating town.



Luang Prabang – A UNESCO Town



Luang Prabang: A City of Timeless Spirit

Once the royal capital of the Lan Xang Kingdom and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Luang Prabang is a city steeped in history, spirituality, and quiet charm. Nestled between the Mekong and Nam Khan Rivers, it embodies a graceful blend of traditional Lao architecture and French colonial influence. With its sacred temples, saffron-robed monks, and enduring cultural traditions, Luang Prabang offers a profound glimpse into the spiritual soul of Laos.

Luang Prabang City Tour

Half-day excursion

We begin the tour at Amantaka, and our first stop is Wat Visoun and Wat Aham. Within their precincts stands the gigantic That Makmo (Watermelon Stupa), originally known as That Patum or Lotus Stupa, built in 1503 A.D. We make our way towards Mount Phousi, bearing right to follow the Nam Khan River flanked by small vegetable gardens along its banks. After reaching the end of the peninsula, we visit Wat Xieng Thong, Luang Prabang's most famous wat, known as the "Temple of the Golden City" and considered the town's main spiritual gateway.

As we walk through the winding streets, we'll observe small storefronts preparing rice cakes and handmade paper products before reaching the main artery of the town to visit the golden Buddha at Wat Sene. We continue to Wat Nong and follow the Mekong to the Royal Palace, now home to the National Museum. Its most treasured exhibit is the Phra Bang (Golden Buddha), for which Luang Prabang—"City of the Golden Buddha"—was named. We end our tour at Wat Mai, one of the grandest and most impressive temples in Luang Prabang, with its golden frontage and distinctive five-tiered red roof, before returning to Amantaka.



Amantaka and the Buddhist Community

Lao Buddhism is a distinct form of the Theravada tradition, where monkhood holds a central place. Luang Prabang, long its spiritual heart, is now experiencing a quiet renewal. More than one thousand young novices and monks are currently studying at the monastic school.

While many visitors see only the beauty of historic temples, the deeper rhythms of Buddhist life often remain unseen. Amantaka has formed a close and respectful relationship with the local Buddhist community, and we are honoured to share this connection with our guests.

We invite you to take part in three thoughtful experiences that offer insight into contemporary Buddhist life. Each experience directly supports the projects and people involved.

Buddhist Pilgrimage to the Budding Buddhist Academy

Experience a rare glimpse into contemporary Buddhist life in Laos. Begin your journey at Wat Khilli, carrying a hand-carved wooden Buddha in procession to a boat that travels upriver to the Budding Buddhist Academy — a school built by monks in rice fields north of Luang Prabang, offering free education to young novices from farming families.

Welcomed by ceremonial chanting and bells, you'll offer your statue and donation — a gesture believed to generate karmic merit, for yourself or a loved one. This half-day pilgrimage is best experienced in the afternoon, departing from Amantaka at 12:30pm.

Ceremonial scarves and offerings are provided. Dress modestly in light colors and bring your donation in an envelope. A guide from the Buddhist Heritage Project will accompany you to share the ritual's deeper meaning and context.



Buddhist Learning Session

At Amantaka's Buddhist Learning Centre

Located within the grounds of Amantaka, the Buddhist Learning Centre offers guests a deeper understanding of Buddhism through private sessions led by the abbot, head of the local monastic community.

Daily 90-minute lessons provide thoughtful insight into Buddhist principles and practice. Guests may also join the Senior Monk for a personalised visit to Wat Siphouthabath, offering a rare glimpse into monastic life and spiritual tradition.

Throughout the resort, Buddhist rituals are gently woven into daily life. Each evening, an abbot chants as he moves quietly through the property — a reflection of Luang Prabang's living spirituality. At dawn, guests may also witness or participate in the sacred ritual of almsgiving, as 70 monks pass by Amantaka's entrance on their morning walk.

Festive moments throughout the year bring additional colour to temple life, including candlelit ceremonies, floral garlands, and the iconic paper boat parade that flows through the town toward the Mekong River.

Temple visits: pricing upon request



Buddhist Rituals



Sacred Rhythms of Lao Buddhist Life

Buddhism is deeply woven into the fabric of daily life in Laos, influencing personal values, community customs, and sacred ceremonies. Rooted in Theravada tradition, Lao Buddhist practices express quiet devotion and foster a close bond between laypeople and the monastic community. Daily rituals such as the alms offering ‘Sai Bat’ at dawn, floral offerings to temples, and the heartfelt Baci ceremony all play vital roles in marking life’s milestones, inviting merit-making, and nurturing spiritual connection. These practices offer both locals and visitors a profound glimpse into the living traditions that shape Lao culture and spirituality.

Alms offering ‘Sai Bat’

At Amantaka Front Gate

For centuries, monks and novices have walked through Luang Prabang at dawn, receiving offerings of sticky rice and other simple foods from the local people. This quiet ritual, known as *Sai Bat*, allows laypeople to gain merit and helps sustain the monastic community.

This walking meditation takes place throughout the town at first light. While a large procession can be seen along the main street, we invite you to join us for a more intimate experience in front of the resort — a serene and respectful way to engage with one of Luang Prabang’s most meaningful traditions.



Floral Offering At Wat Thai Noi

Engage in a hands-on experience of traditional Lao religious floral decoration using banana leaves and vibrant local flowers gathered from the surrounding jungles. Under gentle guidance, you will create a Vanh Cornet, a symbolic floral offering prepared for the monks at Wat That Noi, our nearby village temple.

Baci Ceremony

The Baci, or Sou Khouan, is a sacred Lao ceremony with Brahmin roots, practised in Luang Prabang for centuries. Based on the belief that each person is made up of 32 spirits or khouan, the ceremony calls these spirits to return and harmonise — especially during life transitions such as travel, illness, or celebration.

Led by a Mo Phon (spiritual master of ceremonies), the ritual includes rhythmic chanting, blessings, and the symbolic tying of white cotton threads around your wrists to bind the spirits and bring balance and well-being.

A ceremonial tray of floral offerings, candles, and Baci strings will be thoughtfully prepared for you.

Monk Blessing At Wat That Luang

Escorted by Amantaka staff, we arrive at Wat That Luang (the Monastery of the Royal Stupa). We respectfully remove our shoes before entering the sim, and once inside, we sit quietly with offerings of flowers, incense, and candles before the ancient Buddha statues. The monk will bless you with fragrant water as you kneel before him.

At the end of the blessing, he will tie string bracelets on your wrists. Unlike Baci strings, these bracelets are to be kept on indefinitely.

Food Offering to a Monastic Community

Monasteries in Luang Prabang are home to many young novices who come to study and live under the guidance of monks. Supported by the generosity of the local community, these novices rely on daily offerings for their meals.

As a meaningful way to engage with this tradition, guests are invited to prepare and present food to a selected temple community. This offering takes place mid-morning, in time for the monks' lunch. Amantaka will guide you through the preparation and accompany you to a thoughtfully chosen monastery, away from the usual tourist routes, ensuring the experience is conducted with respect and authenticity.



Lao Culinary Experience



Discover the Rich Flavours of Lao Cuisine

Laos offers a vibrant culinary landscape deeply rooted in its natural environment and cultural heritage. Known for its bold, fresh flavours and balanced use of herbs, spices, and local ingredients, Lao food is a celebration of simplicity and harmony.

From the staple sticky rice to fiery salads and aromatic curries, each dish tells a story of tradition and the land it comes from. This rich tapestry of tastes invites both locals and visitors to experience the soul of Lao culture through its food.

Organic Farm Tour & Lao Cooking Class

Just a short drive from Amantaka, you will arrive at a tranquil organic farm set against a backdrop of rice fields, lush forest, and distant mountains. The farm is fully organic and plays an active role in supporting the education of local children and improving village infrastructure.

Upon arrival, you'll be welcomed by our chef, who will introduce you to the vegetables and herbs grown on-site, highlighting their culinary and medicinal uses. Guests are invited to hand-pick fresh ingredients, deepening their connection to the land. The experience begins with an introduction to the foundations of Lao cuisine, followed by the traditional steaming of sticky rice — a staple of every Lao meal. As the rice steams, your chef will guide you through the preparation of several classic dishes, such as spicy green papaya salad (Tam Mak Hoong) and fragrant pork curry (Moo Phak Sikai).

Once your dishes are complete, enjoy your meal in a peaceful dining sala overlooking the rice paddies — a moment to savour both the flavours and the setting.



Morning Market Walk with Chef

Lao cuisine is a blend of Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese with local influences strongly emphasised on fresh herbs and salads. A wonderful way to delve into the Lao culinary experience is to visit a morning market where ingredients are explained.

The morning market is just a short walk from Amantaka and adjacent to the former Royal Palace Museum. One of our chefs will escort you for an early morning tour to see the variety of vegetables, spices, freshwater fish and meat on display.

This colourful and exotic cornucopia is a cook's and a photographer's delight. Walk through each stalls of Khai Phaen (freshwater nori), Jeow Bong (chilli paste), garlic, ginger and bright red chillies to handpick and engage with local villages.



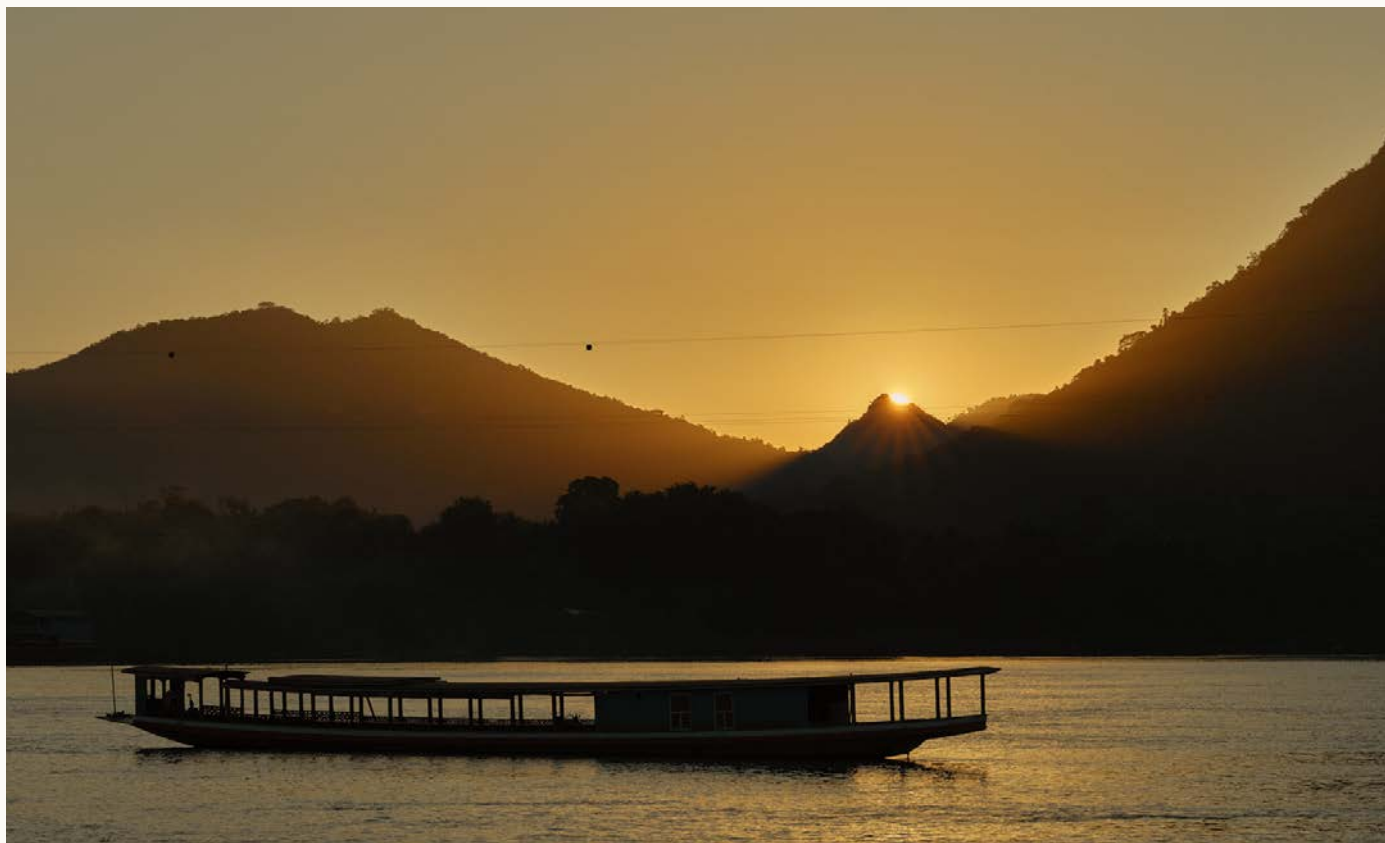
Romantic Dinner

In the embrace of a candlelit setting, a romantic dinner unfolds with breathtaking views of mountains and serene rice fields.

Amidst this picturesque backdrop, you and your loved one savour the exquisite flavours of authentic Laos cuisine, crafted from locally sourced ingredients, including the richness of produce cultivated from nearby plantations and the bounties of the Mekong River.

A night of enchantment, where love and nature intertwine, creating cherished memories under the stars.





The Mekong – Cruise, Caves and Sunsets

The mighty Mekong River starts its journey in the Tibetan Plateau and passes through Laos on its way to the South China Sea. One of the most scenic places to enjoy the river is around Luang Prabang, and there is no better way to absorb the atmosphere than on one of Amantaka's private boats. We suggest several cruising itineraries for you to choose

Cruise to Pak Ou Caves

Morning or afternoon

Cruise leisurely along the Mekong River on your private Amantaka boat to the caves at Pak Ou where pilgrims have been visiting and offering Buddha statues for hundreds of years. The caves are believed to have been discovered in the 16th century and were possibly a centre for spirit worship prior. Cruise along the Mekong observe village life as children play on the river bank, women do laundry and men fish for some of the large catch that live deep on the river floor. Reaching the caves, you will then ascend a flight of stairs to see the lower and upper-level limestone caves filled with thousands of Buddha statues.

Sunset Mekong Cruise

Absorb the magic of dusk in Luang Prabang on a private cruise as the sun sets behind forested mountains. Enjoy some snacks and drinks served by your personal bartender as you float down the river. Witness the end-of-day local rituals as villagers return home on small boats and fishermen check their catches. After the cruise, guests can walk leisurely through the streets part the part the bustling night market en route to Amantaka.

Waterfalls & Wildlife

Trip to Kuang Si Waterfall (Tad Kuang Si)

A winding road takes you through small villages and rice paddies into the lush area of Kuang Si. As you wander through the cool rainforest, you will come upon a majestic tiered waterfall tumbling 100 metres over white limestone formation into multi-level turquoise pools. It is possible to cool off in some of the pools below, or just wade in the water. Walk down the path that follows the stream, passing small pools and ancient trees.

Breakfast at Kuang Si Waterfall

Savour your breakfast in the midst of this serene oasis, where the cascading waters and lush greenery provide a captivating backdrop. Our carefully crafted menu offers a delightful array of options, from freshly baked pastries and artisanal bread to a vibrant selection of fruits, yogurt, and granola, all designed to satisfy your palate.

Lao Bear Sanctuary

Amantaka has arranged a unique experience for our guests. On arrival at the rescue centre you will receive a “behind the scenes” tour, including time with some of the centre’s newest arrival (these bears, and cubs are usually raised away from general visitors with a little human contact as possible). After rewarding the bears with a banana or two you will then join the keepers as they hide the bear’s lunch time food around their enclosure. Finally, from a safe vantage point, watch the bears return from their dens to forage for the treats you have hidden.

Free the Bears Fund relies on generosity in order to continue their work and would like to kindly thank guests for their donation which is included in your visit and added to your personal account.





Amantaka Elephant Experience

With their mission to demonstrate respect for the elephants through interactive learning experience, Manda Lao Elephant Sanctuary is inviting you to participate in this new training process largely pioneered by Khun Prasop Tipprasert in hope that these techniques will be adopted throughout the region and in other elephant-inhabited countries. You will have an intimate and exclusive while hiking up a cool mountain stream in the jungles of Laos.

This is a unique chance to participate in something entirely new with a potential to change the future of elephant welfare in Laos and abroad. The journey concurs with Lao lunch, freshly prepared from the sanctuary's own organic vegetables farm.



Equestrian adventures

Embark on a journey through the stunning natural landscapes of Luang Prabang on horseback, discovering the region's enchanting beauty. Our guided tours cater to all skill levels, offering a unique opportunity to immerse yourself in the area's rich culture and breathtaking scenery. Learn the art of horseback riding at our equestrian school, where we focus on ethological riding to foster a deep connection and harmony between rider and horse. Explore a variety of exotic trails, winding through lush forests and alongside serene rivers, and experience the authentic Laotian countryside from an unparalleled perspective.

The experience lasts for 1.5 hours, offering a peaceful ride through the forest and occasionally along the river. This is a private experience, ensuring a personalised journey.

Please note that rides are available only before 11:00am and after 3:30pm to avoid the midday heat.

For safety, there are weight and height restrictions: the maximum weight is 65 kg and the maximum height is 1.70 m.





Cultural Experiences

Lao Textile Experience

Unlock the secret of Lao Textile in one afternoon at Ock Pop Tok's Lining Crafts Centre. Bringing alive the concept of "east meets west", the Centre is an ideal venue to learn about the origin of silk, interact with master weavers and a Hmong batik-artist, and increase your appreciation of Lao's diverse textiles and cultural heritage.

A short drive will take you to Ban Saylom, where you will be welcomed by Ock Pop Tok's Cultural Guide in a beautifully-restored wooden house over refreshing tea. You will be guided to a description of the silk-making process and an explanation of the three distinct types of Lao weaving.

Soon it's time to get creative, and you are led to the dyeing shed where you are coached through dyeing your own colourful silk scarf, using all-natural materials. Then it's over to the weaving studio where you can see the master weavers working using techniques and weaving patterns unique to Laos. A master weaver will accompany you to the riverside sala where you will try your hand at using a loom, while learning the master's techniques.

You will then be escorted to a nearby sala, where you will meet Mrs. Suxiong, the only Hmong batik teacher in Luang Prabang. After an introduction to batik print, Mrs. Suxiong will prepare a clean piece of hemp and will guide you as you design your own batik masterpiece.

Mulberry "Saa" Paper & Lantern Making Workshops

Create your own unique souvenir by decorating mulberry paper with your chosen patterns, and craft a lantern using your preferred colours. The experience begins with a brief tour of the mulberry production house, souvenir shop, and art gallery.

Next, join the mulberry paper-making workshop, where you'll decorate your paper with fresh flowers, leaves, and fibres. After a short break, select your favourite coloured paper and design to craft your lantern.

Morning private session 9.30am-12pm
Afternoon private session 1.30pm-4pm



Village Tour to Ban Pa Noh and Ban Long Lao

Begin your journey south from town towards Kuang Si Waterfalls, then turn southeast onto winding, unpaved roads offering breathtaking views of the mountainous countryside. Along the way, pass a small hydropower dam, vegetable farms, and expansive pineapple and banana plantations before reaching Ban Pa Noh.

Ban Pa Noh is a traditional Khmu village, where culture is passed down through storytelling around evening fires. The village is typically enclosed by fences with gates separating the people from their granaries and barns.

Altars are placed outside to ward off fires and storms. Traditionally, homes consist of two rooms—one for unmarried girls and one for the rest of the family. The Khmu follow animistic beliefs, with strict taboos to protect against spiritual retribution, including prohibitions on touching altars or entering homes without permission.

Next, continue up the mountain to visit Ban Tin Pha, a small Hmong village. The Hmong are one of Laos' best-known minority groups, some of whom fought against the Pathet Lao during the Laotian Civil War. After exploring the Hmong village, continue your journey to the final stop at Ban Long Lao.





Family Adventure

Organic Farm Tour & Cooking Class

On arrival of the Amantaka's organic farm, you will be taken on a short tour of the farm and its open-air kitchen overlooking eight hectares of sticky rice fields as your chef provides an overview of the basic tenets of the Lao cuisine. Then, prepare all the ingredients that will make up your feast. Once all the hard work is done it is time to enjoy the fruits of your labour overlooking the rice fields, fishpond and the mountains in the distance.

Rice Planting Experience

In the midst of ancient rice terraces, embrace Luang Prabang way of life on rice planting experience. Learn the life of a rice farmer and have hands-on experiences with family including planting seedlings, cutting and bundling rice, ploughing a rice paddy with a buffalo, and threshing rice.



Buffalo Farm Experience

In Laos, Buffalo is known as a friend of farmer family not only for draught power and fertiliser but also for taking full advantage of feeds resources, free time and subsidiary labours etc. At the farm, you will be shown around the dairy, learn how to milk a buffalo and try some delicious ice cream.

Family Cycling Tour

Discover historical temples and experience the local way of life on two wheels with your family. Ride through the enchanting lanes of Luang Prabang.

A private tour guide is available to offer riding tips and share insights about notable architectural landmarks and other distinctive attractions around town.

The tour guide is available at extra cost



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