



Pandaw River Expeditions

EXPEDITION No 6

THE LAOS MEKONG

10 NIGHTS

Enjoy a three country expedition as we will traverse Laos to touch Thailand and Burma at the once notorious Golden Triangle. From Vientiane, the old French capital, and so redolent of L'Indochine Pandaw will be the first river expedition since pre war days to cross all Laos. We stop two nights at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Luang Prabang with its dazzling wood carved monasteries and then on deep into the mountains, through rapids and gorges on our high powered little Pandaw. Visit tribal villages and explore into jungle and countryside.

YOUR SHIP - [RV LAOS PANDAW](#) / [RV CHAMPA PANDAW](#) / [RV SABAIDEE PANDAW](#)

[MORE IMAGES OF THE RV LAOS PANDAW](#)

[MORE IMAGES OF THE RV CHAMPA PANDAW](#)

Cruise Price Includes: Entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes. Transfers Chiang Rai / Chiang Mai to ship v.v. and ship to Vientiane / Udon Thani v.v.

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and tips to tour guides,

local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers.

UPSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

VIENTIANE

PLEASE NOTE: The itinerary for this expedition is indicative only and subject to reconnaissance. As we travel to remote areas, changes to the itinerary will inevitably occur. A flexible approach is required if you book this cruise.

Embarkation 11.30, followed by lunch and afternoon exploration of the delightful French city including visits to the golden Pha That Luang Stupa, Sisaket Temple, the President's Hall, Wat Prakeo Temple and the Phatouxay monument. Set sail late afternoon, enjoy a welcome dinner on board and overnight near Vientiane.

[MORE ABOUT VIENTIANE](#)

DAY 2

CRUISING THE MEKONG

Cruise upstream on the Mekong, passing lush jungle scenery and tiny riverside villages. Morning presentation on the Lao language. Afternoon cooking demonstration on the upper deck. Arrive in Ban Xanakham to moor overnight.

[MORE ABOUT CRUISING THE MEKONG](#)

DAY 3**PAK LAI**

Afternoon visit to the French administrative town of Pak Lai with many colonial buildings and a bustling local market. This town boasts the largest elephant festival in South East Asia, usually in February.

[MORE ABOUT PAK LAI](#)

DAY 4**BAN PARK BOR VILLAGE**

Morning visit and walking tour to Khamo tribal village, a typical village, set on the banks of the Mekong amidst lush jungle. In the afternoon pass through the Xanyaburi Hydro Electric Power Plant.

[MORE ABOUT XAYABURI DAM](#)

DAY 5**BAN MOUANG KHAI VILLAGE AND LUANG PRABANG**

In the morning visit a Hmong village and continue upstream to the village of Ban Mouang Khai. Afternoon sightseeing by minibus visiting the jungle pools and dramatic Khaung Si waterfall then on to a butterfly garden. Arrive in the heart of the temple city of Luang Prabang where there is a buzzing night market and many great cafes and some good local restaurants.

[MORE ABOUT KUANG SI WATERFALLS](#)

DAY 6

LUANG PRABANG

In the morning explore by tuktuk this well-preserved and unique world heritage site with its many Buddhist temples, libraries and royal palace. Visit the National Museum and have the afternoon free to explore the beauty and unique atmosphere of Luang Prabang on your own. Enjoy traditional Laos dancing on the upper deck late afternoon. Moor overnight in Luang Prabang.

[MORE ABOUT LUANG PRABANG](#)

DAY 7

PAK OU CAVES

Early morning walking tour to see the alms offering by the local people to hundreds of monks who walk around the city every morning. Passengers are invited to join in with offerings we provide for the alms giving. Morning sightseeing by local boat exploring the unique Pak Ou Caves and Elephant camp, a Buddhist sanctuary with spectacular limestone cliff faces. Evening cocktails on a sandbank. Sail upstream on the beautiful Mekong towards Ban Bo

[MORE ABOUT PAK OU CAVES AND NAM OU RIVER](#)

DAY 8**PAK BENG**

Morning visit to a local Khamo village. Sail upstream on the Mekong passing Pak Beng towards Pak Sit.

[MORE ABOUT PAK BENG](#)

DAY 9**BAN HOUAYXAY**

Early morning walking tour in a Khamo village then cruise through stunning scenery to the border of Laos and Thailand. The night is spent on the Lao side in the Huay xay area where we take a late afternoon village walk.

DAY 10**CHIANG SAEN**

Cruise upriver to the Town of Chiang Sean for border crossing at the Golden Triangle. Farewell cocktails and Thai traditional dance on board for your last evening.

[MORE ABOUT GOLDEN TRIANGLE](#)

DAY 11

CHIANG SAEN

Disembark by 8.30 in Chiang Sean and group transfer to hotel/airport. En route, explore the Golden Triangle including a visit to the opium museum. Continue to airports or city hotels in Chiang Rai (2 hours) and Chiang Mai (6 hours).

[MORE ABOUT CHIANG SAEN](#)

STATEROOM

The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are very spacious at 168 square feet (15.6 sqm). Much loved by all our passengers we have ensured that with each ship we build the stateroom remains the same. Our cabins do not have mini-bars, satellite TV's, internet or phones. Pandaw passengers usually want to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

Many passengers describe life on board a Pandaw more like being a guest on a private motor yacht than a cruise ship. Where we go and what we see is intrepid in extreme. What you come back to is a floating base of discreet comfort, caring service and all the good things one looks for in life. All our cabins have the same size and Pandaw signature amenities. Choose from Main Deck, Upper Deck or Premium Upper Deck (Mekong only).

Special to Your Stateroom

- Fruit and flowers on arrival
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

VIENTIANE

Welcome to Laos! We will meet you at the airport and transfer to your hotel in Vientiane. Rest of day at leisure.

Meals: None.

DAY 2

VIENTIANE - PHONSAVANH

8:30: Pick up at hotel and drive to Vat Sisaket, the oldest original temple in Vientiane. Built in 1818, Vat Sisaket is the sole survivor of an invasion in 1828. The temple features remarkable frescoes and 6,840 Buddha images. Nearby is Ho Phra Keo, once the royal temple of Lao monarchy. Built in 1565, Ho Phra Keo has been used as a museum since 1970 and contains some of the finest Buddhist sculptures and artifacts in the country. The main structure originally housed the famous Emerald Buddha that now resides in Bangkok's Wat Phra Keo. One of the most photographed images of Vientiane is Patousay, the victory gate also known as Anousavari. Constructed in 1958, its architecture is inspired by the Arc of Triumph in Paris. Another famous Vientiane landmark is the That Luang Stupa. King Setthathirath built this great sacred stupa in 1566. Its central structure is 45 meters tall and echoes the curving lines of an elongated lotus. The original stupa was said to contain relics of Lord Buddha. Continue to visit the Morning Market (Talaat Sao), known for its superior silk weaving, metal work, and woodcarving.

Transfer to the airport for your afternoon flight to Xieng Khuang, the gateway to the plain of jars. Transfer to your hotel.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel.

DAY 3

THE PALIN OF JARS

A full day to explore the famous Plain Of Jars, a vast area extending around Phonsavan where over 300 huge stone jars carved out of solid rock from 1 to 3.25 meters high and weighing up to six tons each. And estimated to be 2,500 to 3,000 years old. According to local legend, King Khun Chuang had them constructed in order to store wine for the celebration of his conquest of the province in the 6th century. We visit Site I, II and III. Continue to Ban Na Pia (War Spoon Village) before returning to Phonsavan.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel, Lunch at local restaurant.

DAY 4

DEPARTURE TO VIENTIANE

Morning visit to scenic Muang Khoun, surrounded by mountains, the ancient capital that was founded by Chao Noi Muang and was a stronghold for the Xieng Khouang royal family was destroyed during the Indochina War. The town was rebuilt after 1975 with rows of wooden Lao houses and a market area. We also visit the ruins at Wat Phia Wat, That Foun and That Chomphet.

Transfer to Phonsavan airport for flight to Vientiane followed by transfer to your Pandaw vessel.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel.



DISCOVER

The Plain of Jars - Pre Cruise Upstream Laos

The Plain of Jars offers fascinating insights into Phuan, Hmong, Khmu and Tai Dam culture. Very little is known about the civilization that created The Plain of Jars, but you can only imagine the greatness of the ruler who constructed these unusual and enormous storage jars.

This is a Pandaw group tour depending on how many guests booked this extension.

Rates include:

English speaking guide, 2-nights at the Vasana Plain of Jars Hotel and 1-night at the Ansara Hotel on a bed and breakfast basis, 1x lunch at local restaurant, return domestic flights from Vientiane to Phonsavanh, taxes, all transfers and excursions and described and entrance fees.

Note

Lao Airlines does not operate flights on Saturday to/from the gate way of the Plain of Jars. This affects pre tours of following cruises:

- Saturday, 15 September 2018
- Saturday, 29 September 2018
- Monday, 29 October 2018

- Monday, 12 November 2018
- Monday, 3 December 2018
- Saturday, 16 February 2019
- Monday, 1 April 2019
- Saturday, 24 August 2019
- Saturday, 7 September 2019
- Monday, 7 October 2019
- Monday, 21 October 2019
- Monday, 23 December 2019
- Saturday, 1 February 2020
- Monday, 9 March 2020
- Monday, 16 March 2020

[Click here](#) for details and pricing for an adjusted 4 night extension to match the airline's schedule.

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVE CHIANG MAI FROM PANDAW SHIP

Arrive from your Pandaw ship transfer at the deluxe Rachamankha Hotel, Chiang Mai where you stay in a superior room for 2-nights on a bed and breakfast basis.

DAY 2

EXPLORE CHIANG MAI

After breakfast, you will be met by your guide for a morning visit of Chiang Mai including Suan Buak Hat, a lovely park full of flowers that lies just inside the moat. From here, you take a local rickshaw (three-wheeled bicycle taxi) to Wat Pan Tao. Wat Pan Tao is essentially built of wood and, although rarely visited, is certainly one of the most charming temples of Chiang Mai. Then, continue to Wat Phra Sing – the most famous temple in the old city centre. Afterwards, visit Warorot Market, Chiang Mai's biggest market and well known for its huge choice of flowers. Lunch is included at a typical local restaurant serving Northern Thai food.

After lunch, drive up Doi Suthep Mountain and visit Wat Doi Suthep, Chiang Mai's most revered temple on the mountaintop. According to an old legend, Monk Sumana presented the king with a bone relic of the Lord Buddha. He then tied it to the back of a royal elephant that stomped through the jungle for days. The elephant finally stopped at the actual place of the temple where he died. Both the king and monk Sumana agreed that this would be the place where Doi Suthep temple would be built.

DAY 3

CHIANG MAI - TRANSFER TO AIRPORT

Check out after breakfast. You will be collected from the hotel lobby and transferred to Chiang Mai airport for your onward flight.



DISCOVER

The Rachamankha Hotel, Chiang Mai Post Tour

Enjoy the comfort and charm of the deluxe Rachamankha Hotel and explore Chiang Mai on our included full day excursion.

Rates include:

Airport transfer; sightseeing as per itinerary with English speaking local guide; 2-nights accommodation in superior room at the Rachamankha Hotel on bed and breakfast basis; lunch on day 2; entrance fees to specified sights; service charges, room tax and baggage handling.

Rates exclude:

Compulsory Gala Dinners at Rachamankha Hotel on 24 & 31 December 2016, travel insurance, visas, tips, items of a personal nature.

Public facilities

Public areas include the Library with over 2,000 books and an enchanting open-air massage pavilion overlooking a tranquil 20-meter pool where drinks and light snacks are served pool-side throughout the day. You can dine in al fresco or in the stylish restaurant. Antiques from different periods around the world, from Europe, Africa, China, Burma and Thailand are scattered throughout the hotel. The spacious and comfortable air-conditioned superior rooms are fully equipped with wireless Internet connection, TV and CD/DVD

player.

THE RACHAMANKHA HOTEL

6 Rachamankha

9 Phra Singh

Chiang Mai 50200

Thailand

Tel: +66 53 904 111

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

PANDAW CRUISE - CHIANG KHONG / CHIANG SEAN - MORNING ARRIVAL

Morning meet and greet by our local guide for pick up and transfer to Lanjia Lodge. Arrive at Lanjia Lodge. Herbal local juice will be served during the check-in. Then, watch a presentation about the Hmong and Lahu tribes, the Golden triangle area and the giant catfish (locally known as Pla Buek) - the world's biggest fresh water fish found in the Mekong River. Learn about the activities that affect the Mekong River and the people whose lives depend on the river. Morning tour of the Hmong and Lahu hill tribe village, including a visit at the shaman's house of the Hmong. Drink tea with the shaman and discover why the fireplace is important to the Hmongs.

Lunch will be provided on the charming terrace that looks to the Mekong River and Laos.

In the afternoon you will get firsthand experience on how to make Hmong batik handkerchief with Hmong ladies (about 45 minutes) or Alternatively, you can learn how to make and set animal traps. Dinner and watch traditional Hmong performances.

Overnight at Lanjia Lodge

Meals: Lunch / Dinner

DAY 2

CHIANG KHONG - GOLDEN TRIANGLE - BAN THATON

After breakfast, check out and continue drive to visit Golden Triangle with Golden Buddha viewpoint to enjoy the spectacular view for 360 degree. From there we continue to visit the Hall of Opium that was built to educate people about the dangers of the drug through an entertaining exhibition which traces opium's history from its first use 5,000 years ago to current issues of drug abuse and addiction.

Lunch at local restaurant. Then proceed to Ban Thaton where you will stay overnight at the natural resort. Dinner will be serving at the hotel.

Overnight at Maekok River Village Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3

BAN THATON - DOI ANGKHANG - CHIANG DAO

After breakfast, check out from the hotel and proceed to Doi Angkhang National Park. The area has a cool climate all year round, particularly from December to January. During this period, visitors should be prepared to cope with cold weather. Doi Angkhang Royal Agricultural Station is a site for planting and researching for flowering plants, temperate fruit trees, vegetables and other crop under the patronage of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (King Rama IX).

Lunch is at a local restaurant.

Afternoon, visit Muser Hill tribe at Baan Khob Dong village, The tribe believe in ghosts and spirits and still hold on to simple ways of life. The Royal Project has supported this village in promoting agriculture and handicrafts. The Young Local Guide project is underway to guide visitors on the local lifestyle and beliefs, as well as to create a non-migration awareness in local youths.

The next stop will be a visit to Baan Nor Lae village, this village is located on the Thai-Burmese border. The people of No Lae migrated from Myanmar about 15 years ago. They speak their own language and are Buddhists. From here we continue to the villages of Baan Khum which is a village located near the Royal Agricultural Station. It is a small community comprising of people from various races such as Burmese, Hwa, and Thai Yai. They settled in the area and run souvenir shops and restaurants.

Late afternoon, transfer to hotel in Chiang Dao for check in. Dinner will be served at Hotel.

Overnight at Azalea Village Resort

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4

CHIANG DAO - CHIANG MAI

Today, before leaving to Chiang Mai, you will visit Chiang Dao cave, with a stop to visit Chiang Dao cave, situated among the rolling hillside. The cave consists of 4 interconnected caverns that are opened. Here you will see an array of different stalactites everywhere.

Lunch is at a local restaurant. Continue to Chiang Mai hotel for check in and afternoon at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 5

CHIANG MAI DEPARTURE

Today will be your own leisure until check out time at noon. We will transfer you to boarding either flight or train depending on your selection of transportation to next destination. Chiang Mai Airport to Rachamankha: 15 - 20 min.

Meals: Breakfast



DISCOVER

The Hill Tribes of North Thailand Post Tour

Travel off the beaten track with your English speaking guide and discover the hilltribes, beautiful scenery and history of the land of opium, in our exclusive post cruise arrangement.

Rates include:

Accommodation at selected hotels with daily breakfast, check-in time is 2.00PM and check-out time is 12.00PM. Early or late service is subject to availability with surcharge, meals as mentioned, english speaking guide, tours and transfers as mentioned by air-conditioned vehicle, sightseeing fees and permits during guided time, service charge and current government VAT tax.

Rates exclude:

Early/late check in/out service at hotels (surcharge if requested), tips and gratuities, services and meals if not mentioned in itinerary, all drinks, including water, soft drink and alcohol on all included or optional excursions, laundry, telephone calls and expenditure of a personal nature, travel Insurance (Compulsory).

Note

- TThis is a group tour exclusively for Pandaw guests

- All accommodation will be booked after your deposit is received
- On day 1 of your post tour we do a hike to Lahu village. This tour including visits/stops takes 2.5 to 3 hours. The mountain road is steep and can be demanding. Medium fitness is required. If you do not want to walk then transport will be provided
- The cruise itinerary includes the Golden Triangle and Opium House on the last day. You will have this covered during this post tour on Day 2 instead

River Conditions Warning!

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience - not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

Useful Links

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[General Information & Life on Board](#)

[Visa Information](#)

