

Thailand and Laos by rivership

Exclusive Calder & Lawson Tours ship charter

Saturday 28 September - Wednesday 16 October 2024
17 nights

TOUR OVERVIEW

Join us on an exclusive charter of an award-winning Pandaw river ship. Enjoy the splendour of Laos on a ten-night expedition on the Upper Mekong. Sailing between Chiang Khong on the Thai-Laos border, and through Laos toward Vientiane, the old French capital, you will witness stunning scenery, meet warm and friendly locals, and learn about Laos' national animal, the majestic elephant. You stop for three nights at the UNESCO World Heritage City of Luang Prabang with its dazzling wood-carved monasteries before heading deep into the mountains, through rapids and gorges. Your tour starts with a stopover in Singapore where you can enjoy a visit to Gardens by the Bay and then a couple of nights in Chiang Mai, home of the northern Thai hill tribes. At the end of your cruise, disembark and spend two nights in the wonderful French-influenced city of Vientiane.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- Relax for ten nights on board a comfortable Pandaw river ship cruising in style with all meals.
- Daily shore excursions to local villages, waterfalls, and attractions.
- Visit the infamous Golden Triangle where Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar (Burma) meet.
- See the beautiful elephants and meet their Mahouts at the Pak Beng Elephant Sanctuary.
- Get to know the World Heritage City of Luang Prabang where traditional arts and culture thrive.
- Explore the French-influenced capital, Vientiane.
- Two nights in Chiang Mai including a visit to local hill tribes.
- A stopover in Singapore to break up your outbound journey and enjoy this ever-developing city-state.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- The services of an experienced Calder & Lawson tour manager
- Return economy airfare ex Auckland
- Stopover in Singapore for two nights
- Two nights accommodation in Chiang Mai, Thailand
- Three nights accommodation in Vientiane, Laos
- Ten nights on board a Pandaw river ship
- A drinks package on the ship of daily cocktail, beer, local spirits, and soft drinks (wine is available at an extra cost).
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Local guides and all group transfers
- Laos Visa
- Admissions as detailed in the itinerary
- All tips for local guides and drivers

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- International airline taxes
- Domestic NZ flights
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Hotel portorage

IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

This trip is suitable for people of most fitness levels, although you must be reasonably mobile and able to walk for 1-2 hours at a time to take part in the shore excursions and visits. There are no lifts on board the Pandaw ship. River banks can be steep and slippery when embarking and disembarking the ship, however, there is always crew assistance available if needed. Guests can opt out of any excursion and relax on board the ship. As the itinerary covers remote regions, it is unsuitable for passengers with serious medical conditions.

TOUR PRICE

Share twin per person	NZ\$12,990
Single supplement (limited availability)	NZ\$2,990

This price includes your international flight.

GROUP SIZE Minimum 10, maximum 18.

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL We can make arrangements for any travel you would like to do before or after this tour, or book business class flights. Please contact us to discuss your requirements.

[CLICK HERE TO BOOK ONLINE](#)

TOUR MANAGER: Leen Van Duin

Leen is well travelled in South East Asia and has led many successful tours worldwide. After 13 years with Air New Zealand, Leen joined Calder & Lawson House of Travel as an Owner/Director where he spent 25 years growing the corporate travel business. Relaxed, caring, and friendly with a quick sense of humour, Leen aims to make his travel companions comfortable and at ease. From the moment Leen and his wife Diane meet you at the airport, you can be sure that you will be very well taken care of.



DAILY ITINERARY

Saturday 28 September 2024

Auckland – Singapore

Meals: in flight

Overnight: Singapore

Depart Auckland in the afternoon on a direct flight to Singapore on Singapore Airlines. Arrive in the late evening and transfer to your hotel for the next two nights.

Sunday 29 September

Singapore

Meals: B/D

Overnight: Singapore

Enjoy a full day in Singapore. Activities will be arranged based on the group's interests. Options include a half day at 'Gardens by the Bay' with visits to a couple of the incredible domes holding indoor waterfalls, exotic plants, and unique habitats. Or perhaps explore Chinatown and the Singapore Botanic Gardens. If you fancy a bit of exercise, a bike ride on the new Singapore Rail Corridor may be of interest. Have a welcome dinner with the group this evening.

Monday 30 September

Chiang Mai

Meals: B/D

Flight: 3 hours

Overnight: Chiang Mai

Have a relaxing morning in Singapore and then in the afternoon fly to Chiang Mai. Tonight you will have dinner with the group and have time to explore the lively night markets.

Tuesday 1 October

Chiang Mai

Meals: B

Overnight: Chiang Mai

Take a tour around a local hill tribe village nestled in lush countryside and learn about the local culture and way of life.



DAILY ITINERARY

Wednesday 2 October

Golden triangle

Meals: B/L/D

Transfer: 6 hours

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Transfer from your hotel in Chiang Mai to the boarding spot for the river ship. This will be a fairly long drive but with stops at Ban Rai Sabaidee Farm for lunch plus a guided visit to the Golden Triangle and the now infamous opium museum. Embark your ship by 16.00 and enjoy welcome drinks on the sundeck with traditional Thai dancing.

Thursday 3 October

Into Laos

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Pass through immigration formalities at the Thai/Laos border and re-join the ship. Set sail downstream on the beautiful Upper Mekong River and take in a presentation on the Lao language. After lunch, if time allows, sightseeing on foot in Pak Sith.

Friday 4 October

Pak Beng Elephant Sanctuary

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Take a morning walk at the local Ban Luang Tong Lao Lowland village. Laos is known as 'The land of a million elephants'. After lunch, you will visit a rescue sanctuary that is helping to preserve the elephants of Laos and provide sustainable alternative employment for Mahouts who once trained and rode these beautiful creatures. In the evening you moor at a sandbank for a special riverside barbecue and cocktail party. Light paper lanterns with the crew and enjoy a dance in remote Laos.

Saturday 5 October

Ban Bor and Yoi Hai Khmu villages

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Today you will discover the Khmu minority group and learn about their remote way of life. In the morning you will visit Ban Bor village, home to the Lao and Khummu people. In the afternoon you walk through the Khummu village of Yoi Hanoi and will have the opportunity to support locally produced handicrafts.



DAILY ITINERARY

Sunday 6 October

Pak Ou Caves

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Continue cruising downstream to Pak Ou, sightseeing by local boat and exploring the unique Pak Ou Caves, a Buddhist sanctuary with spectacular limestone cliff faces. See the production of local Laos whisky at the Whisky village and shop for locally produced handicrafts before sailing into the World Heritage City of Luang Prabang. Moor overnight in central Luang Prabang.

Monday 7 October

Luang Prabang crafts & culture

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Today you can explore the various handicrafts of Laos in more detail. Start with a morning walk up the 228 steps to Phousi temple where the best views of Luang Prabang can be found. After lunch aboard the ship, you will visit Ock Pop Tok, a social enterprise providing sustainable employment and training for the women of local weaving villages. You then head to TAEC (Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre) to understand more about Laos musical instruments. Cocktail hour is accompanied by a traditional Bacci ceremony onboard highlighting some of the instruments seen in the afternoon.

Tuesday 8 October

Luang Prabang

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Take an early morning walking tour to observe the morning alms offering by local people to the hundreds of monks who walk around the city every morning. You continue after breakfast to the morning market before taking tuk-tuks for a city tour of this well-preserved and unique UNESCO World Heritage site with its many Buddhist temples, libraries, and royal palace. The afternoon is free to explore the beauty and unique atmosphere of Luang Prabang.

Wednesday 9 October

Kaung Si Waterfall

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

After breakfast sail downstream to Ban Chan where you can take part in a pottery demonstration at the local pottery workshop. After Lunch, moor at Ban Mouang Khai and take a short drive to see the deep jungle pools at the Khaung Si Waterfall where you can swim in the crystal-clear waters. You then stop at the Laos Buffalo Farm, a social enterprise utilizing the abundant buffalo in Laos before rejoining the ship. Sail downstream for a sunset cruise and moor overnight at Ban Na San.



DAILY ITINERARY

Thursday 10 October

Xayaboury Dam

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Morning walk through Ban Na San Hmong Village. In the afternoon visit Xayaboury Hydroelectric Dam and take an inside look at the workings of this somewhat controversial project as we pass through the locks. Afternoon walk at Ban Khok Fark and moor overnight.

Friday 11 October

Ban Pak Yun to Pak Lay

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: Pandaw rivership

Explore the Ban Pak Yun mixed minorities tribe in the morning, (a rural local village) before setting sail to Pak Lay, your final destination on the river cruise. Enjoy a tour of your Pandaw ship and fruit carving demonstration on the sundeck in the afternoon before farewell cocktails and dinner in the evening.

Saturday 12 October

Vientiane

Meals: B/L

Overnight: Vientiane

Disembark the Pandaw ship in the morning and take a long-tail boat expedition downstream to Vientiane. Lunch and drinks will be provided on the long-tail boat by your Pandaw chef and bar staff. Arrive into Vientiane around 17:30 and check in to your hotel for the next two nights.

Sunday 13 October

Vientiane

Meals: B

Overnight: Vientiane

Meet your local guide for a full-day city tour exploring Laos' French colonial capital. Visit Talaat Sao - Vientiane's Morning Market, Wat Sisaket, Haw Phra Kaew, and Putousay, the victory gate inspired by the Arc de triomphe in Paris. After lunch at a local restaurant, head out of town to visit one of Laos' slightly stranger attractions - Xieng Khuan Buddha Park. A sculpture park with over 200 Hindu and Buddhist statues.

Monday 14 October

Vientiane

Meals: B/D

Overnight: Vientiane

A free day in Vientiane and then enjoy a farewell dinner with the group this evening.

Tuesday 15 October

Homebound

Meals: B

Overnight: in flight

In the late morning, you will be transferred to the airport for your onward flight from Vientiane back to Auckland via Singapore. Arrive in New Zealand on Wednesday 16 October.

You may wish to stay in Southeast Asia longer, perhaps adding a visit to Cambodia or Vietnam. The Calder & Lawson Tours team can assist you with any post-tour arrangements.



Your Pandaw Ship

RV Laos Pandaw

Your journey will be on an exclusive charter just for Calder & Lawson Tours passengers. The ship was built in 2015 and there are just 10 staterooms, finished in teak and brass, and all with their own ensuite bathrooms. On board, you will enjoy fresh and delicious meals cooked with local ingredients, evening cocktails, and an open-air lounge and bar. Sailing on a Pandaw is a fantastic experience with a relaxed environment and attentive service. The ship has quality mountain bikes for your use.



TWIN CONFIGURATION



DOUBLE CONFIGURATION

HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of \$2,000 is required to secure your place on the tour. When minimum numbers are reached, the tour will become a 'confirmed departure' and your deposit will be non-refundable.

Click below to complete the online registration form, pay the \$2,000 deposit, and your place in this tour is secured. Or you can complete a paper registration form. You can download one from our website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz/forms/ or give us a call and we will email or post one to you.

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TERMS & CONDITIONS

These can be found on our website www.calderandlawsontours.co.nz/forms/, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration. There is a 1.5% surcharge if you pay by visa or mastercard.

