

EL SOL TRAVEL & TOURS SDN BHD 28805-T KKKP: 0194

Tel: 603 7984 4560 Fax: 603 7984 4561 david@elsoltravel.com www.elsoltravel.com

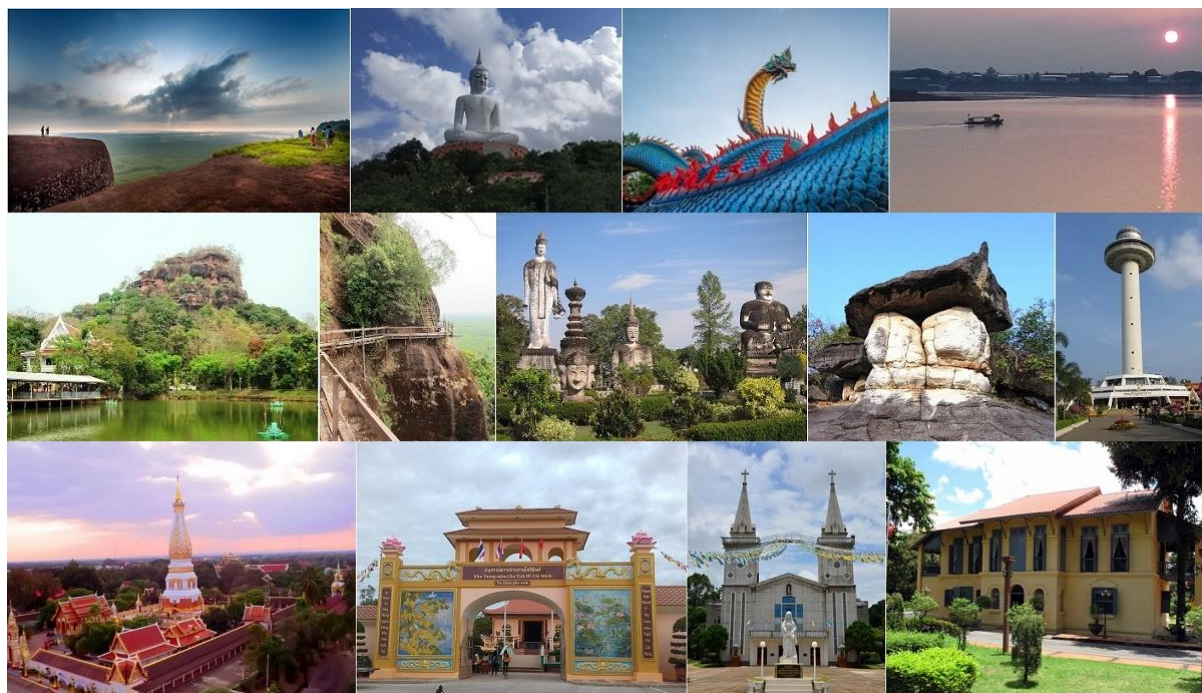
6D5N OCT 12-17 THAILAND & LAOS

Along The Mekong River Tour

Nong Khai – Bueng Kan – Nakhon Phanom – Mukdahan – Savannakhet – Tha Khaek



**Special Edition: Oct 13 Nakhon Phanom
Illuminated Boat Parade (+ VIP dinner)**



With Heritage Walk around Savannakhet Old Quarter



Cross The Mekong River at 3 Thai-Lao Friendship Bridges:



Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No.1
(Nong Khai with Vientiane)

Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No. 2
(Mukdahan with Savannakhet)

Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No. 3 (Nakhon Phanom with Tha Khaek)

Discover the UNSEEN Wonders of 4 Thai provinces & 2 Lao provinces that hug the mighty Mekong River



FLIGHTS FOR THE TOUR:

Air Asia KL to Vientiane

Air Asia Nakhon Phanom to Don Muang BKK

Air Asia Don Muang BKK to KL

DAY 1 SAT OCT 12: Vientiane - Nong Khai - Bueng Kan (L/D)



Arrival by Air Asia 8.20am **Vientiane airport**. Transfer to **Nong Khai** town of Thailand (capital of

Nong Khai province) by crossing the Mekong River using the **Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No.1** (completed in 1994; Nong Khai - Vientiane connection). Visit the **Mekong Riverside Indochina market**, packed with goods from Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and China. At the market, take a photo at the **Naga signage** fronting the Mekong River. Lunch in Nong Khai. Then to **Sala Kaew Ku Park**, built by a shaman and filled with a bizarre collection of Buddhist, Hindu and mystical sculptures.



Proceed to **Bueng Kan**, Thailand's latest province (no. 76), carved out from Nong Khai province in 2011. Visit **Ahong**

Silawat temple, which has a replica of the famous Chinnarat Buddha statue. It is located besides a deep whirlpool in the Mekong River, hence the site's nickname, **"The Navel of Mekong"**. A powerful Naga is believed to reside in its depths.

Arrival in Bueng Kan town for dinner. Opposite of town across the Mekong River is the Lao town of Paksan. Overnight in Bueng Kan.

DAY 2 SUN OCT 13: Bueng Kan - Nakhon Phanom (B/L/D)



Transfer to visit **3-Whales Rock (Hin Sam Wan)** formation, located on top of Phu Singha Hill, for breath-taking views including ticket for pick-up truck transfer to mountain top). It is so named because the rock formation looks like 3 whales swimming in the sea.



Then to **Wat Phu Tok** (means "Lonely Mountain Temple"), a forest monastery located up a sheer rock outcrop; accessible by climbing up the network of wooden

stairs. Enjoy the 360 degrees panoramic views provided by walkways surrounding the rock outcrop. Established by the late monk, Ajahn Chuan Kunlatchettho, it has a gallery of statues of Ajahn Mun (Ajahn Chuan's master) and his many eminent monk disciples. Nearby a rock boulder is perched on top a small shrine, reminiscent of the Kyaiktiyo Golden Rock shrine of Myanmar.



Continue on to **Nakhon Phanom** province, following the route along the Mekong River. Just before arriving in Nakhon Phanom city, **stop to view the Thai-Lao**

Friendship Bridge No. 3 (completed in 2011, Nakhon Phanom - Tha Khaek connection). Arrival in Nakhon Phanom city.



Tonight will be the night where the **Illuminated Boat Parade ("Lai Reua Fai")** will be held; it is a once a year event held in Nakhon Phanom during the Full Moon Night of End Of Rains Retreat celebration. Enjoy **your dinner at your VIP table** seated beside the Mekong River and **watching the many Illuminated Boats sail by**. Each boat's design is made of many oil lamps hung on a bamboo or wood frame; each oil lamp specially placed so that the beautiful design is alight for your viewing pleasure!

On this special evening, the riverside **Night Market** will be abuzz for you to enjoy shopping, snacks & drinks. Overnight in Nakhon Phanom.

DAY 3 MON OCT 14: Nakhon Phanom - Mukdahan (B/L/D)



Morning, visit **Phra That Nakhon** (this principle stupa of the town is a holy place for people born on a Saturday), **Giant Naga monument** on the riverfront, the unique 2 storey **7-Eleven with rooftop viewing**

deck, riverfront walking-cycling boardwalk with **colourful shop houses**, **Old Clock Tower** (built in 1960 by the local Vietnamese community), **Old Governor House** (where King Bhumibol stayed a night in 1955; now it is a museum documenting the King's visit and the history of Nakhon Phanom) and **Saint Anna Church** (originally built in 1926; this current version dates from the 1970s).



Then visit **Mekong Underwater World** aquarium (to see the rare Giant Mekong Cat Fish and other fishes) and nearby **Chakri Dynasty Honour Celebration Building** museum (celebrating the royal family of Chakri Dynasty from kings Rama 1 to the present Rama X).



Next, to Ban Na Chok village (community of descendants of migrants from Vietnam), to visit **Ho Chi Minh Shrine** and **House of Ho Chi Minh**. Ho Chi Minh stayed here briefly after coming from Bangkok

and Udon Thani; he then returned to Vietnam via Laos to start his fight for Viet independence against the French. Lunch in Nakhon Phanom.



Transfer to That Phanom district to visit **Phra That Phanom**, which according to legend, contains The Buddha's breast bone. It was originally built in the 16th century by the Laotian King Setthathirath of Lanxang, but has seen undergone many rebuilds and renovations. This is the only temple in North East Thailand with Royal 1st Class status. In Thai folk Buddhism, it is a popular pilgrimage destination

for those born in the year of the Monkey.

Arrival **Mukdahan** province. Dinner and check in hotel to overnight in Mukdahan city.

DAY 4 TUE OCT 15: Mukdahan - Savannakhet (B/L/D)



Visit **Big Buddha** and **Wat Roi Phra Phutthabat of Phu Manorom** hill (with viewpoint looking across the Mekong and into Laos; and a giant blue Naga statue).



Continue to **Phu Pha Thoeb National Park**, where you find bizarre shaped rocks, including **one resembling a camel**. Back to Mukdahan town to visit **Indo-China market** (located along Mekong River, with the Lao city of Savannakhet opposite) and have lunch at a local restaurant. Then visit **Mukdahan Tower**, which was built in 1996 and has a height of 65m. Enjoy the view from the observation deck and the exhibits on the ethnic peoples of Mukdahan.



Transfer to **Savannakhet** city of Laos (capital of Savannakhet province and 2nd largest city of Laos after Vientiane), using **Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No. 2** (completed in 2007, Mukdahan - Savannakhet connection). Enjoy **sunset at the riverside** looking west at the Mekong River and Mukdahan city of Thailand.

Overnight in Savannakhet.

DAY 5 WED OCT 16: Savannakhet - Tha Khaek - Nakhon Phanom (B/L/D)



6.30am: WALKING TOUR (approx. 1 hour) of Savannakhet Old Quarter, stopping at the following places for photos:

- 1) Vietnamese Temple
- 2) Chinese Temple & Chinese School
- 3) St. Theresa Catholic Church & Talat Yen area
- 4) Exhibition of Savannakhet's heritage buildings located inside Lin's Cafe
- 5) Lao Vietnam Association building
- 6) Sala Savanh Guest House

7) Theatre "Lao Chaleun"

8) Si Muang House

9) Public Works Office Building

10) Mekong Hotel

11) Wat Xaiyaphoum Temple

12) Houma Ho Sak Shrine

7.30am, back to hotel for breakfast.



8.30am, check out hotel and transfer to **Old Governor Office** for photo stop outside, then **house of former president Kayson Phomvihane** (the 1st Prime Minister and 2nd President of the Lao People's Democratic Republic was born in Savannakhet city) for photo stop outside and then visit **Dinosaur Museum** (dinosaur remains dug up in & around Savannakhet).



Then visit **Dinosaur Roundabout**, **Bungva Lake** and **Phra That Ing Hang** (a Lan Xang style stupa from the 16th century).



Transfer to **Tha Khaek** town (capital of Khammouane province) for lunch. Then visit **Tham Pa Fa Cave** (inside there are 229 Buddha statues). Next visit **Kamphaeng Nyak (Great Wall of Laos)**, at the highest section located 8 km north of Tha Khaek on Route 13 where it reaches a height of 16 meters with an unbroken section 75 meters long. Here there is a small shrine constructed by the French that contains a statue of the Virgin Mary. Continue to **Phra That Sikhottabong** (including the 9 wooden houses that follow traditional architectural styles of Khammouane Province). Lastly, photo stop of old **French colonial buildings** and the **Mekong Riverside area** in town (opposite is Nakhon Phanom city of Thailand).

Then transfer back to Thailand across Thai-Lao Friendship Bridge No. 3 and have dinner in Nakhon Phanom. Overnight in Nakhon Phanom.

DAY 6 THU OCT 17: Nakhon Phanom departure (B)

After breakfast, check out and transfer to Nakhon Phanom Airport for 10.25am Air Asia flight to Don Muang BKK airport, arriving 11.35am. Catch Air Asia 3.15pm flight to KL, arriving 6.30pm.

RATES: RM 2,290 /pax, twin sharing, 8 to 9 persons group, using 9-seater van

Single Supplement: RM 410

Rates & itinerary subject to change in FOREX rates, unforeseen surcharges, weather, local conditions, etc.

INCLUSIVE:

- a) Airport transfers and tour excursion on private basis using 9-seater VIP van
- b) 3 star hotel accommodation

BUENG KAN: The One Hotel or similar

NAKHON PHANOM: Fortune View Khong Hotel or similar

MUKDAHAN: Riverfront Hotel or similar

SAVANNAKHET: New Saen Sabai Hotel or similar

- c) Full-board meals as indicated in itinerary above
- d) English speaking tour guide
- e) Entrance fees for attractions as per itinerary
- f) 2 x 500ml bottles of drinking water /person/day (except last day)

EXCLUDING:

- a) Air ticket, airport taxes & fuel surcharges.
- b) Travel insurance
- c) Tipping (recommended minimum): Guide 400 baht /traveller for whole tour
Driver 200 baht /traveller for whole tour

Kindly tip at end of tour service (upon drop-off at airport on Day 6)

d) Malaysian passport holders don't need visa to enter Laos and Thailand; other nationalities to be advised. Laos Customs Border crossing fee of 50 baht /person may apply at Thai-Lao Border; please pay direct at counter.

e) Expenses of personal nature such as optional activities not part of itinerary, laundry charges, room mini-bar charges, tipping for hotel/restaurant/etc. staff.