

# MACLEAY VALLEY TRAVEL PTY. LTD.

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## Laos, North Vietnam & the Golden Triangle Adventure Tour

24 Day Conducted Tour

for only **\$4,590** per person twin share

This price includes airport taxes & fuel levies

This wonderful “off-the beaten track” adventure tour visits the rarely visited hill-tribe areas of North East Laos and North-West Vietnam. The price is incredible value as all of the following are included:

- Return air fares from Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane into Chiang Mai and out of Hanoi with Thai International.
- A 5 day tour of the Golden Triangle area.
- A 7 day coach and boat tour of Laos, including 2 days cruising the mighty Mekong River, 2 days in the wonderful World Heritage town of Luang Prabang and 3 days touring the ‘wild’ country of N.E. Laos before entering Vietnam.
- A 10 day tour of North Vietnam, visiting the Dien Bien Phu battlefield area, the Sapa hill tribe area with its spectacular rice terraces, Hanoi and a cruise on World Heritage Halong Bay.
- Mainly 3 to 4 star accommodation or the best available in the isolated areas.
- Most meals and all transfers and transport.
- All entrance fees.
- Services of local tour guides and if there are 12 or more participants, an Australian tour escort.

If you don't have a travel partner but wish to travel at twin share rates we will try and assign you with another traveller but this is not guaranteed.

For a single room there will be an extra cost of \$1215.

Please note: Some of the roads travelled in the remote areas are fairly rough, so if you don't think you can handle this then perhaps this tour isn't for you. However the scenery is quite spectacular.

As this is an Adventure Tour it will be a small group, with a maximum of about 22 passengers.



The tour departs Australia 1<sup>st</sup> September and returns 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016

*We try harder to find you the best travel deal*

## **Itinerary for Laos, North Vietnam, Golden Triangle Tour**

Included meals are indicated as B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

### **31.08.16 Melbourne – Bangkok**

Depart Melbourne at 11.30pm on TG 462, arriving in Bangkok at 6.00am the next morning (01.09.16).

### **01.09.16 Australia - Bangkok - Chiang Mai**

Melbourne passengers depart Bangkok at 7.55am on TG 102, arriving in Chiang Mai at 9.15am.

Sydney passengers depart Sydney at 10.00am on TG 476, arriving in Bangkok at 4.20pm. Then depart Bangkok at 5.20pm on TG 116, arriving in Chiang Mai at 6.30pm.

Brisbane passengers depart Brisbane at 2.00pm on TG 474, arriving in Bangkok at 8.20pm. Brisbane passengers will have overnight accommodation at a hotel in the airport area.

Sydney and Melbourne passengers will be met at Chiang Mai Airport and transferred to the hotel for a three night stay. Our hotel is situated close to Chiang Mai's famous night market area.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Chiang Mai

### **02.09.16 Chiang Mai**

**(B/L)** Brisbane passengers will transfer back to Bangkok airport, departing at 7.55am on TG 102, arriving in Chiang Mai at 9.15am. Brisbane passengers will then commence the morning tour with the rest of the group.

This morning there will be an inspection of Chiang Mai's famous handicraft village, where we will see the manufacturing of Thai jewellery, paper umbrellas, Thai silk, wood carving and furniture etc. After an included lunch we visit Chiang Mai's spectacular mountain-top temple, which has wonderful views over Chiang Mai.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Chiang Mai

### **03.09.16 Chiang Mai**

**(B/L)** Today we drive out to the rural areas to see a wonderful display of elephants at work and play. We then visit an outstanding orchid nursery where we have a delicious buffet lunch. This afternoon is at leisure in Chiang Mai.

Accommodation: Holiday Inn Chiang Mai

### **04.09.16 Chiang Mai - Chiang Rai**

**(B/L)** Today we head north for a beautiful scenic drive to Chiang Rai. We travel through the main hill-tribe area of Thailand and stop and visit an Aka village. After an included lunch we proceed to Chiang Rai. In the evening visit Chiang Rai's interesting night market, a short walk from our hotel.

Accommodation: Wiang Inn

### **05.09.16 Chiang Rai**

**(B/L)** This morning we visit the Queen Mother's lovely gardens. This is followed by a visit to Wat Rong Khun. This white temple is unlike any of the other temples in Thailand.

It is a modern masterpiece built by Chalermchai Kositpipat, a popular artist who dedicated 10 years of his life to his grand project, in the name of Buddha. It is a modern temple almost entirely made out of white materials and decorated with small pieces of mirrored glass that make it glitter, especially during the night. The afternoon is free to enjoy the facilities at our lovely hotel.

Accommodation: Wiang Inn

**06.09.16 Golden Triangle**

**(B/L)**

This morning there will be a scenic drive into the famous Golden Triangle area where the borders of Thailand, Burma & Laos come together. We have a short boat ride on the Mekong River. We then travel up a large hill for scenic views of Thailand, Burma & Laos. After this we visit the interesting Opium Museum. After an included lunch beside the Mekong River we visit the Chiang Saen Historical Area. Chiang Saen was the first capital of the Thai people and was one of the oldest settlements in the Kingdom of Thailand. There are many important temples and chedis in Chiang Saen, most dating back to the 13th & 14th centuries. We will also visit the Chiang Saen National Museum with a magnificent collection of ancient artifacts recovered from archaeological sites in Chiang Saen and other nearby areas. There is an annex containing information regarding the way of life, religion & beliefs of the people of this era. In the evening there is a good opportunity to enjoy promenading along the walkway beside the Mekong River with numerous market type stalls and restaurants.

Accommodation: Imperial Golden Triangle Hotel

**07.09.16 Golden Triangle - HoueiSay - Pakbeng**

**(B/L/D)**

This morning we drive to the Mekong River, which we cross by boat to enter Laos. After completing border formalities, we board a private traditional slow boat for the trip down the Mekong River to Pakbeng. The scenery along this part of the Mekong is arguably at its most beautiful. Lunch is on board. Upon our late afternoon/evening arrival in Pakbeng, we will be transferred to our hotel. This evening enjoy an included dinner.

**Note:** You will need to pack an overnight bag for this hotel visit as your main luggage will remain secured on the boat. Please note that the accommodation this evening is very basic, but is one of the best available in this small & rural town.

Accommodation: Phetsokxai Hotel

**08.09.16 Pakbeng - Pak Ou Caves - Luang Prabang**

**(B/L)**

After breakfast in the hotel, we continue our journey downstream passing areas of unspoilt forest with little villages along the river banks and perhaps the odd elephant or two with his mahout. We visit a fishing village and rice wine making village with an opportunity to sample some of the local speciality. A delicious lunch is served on board and upon nearing Luang Prabang we also stop to visit the famous Pak-Ou caves with their thousands of Buddha statues. We arrive in Luang Prabang around sunset and transfer to our hotel for a three night stay. This evening you might like to visit the night bazaar market and take a stroll around this enchanting little town.

Accommodation: Maison Dalabua Hotel or similar

**09.09.16 Luang Prabang**

**(B/L)**

After breakfast we visit the Royal Palace Museum, which hosts a range of interesting artifacts. We then begin our temple tour taking in some of the cities most beautiful

sites, including the magnificent Wat Xiengthong, with its roofs sweeping low to the ground, representing the classical Luang Prabang style, as well as Wat Mai and Wat Visoun, known as 'The Water Melon Stupa' due to its shape.

In the afternoon we visit the excellent Arts and Ethnology Centre which gives us a further insight into the ethnic mix and cultures of Laos. We also visit the weaving and textiles villages of Ban Xangkhong and Ban Xienglek. Our final stop of the day is a climb up Mt Phousi, which offers a spectacular sunset and a panoramic view over Luang Prabang and the Mekong River.

Accommodation: Maison Dalabua Hotel or similar

#### **10.09.16 Luang Prabang - Kuang Si Waterfall**

**(B/L)** After breakfast we visit the local Phosi Market, where all the locals shop and our guide will show us the diverse offerings on display. We stop at Ock Pop Tock, a silk weaving centre. Here we will be given a guided tour and the silk weaving process will be explained. We then drive out of the town where you have the option of stopping to visit Khmu, Hmong and Lao Loum villages, representing the main ethnic groups of Laos. Then we visit the beautiful Kuang Si Waterfall where we can cool off with a refreshing swim in the pools or walk along the forest trails. Afterwards we return to Luang Prabang.

Accommodation: Maison Dalabua Hotel or similar

#### **11.09.16 Luang Prabang – Nong Khiaw**

**(B/L)** This morning we leave Luang Prabang and head north to Nong Khiaw. The drive takes us through rolling countryside where we can admire the beauty of the Nam Ou River and the surrounding rice paddy fields. We arrive in Nong Khiaw and enjoy an included lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure in Nong Khiaw. If you wish there should be optional tours available where you can take a short bicycle ride or an easy trek to the picturesque limestone caves nearby.

Accommodation: Nong Kiaw Riverside

#### **12.09.16 Nong Khiaw – Muang Khua**

**(B/L)** Today we board our private boat for an unforgettable cruise up the Nam Ou River to Muang Khua. This particular stretch offers stunning limestone karst scenery and remote villages, including Ban Sob Jaem, a Khmu and Lao village that can only be accessed by boat. We stop to explore a few of these sites before reaching Muang Khua. Please note that the accommodation this evening is very basic, but is one of the best available in this small & rural town.

Accommodation: Sernaly Guesthouse

#### **13.09.16 Muang Khua – Tray Trang – Dien Bien Phu, Vietnam**

**(B/L/D)** This morning we leave Muang Khua on a three hour drive to the Tray Trang border gate between Laos and Vietnam. After Vietnamese immigration and customs we have a 30 km drive to Dien Bien Phu, which is the centre of Thai people in the north west of Vietnam. Lunch is at a local restaurant before checking into the hotel. In the afternoon we will see A1 Hill, the main battlefield in 1954 where the French were defeated by the Viet Minh. We also visit the Dien Bien Phu War Museum and the shelter of the French commanding general in Dien Bien Phu. Dinner this evening is at a local restaurant. We also enjoy a music show of the Thai people.

Accommodation: Muong Thanh Hotel, Dien Bien Phu

**Dien Bien Phu – Lai Chau**

**14.09.16 (B/L/D)** We leave Dien Bien Phu on an interesting driving journey which not many tourists have been through to Lai Chau. On the way we will meet several groups of Thai, Muong, Tay and Nung ethnic minorities in their traditional clothes. We arrive in Lai Chau in the mid afternoon and have dinner at the hotel.  
Accommodation: Muong Thanh Hotel, Lai Chau

**15.09.16 Lai Chau – Sapa**

**(B/L/D)** After breakfast we depart for Sapa, with fantastic scenery en route. The road weaves its way northwards through the picturesque and steadily more beautiful Na River Valley. We pass ethnic villages of White Thai, Kho Mu and later Red and White H'Mong minorities. We stop at Tam Duong to see a local market. Afterwards we travel on the National Road climbing steadily, which offers great views of the surrounding hills. Once over the summit the road begins its descent towards the town of Binh Lu. At this point we will be able to see groups of Black Dao people whose villages are located in the surrounding hills. Upon arrival in Sapa, we check in and have a late lunch at the hotel.  
In the afternoon there is free time to rest or wander around before dinner at a local restaurant.  
Accommodation: Sunny Mountain Hotel

**16.09.16 Sapa**

**(B/L)** In the morning take a 4km drive to the rim of a deep valley. Along the road we'll see H'Mong, Dzay and Dzao minority people dressed in their traditional costumes. There is a 2 hour walk around Ta Van and Lao Chai, home to all three minorities. Observe their daily lives for a rare glimpse into their culture and costumes. Enjoy a traditional music show of local ethnic minorities and then return to town for lunch. The rest of the day is at leisure.  
Accommodation: Sunny Mountain Hotel

**17.09.16 Sapa – Ta Phin – Lao Cai**

**(B/L/D)** This morning we leave Sapa for Lao Cai. On the way we stop at Ta Phin and have an interesting walk through the village of Red Dzao people. We have an included lunch in Lao Cai and then check into the hotel. In the afternoon we will stop to take pictures of the border crossing between Vietnam and China. Dinner this evening is at the hotel.  
Accommodation: Muong Thanh Hotel

**18.09.16 Lao Cai - Bac Ha Sunday Market – Hanoi**

**(B/L/D)** Today is market day in Bac Ha. We leave Lao Cai for Bac Ha to see their regular market held every Sunday for ethnic minorities. At the Bac Ha market we'll see the gathering of hundreds of people of H'Mong, Phu La, Dao and Tay ethnic minorities, wearing their colourful and traditional costumes. It is a riot of colour and fun. There is an opportunity to explore the colourful market and meet the local tribal people, to appreciate their culture and traditions.  
We leave Bac Ha in the late morning for Hanoi with lunch on the way. Upon arrival in Hanoi we have some free time to wander around the Hoan Kim Lake area before dinner at a local restaurant.  
Accommodation: Tirant Hotel

**19.09.16 Hanoi**

**(B/L)** This morning we enjoy an interesting one hour cyclo ride around the Old and the French Quarters of Hanoi. We then have visits to Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Residence, One Pillar Pagoda and The Temple of Literature built in the 11th century and known as Vietnam's first university. Lunch is at KOTO, whose owner employs and trains disadvantaged Vietnamese in the hospitality industry. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Accommodation: Tirant Hotel

**20.09.16 Hanoi – Ninh Binh**

**(B/L/D)** We depart Hanoi for Ninh Binh, the 10<sup>th</sup> century ancient capital of Vietnam. Upon arrival in Ninh Binh we have a two hour boat ride in sampans to see beautiful karst caves and serene limestone rocks towering over the rice fields. This area is famously known as Dry Halong Bay. In the afternoon we visit Cuc Phuong National Park. Dinner this evening is at the hotel.

Accommodation: Emerald Resort

**21.09.16 Ninh Binh – Halong Bay**

**(B/L/D)** Leave Ninh Binh on a four hour driving journey to Halong Bay. Halong Bay is listed as a World Heritage Area of outstanding natural beauty. 'Dragon Descending to the Sea' as it is known in Vietnamese, picturesque Halong Bay has more than 1,969 limestone islets rising from the clear emerald water. Halong Bay has been compared with the magical landscape of limestone islets at Guilin in China and Krabi in southern Thailand. These tiny islands are dotted with innumerable beaches and grottoes created by wind and waves. It is one of the natural marvels of Vietnam. We board the Victory Cruise and have lunch onboard the ship. We enjoy a fantastic cruise in Halong Bay, with a bamboo boat ride on the way to visit Vung Vieng fishing village, followed by a swim in the beautiful water off the boat. Dinner this evening is onboard the ship while watching the sunset, depending on the weather conditions. If you wish you can also participate in some squid fishing.

Accommodation: Victory Cruise

**22.09.16 Halong Bay – Hanoi**

**(B/L/D)** We have a few more hours on the ship before heading back to Hanoi. During this time we can join a Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck before breakfast. Then we will climb a few hundred steps to visit Sung Sot Cave. We also see Bai Tu Long Bay, Toad Island and Bai Tho Mountain while cruising. We have a buffet brunch on board before disembarking the ship and making our way back to Hanoi, arriving in the mid afternoon.

This evening we enjoy a water puppet show, which has been the unique art of the Vietnamese since the 11<sup>th</sup> century. This is followed by a farewell dinner at 'Jackson' restaurant.

Accommodation: Tyrant Hotel

**23.09.16 Hanoi – Bangkok – Sydney & Brisbane**

**(B)** This morning Sydney passengers are transferred to Hanoi airport for their flights Home. Sydney passengers depart Hanoi at 10.35am on TG 561, arriving in Bangkok at 12.25pm. Sydney passengers will have a free shuttle transfer to the Best Western

Premier Amaranth Hotel for day use of a hotel room. In the late afternoon Sydney passengers take the free shuttle back to Bangkok Airport for their flight home, departing at 7.20pm on TG 475, arriving in Sydney at 7.20am the next morning (24.09.16).

Melbourne and Brisbane passengers have a late 5pm checkout from the hotel and are transferred to Hanoi airport, departing at 8.45pm on TG 565, arriving in Bangkok at 10.35pm.

Brisbane passengers depart Bangkok at 11.59pm on TG 473, arriving in Brisbane at 11.50am the next morning (24.09.16).

**24.09.16 Bangkok - Melbourne**

Melbourne passengers depart Bangkok at 12.15am on TG 465, arriving in Melbourne at 12.05pm.

## **Conditions for Macleay Valley Travel's Laos, North Vietnam & Golden Triangle Adventure Tour**

**Deposits and Payments** - A non-refundable deposit of \$200 per person is payable within 7 days of booking. This deposit is not refundable should you later cancel. The balance is payable in full 8 weeks prior to departure.

**Refunds and Cancellations** - Cancellations after final payment will result in a refund limited to whatever we can recoup from the airline.

**Insurance** - Adequate travel insurance is essential. We can arrange this for you if desired. Macleay Valley Travel offers Suresave Travel Insurance. Please note that we can only process your travel insurance when we have received full payment for the insurance and the signed Suresave Travel Insurance application form, located on the last page of the Suresave Travel Insurance information booklet. Until this time the travel insurance cannot be processed and will not be valid. Macleay Valley Travel will bear no responsibility for any consequences that may occur as a result of an incomplete insurance application.

**Passports** - All travellers require a current passport with at least 6 months left on it at the end of the tour. Non-Australian passport holders require a re-entry visa for Australia. Visas are required for all passport holders to Vietnam and Laos. The Vietnam visa fee for an Australian passport holder is \$75 and we charge \$30 for processing. A visa for Laos can be obtained upon arrival at the Lao border. Two colour photos, passport and USD \$30 are required. Please note these prices are subject to change.

We do not recommend that you apply for your Vietnamese visa online, as this can result in delays at the airport when you arrive. There are also certain risks associated with this process which we hold no responsibility for. Please note that if you intend to get a visa online/arrival, you do so at your own risk. The tour group will not wait for any time spent obtaining visas at the airport and you may need to arrange a separate transfer at your own expense.

**Basic Tour Price and Taxes** - Air taxes and fuel levies are included in the basic tour price if the tour is paid in full on or before the due date on the final invoice. Macleay Valley Travel reserves the right to charge for any increase in air taxes and fuel levies if the tour is not paid in full by the due date.

**Not Included in the Cost** - All items of a personal nature such as telephone calls, drinks, excess baggage, tips, meals, (except those specified in the itinerary), travel insurance etc. Similarly, credit card payments can only be accepted if 2% is added to the price to help defray the heavy merchant fees charged to us by the credit card companies. There is a 3% surcharge for Diners Club.

**Breakaway Fee** - All fully inclusive prices are based on group travel and any deviation from the set itinerary will incur a breakaway fee. The breakaway fee for most deviations including a post-tour extension on this tour is \$55 per person. Please inquire with our office for prices on any pre-tour extensions.

**Health and Fitness** - Macleay Valley Travel recommends that the passenger is reasonably healthy and/or fit to participate in this tour. Persons with a disability requiring special assistance must be accompanied by a companion. Macleay Valley Travel and their representatives cannot provide this service. Macleay Valley Travel reserves the right to accept/decline or terminate a passenger's participation in the tour under certain circumstances. Macleay Valley Travel is legally not permitted to provide medical advice as to vaccinations/injections which you may require for this tour and advise you to consult your local medical practitioner for specific medical advice. There are no compulsory injections required for this tour.

**Booking through other Agents** - As we keep the cost of our tours as low as possible, there is insufficient margin for us to be able to pay commission to other travel agents, so some bookings can only be accepted if the client pays the other agent's commission.

**Accreditation** - Macleay Valley Travel is a fully accredited travel agency under the AFTA (Australian Federation of Travel Agents) ATAS - AFTA Travel Accreditation Scheme. As such, you are assured of a consumer focused and quality assured business, ensuring professional conduct and ethical business practices. We are happy for any prospective traveller with us to check us out with your local Consumer Affairs (Fair Trading) department.

**Twin Share Bookings** - If you do not have a travel partner, but wish to travel at twin share rates, we will try and assign you with another traveller but this is not guaranteed. We assign passengers by their gender, on a first come, first served basis and do not assign twin share passengers according to their age, profession, interests etc. There are risks with sharing a room with a person you do not know, and Macleay Valley Travel accepts no responsibility if you are incompatible with your assigned room mate. Additionally, if you are assigned a travelling companion to share with and they cancel off the tour prior to making the final payment, then you will either be required to pay the single room supplement or we will try our best to assign you with another twin share passenger, if one is available.

**Limitation of Liability** - As Macleay Valley Travel acts only as agent for the Airlines, Hotels, Coach Companies etc., providing accommodation, transportation and other services, Macleay Valley Travel shall not be liable or responsible for death or injury to any person or loss or damage to any property including baggage arising out of or connection with any transportation, accommodation or other services, or resulting directly or indirectly from acts of God, fire, breakdown in machinery or equipment, acts of Government or other authorities, de jure or defacto wars, whether declared or not, hostilities, civil disturbances, strikes, riots, thefts, epidemics, quarantines, medical or customs regulations, delays or cancellations caused by changes in schedules or itinerary, or over bookings or defaults or for any causes beyond Macleay Valley Travel's control or any loss or damage resulting from improper or insufficient passports, visas or other documents and neither Macleay Valley Travel, and its servants or employees shall be or become liable or responsible for any additional expenses or liability sustained or incurred by the tour member as a result of the foregoing causes. Additionally you must meet the entry requirements for each country you visit. Macleay Valley Travel will not be liable if you are denied entry to a country for any reason, including a past criminal history. Macleay Valley Travel reserves the right to decline bookings made for any group tour. Any tour booking confirmation is conditional, contingent on our view of the ability of a person to be able to participate in a tour without the likelihood of conflict between members of a tour whether perceived or actual.

Macleay Valley Travel reserves the right to modify the itinerary or the accommodation if circumstances make this necessary, provided that the amended itinerary is of equal value or greater value than that of the original program.

**MACLEAY VALLEY TRAVEL - BOOKING FORM**

**PLEASE PRINT DETAILS CLEARLY IN BLOCK LETTERS AND ALSO**

**A PHOTOCOPY OF YOUR PASSPORT MUST BE SENT WITH BOOKING FORM**

Name of Tour : \_\_\_\_\_ Departure Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Passenger 1** (as written in passport) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: **Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss. Dr.** \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**Passenger 2** (as written in passport) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: **Mr. Mrs. Ms. Miss. Dr.** \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

**Postal Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **PostCode** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email** \_\_\_\_\_

**Telephone / Fax Number:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Mobile** \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Nationality: \_\_\_\_\_

Passport Nationality \_\_\_\_\_

(Passport must have 6 months validity from the time of tour completion)

**Single room / Twin beds / Double bed:** (Room type is subject to availability)

Circle which airport you wish to depart from: SYDNEY / MELBOURNE / BRISBANE

Do you have any existing medical conditions?: \_\_\_\_\_

Special Dietary Requests: \_\_\_\_\_

Optional Extensions: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you like to receive details of our travel insurance?: YES / NO (Please Circle)

In case of emergency, please notify :

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this sheet with your non-refundable deposit of \$200 per person.

**DECLARATION. I have read and understand fully the booking conditions and I accept them.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**A copy of passport is required to verify spelling of name. If this is not provided and the information we have for the airline is incorrect and ticket is issued, then the airline will charge a reissue fee.**