

## What to do in Luang Prabang

These are some of the things we have most enjoyed while in LP. There are more things that could go on such a list – but these are our favourites – places that we return to on each visit.

### Eating

Name	Where is it	Comments/what we liked
View Point Café	Part of the Mekong Riverview Hotel – on the river front at the tip of the peninsula	Best view in town. Eat a plate of river weed with pre-dinner drinks. Example: Green herb soup (watercress?) with tiny pork balls is excellent.
Apsara Hotel restaurant	On the Nam Khan river*	Lovely balcony Sago/coconut/mango/praline dessert - yummm
Rosella Fusion	On the Nam Khan river*	
Khaiphen	On a side street near the Mekong river	Training restaurant for disadvantaged young people. Excellent 'fusion' food, cocktail special changes each week. Watermelon and citrus mojito – swoon. Example: Chicken legs in tamarind sauce.
Bamboo Tree	On the Nam Khan river*	Lovely herb drinks (iced lemongrass tea etc); excellent cooking school with great market visit (huge Phosy market just outside town).
Coconut Garden	On main road through town (Sakkaline Road)	Average to good food, busy and popular
Luang Prabang Kitchen	On main road towards end	Example: clear watercress and chicken ball soup, laap

\*Restaurants on the Nam Khan River are no longer right on the river front. UNESCO has ruled that to preserve the riverbanks, restaurants must move across the road to their main buildings. This is still good, although not quite as atmospheric as previously. One restaurant has retained the right to have tables on the river – that is the View Point Café (Mekong Riverview).

### Snacking and drinking

Name	Where it is	Comments
Utopia Bar	Overlooking Nam Khan river, just south of the peninsula	Amazing atmosphere; furniture and decorations made of old bomb cases; hippy vibe in rambling garden overlooking the river.

The Veranda	Part of Villa Nagara guest house on Nam Khan river, near tip of peninsula	Lovely riverside spot
Viewpoint Café	At Mekong Riverview Hotel	Best views in town
Banneton Bakery Café	On main road (Sakkaline Road), RHS as you walk down to the end	Great French cakes
Le Café Ban Vat Seng	On Sakkaline Road, RHS as you walk down to the end, before Banneton	Good French food and cakes. Great people watching from tables outside. Very popular.

## Activities

Name of attraction	Where	Notes
Traditional Arts & Ethnology Centre	A museum In town, not far from post office	Good displays of tribal costumes and textiles; great shop selling scarves, placemats, bags etc. Also nice coffee shop.
Ock Pop Tok	A couple of shops in town and a workshop out of town	This group promotes the revival of weaving in the villages. Great fun classes in weaving and fabric dying. Also lovely shop selling scarves etc. Book classes at their shop in town; they provide transport out to the workshop, which also has an excellent café and lovely river views.
Kouang Si waterfall and Bear Rescue Centre	Out of town	Impossibly bright blue falls in shallow terraces – as long as there hasn't been too much rain. Visit early (avoid the crowds). Your hotel can probably organise a trip or you can sort it out with the touts near the river (Mekong pier). The bears are rescued from the bile farming trade. They seem happy – it has to be better than the alternative.
Xang Khong textile and paper village	Across the Nam Khan river from the end of the peninsula	In dry season (Nov to April-ish) you can walk across the bamboo bridge at the end of the peninsula. Other times you can drive (get a tuk-tuk) or get there by boat (see sunset boat trip). Many shops selling handmade paper; also textiles. We have bought a few lovely wall hangings here. Pleasant to walk around.
Sunset boat trip		A must. The boatman will usually take you to the textile village, also to Vat Kok Pab. The sunset on the river is gorgeous. Your hotel can probably organise this, or negotiate with the boat men at the Mekong pier.
Vat Kok Pab	Across the river.	Extensive, beautifully cared-for grounds. Can be done as part of the sunset boat trip.

Cooking school	Bamboo Tree restaurant. Others recommend Tamarind (we have only tried Bamboo Tree)	Lots of fun and you get an excellent lunch and market visit.
Living Land Farm	Out of town	Ring them to book: (856) 20 551 99208 or (856) 20 7777 8335. They organise transport. Half day Rice Experience, where you learn all about growing rice in a most entertaining way – the best fun we had on that trip.
Pak Ou caves	On the Mekong, out of town.	Hundreds (thousands?) of Buddha images in a cave. Get there by boat (organize with hotel or directly with boat men.
Morning market	Side street running from main road towards Mekong River, at the western end of the peninsula.	Go early – runs from about 6.00 to about 10.00. You'll get some great photos but will possibly see some confronting foods (we saw a binturong ready to eat)
Phousy hill	Western end of the peninsula, on the left as you walk up the main road from the tip of the peninsula.	Climb the hill for some beaut views of the town.
Wandering	Walk along the main road and roam into the many small laneways connecting the road with the river (Nam Khan side closer or Mekong side a bit further). Or – walk along the Nam Khan from the end of the peninsula to Utopia bar.	<p>LP is the most relaxing town to walk in – low traffic, wide footpaths, beautiful buildings...</p> <p>The riversides are great, full of sights and shops and views of the rivers. And you will take thousands of photos. The town has some lovely temples, too. Wat Sensoukharam is one of our favourites – on the main road. Refuel in the Café Ban Vat Sene or the Banneton.</p> <p>The whole town is easily walkable. Maps available on line – Hobo Maps: <a href="http://hobomaps.com/LuangPrabangCentralMap.html">http://hobomaps.com/LuangPrabangCentralMap.html</a> - a bit like Nancy Chandler.</p>
Alms-giving	Along main road and a couple of side streets at dawn	Not sure whether to recommend this. The monks get a bit tired of tourists watching their activity, and some groups of tourists have made themselves unpopular by their proximity and refusal to leave them in peace.

## Shops

Name of shop	Where is it	Comments
Naga Creations	On the main road	Beautiful silver and silk jewellery created by owner Fabrice. Tribal and modern designs combined. I bought a lovely tribal bead (heavy silver) on a black rolled silk cord. It is my favourite piece of jewellery.
Montagne	Main road	Jewellery and clothes. I bought a buffalo horn necklace – marble sized beads, all different, on waxed string. Another favourite. The buffalo horn jewellery turns up in many places I suspect there is a factory in China) but this place has really lovely stuff.
Ock Pop Tok	Several outlets, one on the main road	As mentioned above – beautiful silk and cotton fabrics, scarves (I have trouble keeping Baz out of this shop), women's tops, bags. Enrol in one of their half day workshops – lots of fun.
Night market	At the western end of the main road every night	Fun to browse, but not a lot of original stuff. Still – recommended at least once.

There are so many beautiful shops that you will pass on the main street and on the riversides. I can't remember their names, but you will have no trouble discovering your own.