

# SPICE ROADS





## CYCLING



### SOUTHERN LAOS BY BICYCLE

Tour Code  
LAO-LSL

8 DAYS  
7 NIGHTS

 Destinations	Thailand, Laos
 Tour Meets Tour Ends	Ubun Ratchatani Ubun Ratchatani
 Fly in to Fly out of	Ubun Ratchathani International Airport (UBP) Ubun Ratchathani International Airport (UBP)
 Group Size Minimum Age	2-16 riders 18 (on scheduled departures)

### ACTIVITY PROFILE



6  
Cycling days

262<sup>km</sup>  
Total cycling distance

44<sup>km</sup>  
Avg distance / day

m  
Avg climbing / day

### PRICING



Price	US\$ 1,900
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US\$ 125
Single Supplement	US\$ 400

### WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks

### WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

### DEPARTURES



31 January - 07 February 2021  
07 November - 14 November 2021  
12 December - 19 December 2021  
26 December - 02 January 2022

## TRIP PROFILE

Our biking sojourn takes us through the Southern Lowlands from Pakse down to the Cambodian border before heading north and then east to the fertile lands of the coffee rich Bolaven Plateau. We cover up to 262 km in 6 cycling days, and much of the terrain is quite flat except for the days up on the plateau. There are some great natural attractions and the chance to spot the rare Irrawaddy dolphins makes this one tour that has absolutely something for everyone. Along the way, the scenery is constantly changing: we go from arid scrubland to jungle to lush green valleys. The views at some of the places we stay are absolutely amazing, and this, combined with the changing scenery, make this tour a feast for the eyes. Apart from cycling, we take time out to see 5th century temples of Wat Phu, some wonderful waterfalls, visit one of the best coffee growing areas in the world, and hopefully are lucky enough to sight the elusive Irrawaddy dolphins from one of the Mekong's 4,000 islands.

**Suitability:** This ride is a great one for novices and experts alike. Most of this ride is flat apart from the end of Day 5 and the start of Day 6, and it undulates on Day 8. The road surfaces are generally very good and so make for easier riding. Anyone who has moderate fitness will enjoy this tour. If you are in doubt, please contact us for advice or a list of references.

**Biking Conditions:** The road surfaces are mixed: most days we ride on reasonably good quality asphalt roads, but there are enough rides on very badly broken or dirt tracks to mean you will need a mountain bike, preferably one with front shocks. However, there is nothing technical involved on this tour, and anyone, assuming they are fit enough, will be able to join no matter how little cycling experience they have. A support truck is always available to help when required, except on Day 4 when we ride on the islands.



**Day 1 Ubon Ratchatani – Khong Jiam**

The start point of the tour is Ubon Ratchatani, and you can travel there by plane or train from Bangkok. We have one group transfer to our hotel on the banks of the Mekong River. Please inform us of your arrival time. We have our trip briefing and dinner in the early evening on the bank of the Mekong River.



Tohsang Khong Jiam



Dinner

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## Day 2 Khong Jiam – Wat Phu – Don Daeng

It's a short transfer to the Lao border at Chongmek, and once visa formalities have been completed, we drive about 1 hour to the start of our ride. We start cycling on a flat tarmac road, passing through the former colonial town of Champasak, which stretches along the Mekong River. We ride 8 km to Wat Phu, a Khmer Hindu temple complex dating back to the 5th century. Here, we have a picnic lunch and explore this fascinating place before we head back to Champasak and overnight at our riverside resort.



The River Resort



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 48km

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## Day 3 Champasak – Don Khong

We start the day with a short cycle to catch a ferry to Don Daeng Island, and we go for a short ride around the island. Then we take a ferry ride to the other side of the river and ride to the village of Ban Niet Ngong. Once we reach the village, we can opt to ride or walk up to see Phu Asa, a curious site of stone towers. We have lunch and then ride back down to the main junction before we load up the vans for a transfer to Ban Hat. Here, we cross back over to the Mekong to one of the biggest of the islands in this mighty river, Don Khong. Arriving in the late afternoon will give you time to walk along the river and watch as the locals make full use of the river.



Arena Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 44km

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## Day 4 Don Khong – Don Khone

Today, we island hop! We have an early start and ride around Don Khong and along the river banks to the ferry, stopping to see locals making palm sugar. When we reach the ferry, it's only 200 m to the island of Don Som, one of the longest islands in the Mekong, stretching about 12 km to where it meets the tip of Don Det. It's another quick ferry ride to Don Det, and we cycle along a dirt path to an old French Railway bridge and cross over to Don Khone for hotel check in and lunch before continuing to a leisurely cruise in search of the nearly extinct Irrawaddy dolphins. We visit Leepi Falls and see the Mekong River channel on our way back to the hotel. A varied ride over four islands on narrow dirt tracks means there'll be no vehicle support, but we will still stop for water and snack breaks.



Seng Ahloune Resort



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 45km

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## Day 5 Don Khone – Bolaven Plateau

After breakfast, we ride a short distance to the ferry to cross the Mekong again. It's a short 12-km ride to Khan Phapeng Waterfalls. This natural phenomenon splits the Mekong. After you've taken your photos, we transfer for about 2 hours to begin our journey into the coffee growing area of Laos: the Bolaven Plateau. We stop for lunch at Tad Fane Waterfall. Then it's on the bikes to cycle to our coffee resort for an overnight. We start with a gentle uphill of 10 km to the town of Paksong. Then the road evens out before we roll down to the resort.



Sinook Resort



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 40km

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## Day 6 Bolaven Plateau - Tad Lo - Semi Rest Day

We ride on to Tha Teng on a quiet road, passing villages and lots of cheering children. After lunch, we hit a very quiet road, watching out for piglets crossing, and stop at a Katou village to see how they roast coffee and learn why there are empty coffins under the houses. Then it's an easy downhill. From the junction, it's only 5 km to Tad Lo Waterfalls and our riverside over-night. The afternoon is free to take a dip in the waterfalls before we have an alfresco dining experience overlooking the falls to round off a great day.

 Tad Lo Lodge  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 30km

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## Day 7 Tad Lo – Pakse

As we leave the Bolaven Plateau behind, we ride on an undulating road that has a few surprises – some lengthy but gradual climbs, one is 5 km, another 14 km. We ride 52 km to Tad Pha Suam, where we can see different styles of traditional Laotian homes and another amazing waterfall. We then transfer an hour to Pakse to take in this riverside town. We have our farewell dinner on the roof of the Pakse Hotel.

 Athena Hotel  Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

 Ride 55km

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## Day 8 Pakse – Ubon Ratchathani

We drive back to the border and cross into Thailand for a 11:00 am arrival in Ubon Ratchathani, in time to catch afternoon flights.

 Breakfast

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**Disclaimer:** The adventure cycling tours we operate often go beyond the beaten track, and the countries where we ride are not always predictable. Due to these reasons, it is occasionally necessary to reroute or update itineraries. Our guarantee is that we will not change a trip unless for safety or to improve it. Our listed hotels are always accurate at the time of writing, but should we have to change any hotel, it will always be for a similar or better one.

## NUTS & BOLTS

### Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. The bikes are well-known makes of mountain bikes with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes and Shimano components and front suspension. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, and that it is in good mechanical order.

### Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

## Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

## Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

## THE NITTY GRITTY

### Passports and Visas

All nationalities require a visa for Laos. A 30-day visa on arrival can be obtained at all airports and \*some land border crossings. An eVisa can be used to enter Laos at international airports in Vientiane, Luang Prabang, and Pakse. The process takes 3 days and can be applied for [here](#).

A visa issued at a Laos consulate abroad is valid for 60 days. When entering Laos with a visa please be sure to obtain an immigration entry stamp. Entering the country on only a visa, and not the proper immigration entry stamp, could subject you to fines and/or penalties.

\*Beginning December 31, 2019, these border posts will no longer offer Visa On Arrival (VOA) services or accept eVisas. If you are traveling into Laos from Vietnam through the Dien Bien Phu border (as in [Cycling Hanoi to Luang Prabang](#)) or the Nameo border (as in [Remote Vietnam and Laos by Bike](#)), you will need to obtain your entry visa at a Laotian embassy or consulate prior to arrival in Laos. Please contact the Laotian Embassy or Consulate in your country of residence to apply for your visa in advance. Be aware that posted visa fees from the Laotian government can be subject to change without notice.

### Health

We recommend that you visit a travel medical doctor and ask about the following vaccinations: typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. A certificate for Yellow Fever is required when arriving from an infected area within six days.

### Weather

Laos has a tropical climate with fairly high humidity. There are three seasons: from March to June it is hot and dry, with temperatures between 27C and 40C (80-104F), with night temperatures in the 20C/75F). The rainy season is from June to October. The cooler season, is from November to February, with average temperatures between 20C and 30C (70- 86F). It can get a little cold at night at higher elevations year round so bring a light fleece for the evenings.

### Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D =dinner. Most meals are local Laos food and feature noodles, curries and soups. Lao cuisine is very similar to Thai food and we make sure you sample as much variety as possible. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

### Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price while riding. Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer is freely available everywhere, but is NOT included in the price.

### Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for travelling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single

supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

## Extra Expenses

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$10, for incidentals. It is customary to tip local tour guides and drivers, however, the amount you give should be dependent on the level of service you receive. As a general guide we suggest US\$3-4 per person per day is appropriate.

## Money

The official national currency in Laos is the kip, however, Thai baht and US dollars are also used, especially in larger cities and towns. In smaller towns and villages, kip is usually preferred. There are now a few ATMs in Laos, but they are not widespread and are operational only sporadically. The best overall exchange rates are those offered at the BCEL (Banque pour le Commerce Extérieur Lao). Licensed moneychangers rates are similar to banks Spend all your kip before you leave as no one will exchange it for you once you leave the country!

## GENERAL BOOKING INFO

### Booking

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place: Read our [Booking Conditions](#)

From the tour page click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office. For the next steps you'll need to know the names of the people traveling and have either a Visa or a MasterCard. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height, or you can add that later by logging into [Manage My Trip](#) (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). However, if you wish to get a children's discount, please do fill out the date of birth of the riders. If you are having any problems, [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 2 381 7490) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

### Deposit

When booking your tour, you'll be required to pay a deposit to guarantee your place. For tours less than 7 days, the deposit amount is 100% of the tour price, per rider. For tours 7 days or longer, the deposit amount is 30% of the tour price, per rider.

Read more about booking and paying for your trip [here](#).

All SpiceRoads trips require proof of travel insurance when booking your holiday. Besides covering you during your trip, travel insurance will also enable you to claim any fees that you have paid to us, including your deposit, if you have to cancel your trip

### Balance

Day tours and tours shorter than 7 days require full payment at the time of booking. For tours 7 days or longer, full payment must be paid 45 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights. Our confirmation will include personal details you provided us (including your flight information), visa application advice, a packing suggestion list and a detailed tour itinerary. It will also include a checklist to ensure you get everything ready for your holiday.

### Cancellation Policy

On the rare occasions when we, SpiceRoads, must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be 100% refunded, which constitutes full settlement. There will be absolutely no deductions. If you, the client, must cancel your reservation, your cancellation fee will be determined according to when you cancel. For full details, please read our [cancellation policy](#).

### Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your

eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for loyalty discount.

### **International Flights**

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your [travel insurance](#) that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

### **Newsletter**

Our adventure travel [e-newsletter](#) is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, however, we will always do our best to adhere to this original itinerary

### **CONTACT US**

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