

PASSPORT



Born in England, **JANE CLEGG** (above) moved to the UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang in northern Laos in 2006, where she now runs a rescue centre for Asiatic black bears.

● **Favourite spot** Tat Kuang Si. Thirty minutes by tuk-tuk (auto-rickshaw) from central Luang Prabang, this rural site hosts the Free the Bears Rescue Centre, and also boasts a stretch of virgin forest and numerous picture-postcard pools and cascades. ● **Satisfying meal** Malee Lao Food (on *Thanon Manomai*, about 50m north of *Phou Vao intersection*, below, far right). Traditional Lao barbecue restaurant offering succulent meat and seafood accompanied by a mouth-watering selection of side dishes and spicy dipping sauces. The aubergine fritters are to die for. ● **Quintessential experience** Watching the locals give alms to Buddhist monks (below, right). At around 6am every day, monks from Luang Prabang's temples walk in a single file around town, receiving food from tourists and Laotian residents. A colourful and deeply traditional sight.



INSIDER: LUANG PRABANG

● **Hidden treasure** The backstreet area around the old jail, close to the picturesque Wat Manarom. An authentic slice of Lao life away from the busier, more touristy waterfront streets. It's the perfect spot for whiling away a few hours immersed in local life. ● **Best view** Mount Phusi (bottom, right) in the centre of Luang Prabang. You get panoramic views at sunrise and sunset from Wat Chom Si on the summit. Watch the Mekong River flow past, with the ornate rooftops of Wat Mai Suwannaphumaham and Haw Kham, the Royal Palace Museum, directly below. ● **Market** Night market (top), on and around Thanon Phothisalat (Luang Prabang's main street). A picturesque array of illuminated stalls offering snacks, souvenirs and all manner of local products. ● **Quiet place** The Nam Khan river area of the Luang Prabang peninsula. At dawn, a lovely mist rises above the lush forested slopes of the nearby peaks, while the clouds overhead reflect beautifully in the slow-moving water. Lucky ones get to watch dragon boat teams practising their strokeplay. ● **Shopping** Pathana Boupha Antique House (26/2 *Ban Visoun on Thanon Phommatha*), on the top floor of a classic colonial-style building, sells a range of authentic Lao ethnic jewellery, silverware, clothing, textiles and pottery (left). It is an Aladdin's cave for souvenir seekers and art enthusiasts.

● **Place to be comfortable alone** Sitting in a Mekong waterfront restaurant snacking on *khai pen* (paper-thin sheets of fried, spiced river algae with sesame seeds) and *jaew bawng* (chili sauce with tomato, dried buffalo skin and garlic), washed down with chilled Beer Lao as the river meanders past. ☒

– AS TOLD TO DANIEL ALLEN



SILVERKRIS 28

