



FASCINATING VIETNAM, CAMBODIA & THE MEKONG RIVER 13 Day River Cruise from Siem Reap to Ho Chi Minh City

Itinerary

Day 1 Arrive Siem Reap, Cambodia

Welcome to Siem Reap, your base during your visit to Angkor, considered by many to be the most spectacular architectural ruins on Earth! Hotel rooms are available for mid-afternoon check-in.

Day 2 Siem Reap

This morning, start your sightseeing of the **TEMPLES OF ANGKOR**. Constructed between the 9th and 13th centuries, the temples were built around the Khmer interpretations of Indian religious and political beliefs that ultimately evolved from Hinduism to Buddhism. The complex architectural grandeur of the Angkor temples is arguably unmatched among ancient ruins anywhere in the world. First, visit the best preserved and most famous of all the temples: **ANGKOR WAT**, honoring the Hindu god Vishnu. Featuring five trademark towers and stunning bas reliefs, it has become a symbol of Cambodia. Then, visit **BANTEAY SREI**, a unique temple dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva. Unlike other temples, it is built on a small scale from red sandstone, which can be carved like wood. This evening, enjoy a **PRIVATE APSARA DANCE PERFORMANCE**, where the ancient Khmer culture is brought to life by talented dancers, singers, and musicians.

☼ Breakfast ☼ Lunch ☼ Dinner

Day 3 Siem Reap

Today, continue your sightseeing of the Angkor temples by tuk-tuk. Start at **ANGKOR THOM** where you will explore **BAYON TEMPLE**. One of the few Buddhist temples in Angkor, it features some 200 striking faces carved in 54 towers and impressive bas reliefs. Next stop is **TA PROHM**, which, unlike the other temples, has been left relatively untouched. Tree roots grow over and through the ruin walls, allowing you to experience the temple with the same wonder as the early explorers who discovered it. Lastly, stop at **LES ARTISANS D'ANGKOR**, a development project

teaching young adults traditional handicraft techniques. The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to explore this charming town.

 Breakfast

Day 4 **Siem Reap (Embarkation)**

This morning, transfer to the port and board your river cruise vessel for your CRUISE down the Mekong through Cambodia and Vietnam. This afternoon, enjoy time on board the ship as you cruise through Tonle Sap (Great Lake). After the rainy season, this massive body of water can cover around 10,000 square miles and provides the perfect breeding ground for fish, which provide food for people living on the lake. This evening, enjoy a welcome reception.

NOTE:

During low water conditions, generally mid-December to August, we will not be able to cruise on Tonle Sap. In these cases, we will fly from Siem Reap to Phnom Penh for embarkation. No included sightseeing will be missed. Low water conditions vary from year to year, so this will be evaluated on a cruise-by-cruise basis.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 5 **Cruising: Kampong Tralach–Konpong Louang–Phnom Penh**

Today, visit Kampong Tralach for an OX CART RIDE past rice paddy fields and the beautiful Cambodian countryside. Along the way, stop to MEET WITH A LOCAL FARMER and learn more about his daily life. Lastly, visit the SILVERSMITH VILLAGE of Konpong Louang. Here you will see talented craftsmen use age-old techniques to turn pure silver into works of art. Then sail to the capital city of Phnom Penh. After lunch, your sightseeing tour by private cyclo includes visits to the ROYAL PALACE with the spectacular SILVER PAGODA and the NATIONAL MUSEUM, featuring an outstanding display of Khmer artifacts.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 6 **Cruising: Phnom Penh**

Sightseeing this morning provides a glimpse of the atrocities inflicted on the Cambodian people by the Khmer Rouge regime. Visit the TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM, a former high school that housed over 17,000 prisoners. Of this number, it is believed that less than 15 survived the torture and avoided being sent to the Killing Fields. You will also visit one of the KILLING FIELDS, where over 200,000 people were killed by the Khmer Rouge. The remainder of the day is at your leisure to explore the city. Just before dinner, children from a local orphanage will put on a SHOW featuring local song and dance.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 7 **Cruising: Wat Hanchey–Angkor Ban**

This morning, visit WAT HANCHEY, a temple dating back to the 8th century and the Chenla Empire. Located on a hilltop, enjoy stunning views of the surrounding area and partake in a TRADITIONAL WATER BLESSING given by local monks. After lunch, enjoy a WALKING TOUR through the rural village of Angkor Ban. Here you will see traditional Khmer houses and visit a LOCAL SCHOOL.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 8 **Cruising: Border Crossing–Chau Doc Vietnam**

Cross the border this morning into Vietnam and sail to Chau Doc. Upon arrival, walk through the LOCAL MARKET and absorb the atmosphere as locals are busy buying and selling fish, meat, and produce. After lunch, join a sampan excursion down the backwaters of the river to the religious sites at the base of SAM MOUNTAIN. Along the way, see traditional floating homes, speedboat merchants, a market selling dried goods, and more.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 9 **Cruising: Long Khong A–Cu Lao Gieng**

After breakfast, a sampan brings you to the village of LONG KHONG A, where cotton weaving is a well-preserved tradition. Spend time at one house for a COTTON-WEAVING DEMONSTRATION and a chance to talk with the family. In the afternoon, board a sampan and enjoy scenes of daily life along the river. Stop at a LOCAL HOME, where a skilled family works together to hand-craft sampans for a living. Then, ride a specially designed MOTOR CART to one of Vietnam's oldest churches for a special INTERACTION WITH A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 10 Cruising: Ben Tre

This morning, board a sampan for a scenic cruise to Ben Tre. Visit a LOCAL WORKSHOP to see how rice wine and traditional coconut candy is made. Then, continue on to a LOCAL GARDEN where several types of fruit indigenous to the area are grown. This afternoon, enjoy time on board the ship as we sail to exciting Ho Chi Minh City.

 Breakfast  Lunch  Dinner

Day 11 Ho Chi Minh City (Disembarkation)

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City, still known as Saigon to many. This morning, enjoy a WALKING TOUR of the city's famous and historic landmarks as you stroll through the heart of the city along Dong Khoi Street (formerly Rue Catinat) past Ho Chi Minh Square, the Municipal Theatre, the Central Post Office, and Notre Dame Cathedral. Stop at the Rex Hotel for a refreshing DRINK at the popular ROOFTOP BAR where the U.S. Military held the infamous "Five O'Clock Follies" during the war. Next, visit the WAR REMNANTS MUSEUM followed by BEN THANH MARKET, the largest and oldest in the city. For lunch, participate in a hands-on VIETNAMESE COOKING CLASS. Head into the classroom and learn how to prepare different local dishes and the techniques necessary to recreate them once you return home. Last but not least, sample your delicious creations! The afternoon is at your leisure to explore this lively city.

 Breakfast  Lunch

Day 12 Ho Chi Minh City. Excursion To Cu Chi Tunnels

This morning, leave the city and drive through vast expanses of rice paddies to visit the CU CHI TUNNELS, an extraordinary network of tunnels more than 120 miles in length that was used by the Viet Cong as a hideout and secret village during the war. Here you will learn about how the tunnels were constructed and have a chance to walk through a section to experience what life would have been like underground. Return to Ho Chi Minh City and enjoy the remainder of the afternoon at your leisure. This evening, join your traveling companions for a special farewell dinner hosted by your Cruise Director.

 Breakfast  Dinner

Day 13 Ho Chi Minh City

Your vacation ends with breakfast this morning.

 Breakfast

Book your next glam vacay today!



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