

Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Itinerary Overview

UPSTREAM: SAIGON - PHNOM PENH

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	SAI GON – MY THO – BEN TRE	L/D
Day 2	GAO GIONG	B/L/D
Day 3	CHAU DOC – SAM MOUNTAIN – VIETNAM/CAMBODIA BORDER	B/L/D
Day 4	PHNOM PENH	B

DOWNSTREAM: PHNOM PENH - SAIGON

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	PHNOM PENH	L/D
Day 2	BORDER CROSSING – CHAU DOC – SAM MOUNTAIN	B/L/D
Day 3	GAO GIONG	B/L/D
Day 4	BEN TRE	B/L/D
Day 5	MY THO - SAIGON	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Detailed Itinerary

Upstream: Saigon - Phnom Penh

Day 1 SAIGON – MY THO – BEN TRE

Transfer from Saigon to the river port for embarkation. After lunch, we journey by sampans through mangroves and bamboo forests to the fruit orchards of Ben Tre. This is an area rich in birdlife which we will explore via local transport before transferring to a local rowboat. We will journey slowly through the bamboo covered canals before arriving at a village specialising in making local products. In the evening you will be entertained by a Vietnamese dance troupe on deck.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 2 GAO GIONG

Sailing through the delta offers a real insight into life along this vast waterway. After lunch, a short coach journey through the lush countryside to Gao Giong 'green oasis', a 1,000-acre eucalyptus forest and listed wildlife sanctuary. Here a diverse selection of water birds and egrets gather in their tens of thousands across the Duong Thap Muoi or 'Plain of Reeds'. Rowboats traverse the canals to take us to view the principal nesting areas where photo opportunities abound.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 3 CHAU DOC - SAM MOUNTAIN – BORDER CROSSING

We go alongside at the picturesque border town of Chau Doc where we visit the floating markets & fish farms by sampan. We make a stop at a Chham Village and observe the lives of Vietnamese Muslims before taking minivans for a short drive to Sam Mountain, location of Phuoc Dien Tu or the Hang Pagoda. We climb the 400 steps to the top to visit the pagoda. Upon return to ship, we navigate a web of canals before dropping anchor on the Vietnam/Cambodia border to undergo Immigration formalities.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 4 PHNOM PENH

After breakfast, disembark your Pandaw Expedition in Cambodia's capital Phnom Penh.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Downstream: Phnom Penh - Saigon

Day 1 PHNOM PENH

Passengers can embark the ship after 12:30. Rest of day at leisure. Overnight in Phnom Penh city port with its lively bars, restaurants and night life.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 2 BORDER CROSSING - CHAU DOC - SAM MOUNTAIN

We up anchor early morning and cruise downstream along the Mekong River to the Vietnam border with Vietnam for immigration formalities. We go alongside at the picturesque border town of Chau Doc where we visit the floating markets & fish farms by sampan. We make a stop at a Chham Village and observe the lives of Vietnamese Muslims before taking minivans for a short drive to Sam Mountain, location of Phuoc Dien Tu or the Hang Pagoda. We climb the 400 steps to the top to visit the pagoda.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 3 GAO GIONG

Sailing through the delta offers a real insight into life along this vast waterway. After lunch, a short coach journey through the lush countryside to Gao Giong 'green oasis', a 1,000-acre eucalyptus forest and listed wildlife sanctuary. Here a diverse selection of water birds and egrets gather in their tens of

thousands across the Duong Tharp Muoi or 'Plain of Reeds'. Rowboats traverse the canals to take us to view the principal nesting areas where photo opportunities abound.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 4 BEN TRE

Morning sail across the heart of the delta. After lunch, we journey by sampans through mangroves and bamboo forests to the fruit orchards of Ben Tre. This is an area rich in birdlife which we will explore via local transport before transferring to a local rowboat. We will journey slowly through the bamboo covered canals before arriving at a village specialising in making local products. In the evening you will be entertained by a Vietnamese dance troupe on deck.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise Mekong

Day 5 MY THO - SAIGON

Morning disembarkation and travel by coach from My Tho to Saigon.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions:

- All cruises include group shore-excursions
- Entrance fees
- Transportation
- Tour guide services on board(English speaking)
- Taxes, fuel, river pilots, transfers in Saigon and Siem Reap from/to the meeting point to/from embarkation/disembarkation point or vice versa.
- Food includes full board (Breakfast, lunch, dinner – buffet or set menu style). Mineral water and coffee/tea (from jug) is included all day.

Exclusions:

- Phnom Penh port tax per passenger of 65 USD.
- Crew gratuities (5 USD per passenger/day are recommended).
- Cambodian Visa (available on Upstream cruise only/37 USD).
- Fuel surcharges if any (see terms and conditions).

Note:

- PROGRAMS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASING ON ACTUAL SITUATION DUE TO THE WATER LEVEL. WE WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED 2 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE.
- For overnight registration, we will need passport information (Full name, sex, Nationality, passport number, date of birth) of passengers at least four weeks prior to cruise date.

Important Information

River Conditions Warning

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop.

Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience – not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

For itineraries that include flights in the price of the ticket it should be noted that regional airlines can change departure times or cancel flights at very short notice. In such an event we endeavour to arrange alternative flights but note that this can result in delays often resulting in embarking or disembarking on a different day to that indicated in the itinerary. In such an event the company will cover the cost of hotel accommodation and main meals only, but will not be liable for any claims for compensation for missed days on board a ship, drinks or curtailment of the said itinerary.

Clothes

We recommend wearing loose and comfortable clothing made of cotton or modern material that can readily cool off sweat and body heat. The type of shoes will depend on the excursion types so best to have both light, open toed shoes as well as good walking/hiking shoes with you. A sun hat is always a good idea to bring along.

Southern Vietnam and Cambodia are warm all year-round, but our other cruise destinations can get chilly during the winter months (Laos, Myanmar or northern Vietnam). Therefore, it is always recommended to bring a pullover or a warm jacket with you during this period.

Many of our cruises include visits to local temples or pagodas. When visiting these holy sites, make sure to wear appropriate clothing which covers your shoulders and knees.

Sea sickness

Generally speaking, the rivers we are cruising on in Southeast Asia are very calm and there is hardly any motion on any of our ships. A bit of motion can occur during monsoon rains with stormy winds, but the amount of motion is much less than one would feel during bad weather on the open ocean.

Sea cruises as we offer in Halong Bay or Lan Ha Bay can sometimes encounter heavier waters and ship motion, although this happens very rarely and port authorities will most likely not allow sailing under any such circumstances anyway.

If you are new to cruising or prone to motion sickness, it does not hurt to bring along some motion sickness medication. Drinking a nice hot fresh ginger tea is a natural remedy and tasty alternative our staff is always happy to make for you.

Food and Beverage

All food and beverage on board is completely safe to eat and enjoy, including the ice cubes you enjoy in your chilled drinks. We do not recommend drinking water straight from the tap anywhere, including onboard. We provide you with complimentary clean drinking water throughout your cruise.

You may want to be bit careful with local dishes as they can be spicier than you are used to from home. Approach new dishes slowly and carefully. If you have a sensitive stomach, then you may like to double check with our chef or onboard managers about specific dishes or meals.

On excursions, it may be a good idea to avoid local foods and snacks unless offered by our tour guides. Besides the above, in general we recommend the following motto for your pre- and post-cruise travelling in the Southeast Asian tropics: boil it, peel it, cook it, wash it or forget it!

Health risks

The most effective protection from personal contamination is ensuring strict attention to personal hygiene and in particular, frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water and refraining from hand-to-mouth contact. Colds and other viruses can spread quickly in an enclosed area such as a ship. Continue to practice common-sense hygiene and respiratory courtesy. Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneeze. It is recommended that passengers carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, which does not require rinsing with water. Use sanitizer frequently and throughout the day, particularly after shore excursions and prior to meals. If you have any questions regarding your health or safety, please do not hesitate to ask your cruise director.

Motion sickness can be a problem for some people when cruising, flying or travelling on coaches and trains and it is a good idea to take precautionary measures. Over-the-counter drugs for treating motion sickness can be purchased at pharmacies in most countries, though a side effect can be drowsiness. Alternatives such as ginger tablets and acupuncture wristbands are also available and work well for some people.

Visa requirements for Cambodia

Cambodia visas are easily obtained for most travelers on arrival. Note that passports must have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Cambodia.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Cambodia embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Visa requirements for Vietnam

With the exception of visa exemptions, all travelers must arrange their visa prior to arrival in Vietnam. Passports must also have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Vietnam.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Vietnam embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Insurance

We recommend at least purchasing travel health insurance which covers both in- & outpatient visits and medical repatriation. Buying additional trip cancellation and interruption coverage may also be beneficial in case you have to cancel your travel plans due to unforeseen circumstances.

Electrical adapters

We always recommend bringing a travel adapter as a standard item in your travel kit. You can borrow an adapter on board, but these may be limited.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use.

Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.