



MAGICAL EXPLORER

20 day Magical Vietnam & Cambodia Mekong Cruise

Day 1_Hanoi

Meeting & greeting at the airport upon your arrival and transfer to your hotel. If time permits, we will take a short orientation tour around central Hanoi.

Day 2_Hanoi

(Includes Breakfast)

Today we have a full day tour to visit the various memorials and complexes of Ho Chi Minh, the famous revolutionary leader. We will also visit Single Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature.

Afternoon we visit the Museum of Ethnology which exhibits a large collection of artefacts and full size unique wooden buildings of the 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam.

Next, we enjoy a rickshaw ride through the lively Old Quarter and end up at an old house on Ma May Street, which is a great example of dwellings in the 19th century.

Later we walk through the busy traffic to the water puppet theatre and enjoy a performance of the famed traditional art form created by village farmers around the Red River Delta region.

Day 3_Hanoi - Halong Bay

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

We Leave Hanoi by road to Halong Bay and enjoy the rural scenery as our vehicle travels through the picturesque countryside. Along the way we can stop for close-up views and photographs of water buffalos ploughing, and chat with the rural women wearing their traditional conical hats as they work in the paddy fields.

On arrival at Halong we board a nostalgic traditional junk boat and enjoy a full day and night cruising among the inspirational islets of Halong Bay. Kayaking and swimming are optional, and you can also try your luck at fishing in the bay, or just relax after your dinner. Overnight in Halong Bay on a luxury Junk watching the sun set.

Day 4_Halong - Hanoi - Luang Prabang

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Wake up to fresh coffee then further cruising and more sightseeing. En-route the junk weaves through impressive rock formations as we return to port.

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Disembark and transfer to airport for a flight to Luang Prabang, Laos. Meet up with our local guide upon arrival.

Day 5_Luang Prabang

(Includes Breakfast)

Early rise to watch or participate in the unique daily morning ritual, where hundreds of saffron-clad monks walk in procession collecting offerings of sticky rice from devout residents along the roadsides.

After breakfast embark on a cruise upstream on the Mekong River to the mysterious Pak Ou caves, crammed with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues left by devoted pilgrims.

We also visit Ban Xangkhong and Ban Xienglek where local people produce traditional textiles and jute paper.

Return to town and tour the most outstanding temples: Wat Visoun with the watermelon-shaped roof, Wat Xiengthong with the sweeping roofs, Wat Sene boasting the most dazzling facade of all Luang Prabang temples, Wat Aham - the "Monastery of the blossomed Heart", and Wat Mai, the largest and most richly decorated of all the temples in town.

We then walk up the steps of Mount Phousi to see the beautiful sunset across Luang Prabang.

Take a leisurely walk through the Night Market at the foot of Mount Phosi to see a lovely array of handicrafts.

Day 6_Luang Prabang

(Includes Breakfast)

This morning we visit the rural around Luang Prabang and get acquainted with the Hmong, Lowland Laotian, and Khmu ethnic minority people.

Visit the beautiful Khouangsi Waterfall that offers a chance to cool off in the turquoise pools.

En route back to town we call at Ban Phanom village to visit skilled hand-weaving women.

Soak in the history of Luang Prabang at the Palace Museum which houses statues within the buildings mosaic covered walls.

NOTE: Alternative tour options can be provided if requested at time of booking

Day 7_Luang Prabang - Siem Reap, Cambodia

(Includes Breakfast, Dinner)

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Free in the morning.

Early afternoon we leave the hotel for the airport to catch a flight to Siem Reap. Meet up with our local guide at Siem Reap airport and drive to our hotel.

This evening, enjoy dinner with entertainment from Apsara dancers. Free time afterwards allows for an exciting walk to see the lively Pub Street and the lucky Night Market.

Day 8_Siem Reap

(Includes Breakfast)

We enter the great city of Angkor Thom through the South Gate and visit the temples of Baphoun and Phimeanakas, the Terraces of Elephant and Leper King, and the mysterious smiling Bayon.

Take a break then continue exploring the fascinating temples of Ta Prohm, Banteay Kdei, Takeo, Thommanon, Chau Say Thevoda, and the Royal Bath of Sras Srang.

Hike up Phnom Bakheng to behold the magnificent sunset into the land of temples.

Day 9_Siem Reap

(Includes Breakfast)

This morning, explore the epic Angkor Wat complex. Built in the 12th century as the capital of King Suryavarman II's kingdom, this is the largest and best-preserved of the Angkor temples.

Free time in the afternoon.

Day 10_Mekong Cruise Embarkation -Tonle Lake

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

We check out and transfer from Apsara hotel in Siem Reap to the pier at Phnom Krom. Board the **RV MEKONG PRESTIGE II** and settle into our cabin.

Following lunch Mekong Prestige sets out to cross the Tonle Lake*. This evening we enjoy a lavish Welcome Dinner on board

NOTE: In case of low waters, the transfer to the ship will be made by coach or speed boat

Day 11_Mekong Cruise: Kampong Chhnang-Kampong Tralach-Oudong

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

This morning we'll arrive at Kampong Chhnang, approximately 90 km from Phnom Penh.

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We board a local boat to visit the authentic floating village where life of the entire population is connected to the river through a criss-crossing canal system. We'll go ashore to stroll through the scenic market. Return to the cruise ship for lunch while sailing towards Kampong Tralach.

In the afternoon, travel by bus to discover the very charming Vihara of the Wat Kampong Leu Pagoda dating back from the last century, which has retained beautiful wall paintings. Return by ox-drawn carriage and continue by bus to Oudong, 40 km from Phnom Penh.

Between 1618 and 1866, Oudong was the capital city of Cambodia. Erected at a hilltop, this place houses numerous Stupas dating of the last Khmer Kings. We'll see the Vipassana Dhura Pagoda, a place of meditation for Buddhist Monks, before retreating to Mekong Prestige for dinner and overnight.

Day 12_Mekong Cruise: Koh Chong-Phnom Penh

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Arriving in Koh Chong in the morning, we'll pay a visit to this silk weaving village, taking in the local workshop, a pagoda, and a primary school.

At the school we have the opportunities to chat with pupils. Enjoy lunch aboard then sail on to Phnom Penh. Visit Wat Phnom after which the city was named then enjoy dinner with Traditional Khmer Apsara Dancing Show on board.

Day 13_Mekong Cruise: Phnom Penh

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Today we explore Phnom Penh and visit the Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda. The National Museum is another highlight, with outstanding displays of Khmer crafts.

After lunch we visit the former High School "S21", converted to a detention centre under the Red Khmer's rule between 1975 and 1979.

We also have the opportunity to immerse in the exotic sights and sounds of the Russian Market, a labyrinth of stalls offering from CDs and DVDs to silks, crafts, jewellery and more. Return to Mekong Prestige for dinner.

Day 14_Mekong Cruise: Phnom Penh - Navigation-Border Crossing

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Today is a day of leisure aboard. The ship departs towards the border with Vietnam. We'll cruise past the Mekong's timeless villages and river life with extensive fishing activities.

Cross the border and complete the required immigration formalities (normally lasts 4 hours).

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Day 15_Mekong Cruise: Outdong-Kampong Tralach

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

This morning we'll arrive in Tan Chau, a remote small town on the main Mekong River. After breakfast, we take a local boat to visit a fishing farm.

Next, we go ashore to visit a local workshop making woven mats, and take a short walk in the village to visit a silk workshop.

We take a rickshaw ride around this fascinating town takes us back to the pier for lunch.

Relax aboard in the remainder of the day.

Day 16_Mekong Cruise: Sadec-Cai Be

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)

Today we explore Sadec, visit a Cao daist Temple and stroll through the colourful local market.

Following lunch aboard we'll cruise past Vinh Long Province, located in the middle of the Delta region.

On arrival in Cai Be, we'll tour the town's French Gothic Cathedral and walk along the river bank to a family manufacturer of rice paper and coconut sweets.

This evening, enjoy dinner with a traditional Music Show

Day 17_Mekong Cruise Disembarkation in My Tho- Saigon

(Includes Breakfast)

We'll arrive in My Tho early this morning. Enjoy breakfast then check out and disembark. Transfer to Saigon by coach.

On arrival, we'll be met at the drop-off point and taken to the hotel. Mid-afternoon we'll set out to see the famous sights in Ho Chi Minh city, taking in the Reunification Palace, War Museum, Notre Dame Cathedral, Central Colonial Post Office, Opera House, City Hall and Ben Thanh Market, etc.

Day 18_Saigon- Caodai Temple -Cu Chi Tunnels - Saigon

(Includes Breakfast, Lunch)

Our tour today includes a visit to the opulent Holy See Temple of Caodai Sect in Tay Ninh. Caodai is a fascinating Vietnamese religion combining aspects of Christian, Buddhism,

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Muslim, Taoism and Confucius into a single religion. There's a chance to observe the impressive noon service of adherents.

Early afternoon we travel to Cu Chi to explore the legendary network of underground combat tunnels where our guide will explain how the Vietcong survived and fought during the Vietnam War.

Day 19_Saigon

(Includes Breakfast)

Free day to relax and explore Ho Chi Minh City on your own to soak up the atmosphere of Vietnam. Experience great shopping, cafes and wonderful restaurants.

Day 20_Departure

(Includes Breakfast)

Free time before transferring to the airport for your departure flight.

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Hotels

HANOI - Golden Silk Hotel

HALONG BAY LUXURY CRUISE - Ba Tho Junk

LANG PRABANG - Villa Santi Hotel

SIEM REAP - Empress Hotel

Mekong River - RV Mekong Prestige II luxury Cruise Main Deck Cabin

HO CHI MINH CITY - Rex Hotel

All hotels selected are based on strict requirement on cleanness, comfort, location and a high international standard that we expect from our hotel suppliers to deliver to our valued guests. If any of the above hotels are not available, a similar hotel in the same standard will be provided.

Price Includes:

- All internal flights within Vietnam.
- All airport/hotel transfers where specified (private transfer).
- Selections of superior/deluxe (4 star) hotels.
- Sightseeing tours including entrance fee by professional English-speaking tour guide.
- Meals as specified in the itinerary.
- Air conditioned transportation and bottle water on coach.
- **7 nights on board Deluxe Mekong cruise Ship**
- Welcome and Farewell Dinners on board the cruise boat including the option of local beer, packaged soft drinks and house brand spirits, filtered coffee, selection of teas & herbal infusions and local mineral water during the Mekong cruise.
- Halong overnight cruise.
- Guaranteed Departure
- **Meals:** As stated in itinerary

Hotel and cabin upgrades are available and private tailor-made tours can also be arranged.

Price Excludes:

- International Flights. Air fare is between £500 and £800 per person return. We can book for you with ATOL Protection.
- Visa letter of arrivals fee (please contact us for details).
- Visa stamping fees at Airports
- Imported beverages on the Mekong cruise ship.
- Travel Insurance.
- Tip for driver and Guide.

The itinerary is designed according to the most updated information available. On rare occasions, changes can occur due to local conditions which are out of our control, such as flight, train, hotel changes etc. We will always act in your best interest to handle any amendments if this did occur. We reserve the right to change, amend or alter the itinerary if required.

Please refer to our website for all current tour details, Terms and Conditions and FAQ pages for up-to-date tour information and further essential information about this tour.

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