



## **CRUISING THE MEKONG RIVER**

### **Vietnam and Cambodia**

### **Aboard the 14-cabin *Mekong Princess***

**November 15–28, 2021**

### **Advance Itinerary**

**(subject to change prior to the publication of the tour brochure)**

Indochina. The Mekong River. Angkor Wat. These names evoke appealing images of exotic cultures, magnificent Buddhist and Hindu temples, and lush tropical landscapes punctuated by a patchwork of rice paddies. Join us for a fascinating journey through Vietnam and Cambodia, including a 7-night Mekong River cruise aboard the *Mekong Princess*, a riverboat that embodies the gracious heritage and beauty of Southeast Asia, combined with a romantic French colonial style and all the modern comforts. Her small size and ultra-shallow draft allow us to experience this mighty river from an intimate and authentic perspective, stepping into local homes to see how people live and work, and gliding through floating markets in the early-morning hours as they come to life.

Our program begins with a stay in Ho Chi Minh City, a busy and dynamic city still known by many as Saigon, and ends with two full days to explore the remarkable Khmer temples and monuments of legendary Angkor, one of Asia's most exquisite archaeological gems. In between, the Mekong River takes us into the fascinating but seldom-visited world of one of Asia's great waterways. Marvel at floating villages whose residents literally live on the water—working, shopping, even attending school and church. Tour a family-owned orchard, visit a noodle factory and a coconut candy maker, and experiment with typical Vietnamese ingredients during a cooking demonstration. A pre-trip extension to Hanoi and breathtaking Ha Long Bay is also available.

### **HIGHLIGHTS**

- Seven nights aboard the 28-passenger *Mekong Princess*. The small size and shallow draft of our riverboat allow for visits to villages not accessible to larger boats, as well as embarkation in Saigon port itself (others miss parts of the Mekong Delta by embarking in My Tho).
- Comfortable cabins (all suites) measure 216 to 495 sq. ft., with panoramic floor-to-ceiling glass French doors, deluxe spa-quality linens and amenities, as well as safe, individual climate control, and flat-screen TV.
- Excellent local guides throughout. Continuity of guides within each country is a special bonus.
- Welcome dinner in Saigon, Vietnamese opera and children's dance performances on the cruise, and a festive farewell dinner in Siem Reap.
- Two full days to explore the temples of Angkor, including sunrise views of Angkor Wat from the peaceful surroundings of Ba Kheng Temple, and opportunities to ride an elephant and a *tuk tuk*.
- Excursions offer authentic glimpses of rural village life, with visits to floating markets, farms, and villages.



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**ITINERARY OUTLINE**

| DAY    | OVERNIGHT                                 | HOTEL                  | ACTIVITIES   |
|--------|---|------------------------|--|
| Nov 15 | Depart U.S.                               |                        | Overnight flights to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam   |
| Nov 16 | Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam                 | Park Hyatt Hotel       | Arrive Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon); transfers to hotel; evening at leisure to rest and recover from flight   |
| Nov 17 | Ho Chi Minh City                          | Park Hyatt Hotel       | City tour and lunch; Cu Chi Tunnels visit with former Viet Cong officer or local expert; welcome dinner at local venue. BLD  |
| Nov 18 | Ho Chi Minh City (Embark)                 | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | Mid-morning check out; market visit; embark <i>Mekong Princess</i> . BLD   |
| Nov 19 | Ben Tre & Can Tho                         | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | <i>Sampan</i> ride through mangrove channels; visit local coconut candy maker and orchard, travel by local boats to explore creeks lined with Nipah palms; cruise on to Can Tho to visit the Zihuang pagoda and see a welcome unicorn dance. BLD |
| Nov 20 | Can Tho & Hoa An                          | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | <i>Sampan</i> ride through Can Tho's floating market; visit a local factory and family-owned orchard; wander the flower gardens in Hoa An and meet families who weave hats and mats. BLD   |
| Nov 21 | Gieng Island / Hong Ngu / Border Crossing | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | In Gieng Island visit a sampan-making village; canal drive through duck farms and monkey bridges; Catholic Church visit; Hong Ngu village where traditional scarves are woven; temple devoted to Hoa Hoa; Cross into Cambodia. BLD               |
| Nov 22 | Phnom Penh                                | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | <i>Cyclo</i> ride to see the Royal Palace and Silver Palace; Explore the National Museum. Enjoy on board activities this afternoon or explore Phnom Penh on your own this afternoon. Overnight in Phnom Penh. BLD                                |
| Nov 23 | Phnom Penh                                | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | Morning visit to Choeung Ek killing fields and Tuol Sleng (former Khmer Rouge prison); evening (local orphanage) children's performance. BLD   |
| Nov 24 | Angkor Ban                                | <i>Mekong Princess</i> | Visit a local family's home and a school to meet children in their classroom; walk through the local village, with a stop at the local monastery. BLD  |
| Nov 25 | Kampong Cham / Siem Reap                  | Raffles Grand Hotel    | Disembark <i>Mekong Princess</i> ; transfer to Siem Reap; evening at leisure BL  |
| Nov 26 | Siem Reap                                 | Raffles Grand Hotel    | Full morning at Angkor Wat; Siem Reap art tour by <i>tuk tuk</i> with visits to galleries and artisan workshops BL   |
| Nov 27 | Siem Reap                                 | Raffles Grand Hotel    | Sunrise view over Angkor Wat from Ba Kheng Temple; elephant ride to Angkor Thom; Ta Prohm; festive farewell dinner. BLD  |
| Nov 28 | Return to U.S.                            |                        | Transfers to Siem Reap airport for return flights to the U.S.  |



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**GENERAL INFORMATION**

**Program Fees:**

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| Junior Suite (Main Deck, 2 cabins), per person, sharing .....  | \$7,995  |
| Saigon Suite (Main Deck, 4 cabins), per person, sharing.....   | \$8,995  |
| Apsara Suite (Upper Deck, 4 cabins), per person, sharing.....  | \$9,995  |
| Tonle Suite (Upper Deck, 2 cabins), per person, sharing.....   | \$11,495 |
| Angkor Suite (Upper Deck, 2 cabins), per person, sharing ..... | \$12,995 |
| Junior Suite (Main Deck), single .....                         | \$13,495 |
| Saigon Suite (Main Deck), single.....                          | \$15,495 |

Fees and services are based on exchange rates of November, 2019 and are subject to change.

**Fees Include:** All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary • Full program of briefings, lectures, and presentations • Shared transfers for all participants on group arrival and departure dates • Baggage handling • Gratuities to porters, waitstaff, guides, and drivers • Gratuities to shipboard personnel • Port charges • Entrance fees • Beer, sodas, water, coffee and tea for included for all lunches; all of the aforementioned plus wine included for all dinners • Free-flow coffee, tea, soft drinks, local beer, local liquor on board *Mekong Princess* • One complimentary spa treatment per person during the cruise • Bottled water on motorcoaches, at hotels, and on board ship • Criterion Tour Manager

**Fees Do Not Include:** U.S. domestic and international airfare • Passport/visa expenses • Medical expenses and immunizations • Private airport transfers • Travel insurance • Optional excursions or deviations from the scheduled tour • Excess baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary; dishes and beverages not part of the included meals; liquor or soft drinks except as noted • Laundry or dry cleaning • Telephone, fax, Internet, and email charges • Room service • Other items of a personal nature



## CRUISING THE MEKONG RIVER Hanoi & Ha Long Bay Pre-Trip Extension

Begin your Southeast Asian experience with two nights in Hanoi, Vietnam’s leafy green, lake-studded capital, and travel to the coast for an overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site known for its mystical seascape of limestone islets, where you’ll explore caves with fantastic stalactite and stalagmite formations.

### EXTENSION ITINERARY OUTLINE

| OVERNIGHT                                     | HOTEL                    | ACTIVITIES  |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| Depart U.S.                                   |                          | Overnight flights to Hanoi, Vietnam   |
| Hanoi, Vietnam                                | Apricot hotel            | Arrive Hanoi; transfers to hotel; evening at leisure to rest and recover from flight  |
| Hanoi   | Apricot Hotel            | Panoramic tour including Confucius Temple of Literature, Hoan Kiem Lake, the “Hanoi Hilton,” the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, and the modest “House on Stilts” where Ho Chi Minh lived; cyclo (a three-wheel bicycle taxi) tour through the alleyways of the city’s historic quarter; water puppet performance BLD   |
| Ha Long Bay                                   | <i>Paradise Elegance</i> | Drive ~4 hours to Ha Long Bay; embark aboard the <i>Paradise Elegance</i> for an overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay; afternoon shore excursion to one of the islands to climb the stairs up the side of a rock formation and into the Sung Sot Cave, and visit a Pearl Farm or kayak; return for tea and a cooking demonstration on board BLD                            |
| Ho Chi Minh City<br><i>(main tour starts)</i> |                          | Sail to Titov Island for a morning on the beach or climb up the pavilion at the summit for a panoramic view of Ha Long Bay; disembark late morning and transfer to Hanoi airport for 2-hour flight to Ho Chi Minh City; remainder of evening at leisure; the main group arrives Ho Chi Minh City today and events for the main tour program begin tomorrow morning BL |

**Extension Fee:**

Per person, sharing accommodations ..... \$ TBD  
Single Supplement ..... \$ TBD