Cruise Details

Name:	Indochina Explorer and Luxury Mekong Cruise
Reference:	SCENICVIEX031127-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
Departs On:	03 Nov 27
Departs From:	Hanoi
Arrives On:	25 Nov 27
Arrives At:	Ho Chi Minh City
Cruise Nights:	22
Total Vacation Days:	23

Itinerary

Day 1: Hanoi (Vietnam)

Welcome to vibrant Vietnam – a world of colour, culture and extraordinary food. Today is yours to settle in at your leisure, adjusting to the rhythms of this compelling city before your journey begins in earnest. Check in to your two-night Scenic Special Stay at the iconic Sofitel Legend Metropole, Hanoi’s most celebrated address. This beautifully preserved colonial grand dame has welcomed dignitaries and travellers since 1901, and its refined amenities and attentive service set the tone for the days ahead.

Arrives On: 03 Nov 27

Day 2: Hanoi (Vietnam)

After breakfast, depart your elegant surrounds and begin the four-hour journey northeast to Halong Bay, passing through the fertile farmlands of the Red River Delta along the way. On arrival, board the Bhaya Soul – a handsome luxury vessel purpose-built to explore the deeper

reaches of this World Heritage-listed seascape – for a two-night cruise among its iconic limestone karsts. The Bhaya Soul's well-appointed suites and attentive crew ensure a first-class experience from the moment you step on board, with access to secluded corners of the bay that remain well beyond the reach of day cruises.

Arrives On: 04 Nov 27

Day 2: Cát Bà Island (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 04 Nov 27

Day 3: Cát Bà Island (Vietnam)

Rise to one of Southeast Asia's most captivating mornings with a Tai Chi lesson on the Sun Deck as the Bhaya Soul sails deeper into the National Park. Later, take to a kayak and paddle through the narrow passages of a limestone cave system, enjoying a perspective of the bay that few visitors experience. Ashore on Cat Ba Island, a cycle ride reveals a landscape of dense jungle and quiet shoreline, largely untouched by development.

In the afternoon, gather on deck for an exclusive Scenic Sundowners wine tasting, set against the silhouette of the karst islands at sunset. After a fine dinner in the on-board restaurant, round out the evening with the time-honoured local tradition of squid fishing from the deck.

Arrives On: 05 Nov 27

Day 4: Cát Bà Island (Vietnam)

Savour a leisurely morning cruise back through the bay before disembarking and returning to Hanoi, with time enroute for lunch and a little shopping. Re-check into the Sofitel Legend Metropole for a second stay and, after settling back in, take part in a fascinating historical bunker tour beneath the hotel – a rarely seen chapter in the story of a capital city with more than 1,000 years of history. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
This evening, your Scenic Freechoice dinner opens three distinct options. Dine in the Metropole's own Angelina Restaurant, where Parisian café elegance meets the heart of Hanoi's most storied address. Alternatively, spend the evening as a guest of a local family, sharing home-cooked Vietnamese dishes and stories around their table in a genuinely warm and personal setting. Or, for those drawn to the energy of the streets, jump on the back of a Vespa for a guided foodie tour through Hanoi's Old Quarter, stopping at hidden local haunts for authentic street food with complimentary drinks flowing throughout.

Arrives On: 06 Nov 27

Day 4: Hanoi (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 06 Nov 27

Day 5: Hanoi (Vietnam)

A full day to go deeper into Hanoi, beginning with your choice of Scenic Freechoice activity. Scenic Freechoice:
Visit the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long and Hoa Lo Prison — the former a sweeping journey through the nation's past, the latter a sobering but essential insight into the prisoners held here across two very different chapters of history.

Alternatively, spend the morning at Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and Quarter, then wander to the Temple of Literature — founded in 1070 and Vietnam's oldest university — before losing yourself in the narrow laneways of the Old Quarter over a celebrated egg coffee.

For those wanting a deeper cultural immersion, head to the ancient village of Bat Trang, a community dedicated to traditional porcelain and pottery. Learn the intricate craft firsthand, hear from a local elder about ancestral worship and spiritual traditions, then prepare and enjoy a hands-on lunch of Bánh Cuon rice pancakes. Scenic Enrich
This evening, a green electric car winds through the Old Quarter to deliver you to your Scenic Enrich experience: a VIP performance of Hanoi's world-famous water puppet theatre. Premium seating is reserved exclusively for Scenic guests, and a special backstage pass grants a rare glimpse behind the illusion.

Arrives On: 07 Nov 27

Day 6: Hanoi (Vietnam)

Bid farewell to Hanoi this morning and transfer to the airport for your flight west to Vientiane, the quietly captivating capital of Laos. After lunch, visit the Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise (COPE) – an organisation working to support people with mobility-related disabilities across the country. Their story is told with clarity and quiet power, offering a meaningful perspective on life in modern Laos. Check in to the Crowne Plaza for your overnight stay.

Arrives On: 08 Nov 27

Day 6: Vientiane (Laos)

Arrives On: 08 Nov 27

Day 7: Vientiane (Laos)

Begin the morning with a tour of Vientiane's most significant landmarks. Pha That Luang, the great gold-covered stupa at the heart of the city, is both a national symbol and a deeply sacred site. Nearby, the Patuxay Monument – built between 1957 and 1968 to honour those who

fought for independence from France – offers its own distinct perspective on the country's more recent history.

After lunch, your journey continues to Vang Vieng, where you check in to the Riverside Boutique Resort, beautifully positioned along the Nam Song River. Before the sun sets, take a long-tail boat ride downstream, with the dramatic ridgeline of the surrounding mountains reflected in the water. Dinner this evening is served from the balcony, with that same view for company.

Arrives On: 09 Nov 27

Day 7: Vang Vieng (Laos)

Arrives On: 09 Nov 27

Day 8: Vang Vieng (Laos)

The landscape around Vang Vieng is among the most striking in Laos, a terrain of sculpted limestone formations and forested valleys. This morning, explore Chang Caves, hidden deep within the hills and first discovered by villagers seeking refuge during wartime. Afterwards, transfer to the local station for the new high-speed train to Luang Prabang, a journey that is very much part of the experience as the line passes through tunnels and over viaducts with views that reward every window seat.

Arrive in this ancient city of temples and begin a three-night Scenic Special Stay at the Avani+ Luang Prabang, directly opposite the famous night markets. The remainder of the afternoon is yours to explore at your own pace.

Arrives On: 10 Nov 27

Day 8: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Arrives On: 10 Nov 27

Day 9: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Luang Prabang rewards those who take their time, and today does just that. Visit Wat Xieng Thong, one of the oldest and most revered temples in Laos, its sweeping rooflines a defining image of the city. Continue to Wat Mai and the former Royal Palace, now housing the National Museum.

Afterwards, board a boat for a gentle cruise along the Mekong River, calling at a riverside village known for its rice wine before arriving at the sacred Pak Ou Caves, known locally as Tam Ting, where thousands of gold Buddha statues are enshrined within the limestone cliffs. After visiting the caves, re-board the boat for a leisurely cruise back to Luang Prabang. Once back in town, learn the art of Pétanque, known here as Petong, from the locals. The evening is yours to browse Luang Prabang's renowned night markets at leisure.

Arrives On: 11 Nov 27

Day 10: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Well before dawn, the streets of Luang Prabang become a place of quiet ceremony. Join the morning alms giving procession and witness the silent, graceful movements of the monks as they collect their daily offerings, one of the most meditative and culturally significant experiences this journey offers. Scenic Freechoice:
Return to the hotel for breakfast before choosing your Scenic Freechoice activity for the morning. At the Living Land farm, step into the daily rhythms of Laotian agriculture, learning each stage of the rice growing and harvesting process with as much hands-on involvement as you wish. Alternatively, travel by tuk tuk and ferry to the village of Ban Chan, home to the Laos Pottery House, where you can shape your own piece using methods passed down through generations of royal pottery makers, or gather local produce and prepare a traditional lunch using time-honoured cooking techniques. The afternoon is free to spend as you choose.

Arrives On: 12 Nov 27

Day 11: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Begin the day with a journey to Kuang Si waterfalls, a set of picturesque, tiered waterfalls and swimming holes set amongst the dense jungle.

After fly to the regional city of Siem Reap in Cambodia. Siem Reap is a split in time with ancient and traditional architecture weaved between the modern developments. Step back in time at your hotel, a definition of luxury and your historical home for the next three nights in Siem Reap. This brilliantly appointed accommodation is styled with a mix of French inspired architecture, local interior furnishings, the attentive staff provide a service beyond expectations, and brilliant amenities fit for royalty.

Arrives On: 13 Nov 27

Day 11: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 13 Nov 27

Day 12: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Your Siem Reap exploration starts with a delicious champagne buffet breakfast at the hotel. Scenic Freechoice:
Enjoy a range of Scenic Freechoice activities. The 10th-century Banteay Srei Temple, referred to as the Ladies Temple for its rose-pink sandstone and dedication to the Hindu god Shiva, is one of the most intricately carved structures in the Angkor region, best paired with a visit to the Landmine Museum, which has been working since 1997 to clear Cambodia’s countryside of unexploded ordnance.

Other options include a visit to the Senteurs d’Angkor workshop, where skilled artisans produce soaps, balms, candles and spices by hand using traditional methods, with guests invited to try their hand

at each workstation.

A village walk through Ta Brak offers a quieter, more personal perspective on daily life in the region.

Those drawn to the water may join a cruise on Tonle Sap (available July to February), a vast inland biosphere reserve where entire communities live on floating platforms.

Alternatively, a behind the scenes tour of the Angkor Wildlife Aquarium offers insight into the Mekong's ecosystem, including feeding sessions and close encounters with resident species. This afternoon, visit Angkor Wat itself as the softer afternoon light plays across its towers and galleries, creating ideal conditions to take in this extraordinary site. This evening, your VIP reserved seats await at the Phare Circus, where Cambodian performers weave storytelling, music and acrobatics into a show of genuine artistry.

Arrives On: 14 Nov 27

Day 13: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Scenic Enrich
An early start brings its own reward this morning. Arrive at Angkor Wat before the crowds to witness the sunrise reflecting across the temple's moat, a sight of rare and lasting beauty. Afterwards, gather at a private location near a temple for a champagne breakfast, with food thoughtfully prepared by a Scenic-supported NGO bakery school. The morning continues with a visit to the jungle-enveloped Ta Prohm Temple, where tree roots have slowly claimed the ancient stonework over centuries, before moving on to Angkor Thom and the remarkable Bayon Temple, its dozens of carved stone faces gazing out in every direction. The afternoon is yours to rest or revisit the markets after an early start. Scenic Enrich
As evening falls, your Tour Director and the Scenic team escort you into one of the most exclusive experiences of the entire journey. A private gala dinner awaits within the grounds of Prasat Kravan, a small but deeply atmospheric 10th-century temple of five reddish brick towers. Apsara dancers perform by candlelight as complimentary drinks flow freely, an evening that belongs entirely to Scenic guests.

Arrives On: 15 Nov 27

Day 14: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Discover the rural side of Cambodia as your coach will transfer you to Kampong Cham where the breathtaking Scenic Spirit awaits. Before arriving, you will be visiting the stunning Khmer bridge at Kampong Kdei, Kampong Thom and a stone cutters village.

After boarding, begin your cruise in style with a cocktail reception hosted by your Cruise Director. Take a stroll around the decks to orientate yourself as to where all the amenities are. After your welcome dinner, settling into your private suite does not mean you settle for service. At any time, your dedicated personal butler is free to swing by with a nightcap and delivery of your preferred pillows.

Arrives On: 16 Nov 27

Day 14: Port information not found

Arrives On: 16 Nov 27

Day 15: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Awake as you approach Wat Hanchey, an ancient hilltop pagoda and monastery. After learning about life as a novice monk from one of the locals, wander around the complex and admire the view over the Mekong River and surrounding countryside. Sail back to Kampong Cham. Scenic Freechoice:
This afternoon, explore Kampong Cham and its surrounds.

Choose to learn about local folklore at Phnom Pros, a mountaintop pagoda that has long been part of a traditional legend. Tragically, in more modern times, the site was used as a Killing Field by the Khmer Rouge. The temple now features a Buddha Garden and is home to a local troop of monkeys. Afterwards, visit Wat Nokor Bachey, a unique architectural experiment that blends an Angkorian era temple with a new temple built inside it.

Alternatively, explore Kampong Cham's history and industry with a drive past shop houses, remnants of the French colonial era, and the large Central market. Visit a local rubber plantation established by the French before stopping at a village known for growing betel nut, an important part of Cambodian culture.

Your third option today is a visit to Kho Penh Village. Located on Pen (Bamboo) Island, it's only accessible by local remork after crossing by bamboo bridge or ferry from Kampong Cham. This remote village gives you a fascinating insight into the simple, rural lifestyle of farmers in Cambodia. If you have not had a chance to enjoy your spectacular suite on the Scenic Spirit and are not feeling like socialising, it might be time to unwind and dine in private. Your dedicated butler can arrange for a beautiful meal to be served in your room or on the balcony as you enjoy the fresh air of the Mekong, overlooking the gorgeous sunset of the Cambodian skyline as you sail to Angkor Ban.

Arrives On: 17 Nov 27

Day 15: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 17 Nov 27

Day 16: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

Upon arrival in Angkor Ban, explore its historical rural wooden houses, which survived the Khmer rouge and visit a local pagoda where a segregated and solemn excursion at a Buddhist pagoda awaits. Scenic Enrich
Receive a traditional blessing from a monk and learn how to pray in a Buddhist pagoda before partaking in an alms ceremony, which contributes to the daily meal of the resident

monks. Afterwards reboard Scenic Spirit for lunch and sail downstream to the island of Oknha Tey, dedicated to the art of silk weaving. Travel by tuk tuk to the farm and learn about the process of silk production. Return to Scenic Spirit and some free time. The option to immerse yourself in local culture with our team is available by learning how to make and wear the Cambodian scarf.

Some down time is a great way to relax and what better way to do that than heading to the Wellness Centre or Beauty Salon for a bit of pampering. Get ready for an evening of style with a Scenic Sunset Drinks cocktail reception on the sundeck against the backdrop of Phnom Penh's lights and stunning scenery as we approach the capital of Cambodia.

Later before dinner, enjoy a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children's Organisation.

Arrives On: 18 Nov 27

Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 18 Nov 27

Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 18 Nov 27

Day 17: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

After breakfast, it will be time to head out and explore the city. Scenic Freechoice:
You can choose to journey to the infamous Killing Fields and take a tour of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, housed inside a former prison. These sites are a sobering reminder of the terrors unleashed by the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s. This moving tour will give you a deeper insight into the tumultuous history of Cambodia and the resilience of its people.

Passionate foodies may like to choose a hands-on cooking class. Take a trip to the bustling market with a local chef to purchase your ingredients, then head back to the kitchen to cook your own lunch, testing out the styles and flavours of Cambodian cuisine.

Alternatively, travel by remork, a local style of tuk tuk, to explore the French architecture and history of Phnom Penh. Finish the tour with shopping at the Central Market, famed for its unique Art Deco design and bright yellow façade. At the conclusion of your tour, return to Scenic Spirit for lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Scenic Sunset Drinks
Later this evening, revel in our Phnom Penh by City Lights tour. You'll get to witness the nightlife of the capital before stopping at a local rum distillery for your exclusive Scenic Sunset Drinks experience, including a private tour and tasting.

Arrives On: 19 Nov 27

Day 18: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Even the most developing countries have a standard of luxury and opulence. You can experience this this morning at the Royal Palace with the famous Silver Pagoda within, on your included visit to this must-see attraction. Set on the riverfront, this dazzling palace was built in the 1860s and still serves as the official residence of the King of Cambodia. Upon returning to the ship set sail and say goodbye to Phnom Penh as we sail to the Cambodian and Vietnamese border.

A relaxing afternoon of sailing will allow you to take advantage of the many exclusive facilities on the Scenic Spirit. Sometimes everyone needs a break from the hustle and bustle of this exciting cruise and for those bookworms, kick back in the Scenic Spirit library, or head to the heart of this ship, which is the Scenic Spirit lounge, a great place to unwind with a glass of wine. Obtain some background knowledge of each port and get the key information for the exciting activities ahead. With travelling throughout South-East Asia comes the heat and what better way to cool down than socialising with a fresh cocktail and swimming in the pool all or just settle into the private comfort of your luxury suite and private balcony.

After clearing immigration into Vietnam at the border, you will experience a fantastically themed dinner on board the Spirit along with a lion dance performed by locals on the expansive Sundeck.

Arrives On: 20 Nov 27

Day 18: Port information not found

Arrives On: 20 Nov 27

Day 18: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 20 Nov 27

Day 19: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

You may want to start the day with some exercise in the on-board gym, an early morning yoga class or relax your muscles in the sauna. Then set off to discover the areas surrounding Tan Chau. Scenic Freechoice:
You could leave the city life behind at Tra Su Bird Sanctuary in Tra Su Forest. Travel by sampan through endless tranquil waterways, flanked by mangroves and lush greenery. This eco reserve spans 850 hectares and is an ecological haven for fauna and flora, home to more than 100 species of waterbirds.

Or experience a traditional way of life on Evergreen Island, joining local farmers for a morning of discovery. Back in Tan Chau, ride in a xe loi, a three-wheeled bicycle rickshaw that was introduced by the French in the 19th century and is a common form of transportation in rural Vietnam. Visit the recently renovated, brightly coloured Cao Dai temple. Caodaism is a new religion, established in 1926 in the southern Vietnamese city of Tây Ninh, and brings together beliefs and practices from Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism and Confucianism. Here, you will learn more about the mix of ideas

that form the basis of this fascinating religion.

For your third choice, board a speedboat to visit Chau Doc, a major city in the Mekong Delta, and Tay An temple. Set at the foot of Sam Mountain, this elaborate temple is a mixture of Indian and Islamic architecture. Afterwards, board another sampan to visit Vinh Te canal and view life along the riverfront of Chau Doc, before making your way back to Scenic Spirit. What better way to end the first day in Vietnam than a delicious cocktail by the pool on board the Spirit along with a great view of the Mekong as you set sail for Sa Dec.

Arrives On: 21 Nov 27

Day 20: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

When you arrive in Sa Dec, board your sampan once again to explore the lively wet market where you can meet the sellers and marvel at their wares, including live fish, frogs and even snakes. This two-hour exploration will take you deep into the local lifestyle. You can also see the grand home of Mr. Huynh Thuy Le, a Chinese merchant who inspired Marguerite Duras' novel L'Amant. Your expert guide will reveal the secrets behind this passionate tale of tragic love. After your morning excursion, head back to the Scenic Spirit for lunch whilst sailing downstream to Cai Be. Scenic Freechoice:
This afternoon enjoy your choice from the Scenic Freechoice activities.

Choose to travel via sampan to Tan Phong, a small island located near Cai Be town that is rich in alluvial soil suitable for tropical fruit orchards all year round. With a total area of more than 1,000 hectares, surrounded by silted sandbanks, canals and a mild temperature, Tan Phong has long been a friendly destination for eco-tourism. On arrival, try a hands-on experience at a workshop specialised in weaving water hyacinth into artistic crafts. Board a motorised buggy for a ride through endless fruit orchards, stopping to enjoy the tropical fruits and interact with a farm owner. Reboard the sampan and cruise to Cái Bè town to discover the local cottage industry where families make rice-paper and sweets from pop-corn, pop-rice and coconut.

Alternatively take a sampan from the Scenic Spirit to savour a delicious afternoon tea at the Le Longanier, a French colonial house restaurant, where staff will welcome you with tea, coffee and a range of local fruit and snacks for your tasting. You can dive into a local experience with a band playing music and performing traditional Vietnamese songs.

If you would prefer to enjoy the comforts of your ship, our highly skilled bar team is ready to welcome you to a hands-on cocktail/mocktail making class featuring fresh local ingredients.

Arrives On: 22 Nov 27

Day 20: Cái Bè (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 22 Nov 27

Day 21: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 23 Nov 27

Day 22: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

After breakfast, travel to the Cu Chi Tunnels and spend the morning learning about the development and establishment of this hidden covered tunnel network that the Viet Cong soldiers hid in for months on end. Return to the city for a Pho lunch with the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

Later explore the Reunification Palace, the former Presidential House of South Vietnam which become famous in 1975 with images of tanks crashing through its gates leading to the South’s surrender and end of the War of Independence. Enjoy tonight’s farewell dinner with your fellow travellers.

Arrives On: 24 Nov 27

Day 23: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

After check out head to the airport as you get ready to depart Vietnam for your homeland or extended travels. Leave with a full camera and stunning memories to treasure. Rivers and waterways are subject to variations in water levels. While every effort is made to adhere to the planned itinerary, changes in river conditions, ad hoc local government regulations or local festivities may require journey modifications. These will be made based on the advice of local authorities or for safety reasons. Hotels are indicative and are subject to change. Please note: Preview itinerary subject to change.

Arrives On: 25 Nov 27

For more information on this cruise, please call +44 (0)1202 767926.

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