deluxe cruises

## Cruise Details

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| Name: | Essence of Cambodia, Vietnam & Luxury Mekong |
| Reference: | SCENICVIMC061227-29 |
| Operator: | Scenic River Cruises |
| Cruise Type: | River |
| Cruise Rating: | Luxury |
| Ship: | Scenic Spirit |
| Regions: | Mekong |
| Departs On: | 06 Dec 27 |
| Departs From: | Hanoi |
| Arrives On: | 29 Dec 27 |
| Arrives At: | Ho Chi Minh City |
| Cruise Nights: | 23 |
| Total Vacation Days: | 24 |

## 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.<br /><br />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: 06 Dec 27

### Day 2: Hanoi (Vietnam)

A full day to explore this nostalgic city, beginning with your first Scenic Freechoice. Scenic Freechoice: <br />Visit the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long and Hoa Lo Prison, a journey through the nation’s past across two very

different chapters of history.<br /><br />Alternatively, spend the morning at Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and the Temple of Literature, founded in 1070, then discover the charm of the Old Quarter over a celebrated egg coffee.<br /><br />Those wanting a deeper cultural immersion can head to the ancient village of Bat Trang, a community devoted to traditional porcelain and pottery, where a local elder shares the spiritual beliefs of his community before a hands-on lunch of Bánh Cuon rice pancakes. Scenic Enrich<br />This evening, a green electric car winds through the Old Quarter to your Scenic Enrich: a VIP performance of Hanoi's world-famous water puppet theatre, with a special backstage pass to follow.

Arrives On: 07 Dec 27

## Day 3: Hanoi (Vietnam)

After breakfast and checkout, the journey heads northeast through the fertile farmlands of the Red River Delta toward Halong Bay. Board the luxury Bhaya Soul for a two-night cruise among the iconic limestone karsts of this World Heritage-listed seascape, reaching areas of the bay that remain well beyond the reach of day cruises.

Arrives On: 08 Dec 27

## Day 4: Ha Long Bay (Vietnam)

A Tai Chi lesson on the Sun Deck opens the morning as the ship sails deeper into the national park. Take to a kayak and paddle through a limestone cave system before a bike ride on Cat Ba Island, a landscape of dense jungle and quiet shoreline largely untouched by development.<br /><br />In the afternoon, gather on deck for an exclusive Scenic Sundowners wine tasting at anchor, set against the silhouette of the karst islands at sunset. After dinner, round out the evening with the local tradition of squid fishing from the deck.

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

## Day 5: Ha Long Bay (Vietnam)

A leisurely morning cruise back to harbour before returning to Hanoi and a second stay at the Sofitel Legend Metropole. Take part in a fascinating historical bunker tour beneath the hotel, a rarely seen chapter in the story of a city with more than 1,000 years of history. Scenic Freechoice Dining: <br />This evening, Scenic Freechoice dining offers a French-inspired dinner at the Metropole's own Angelina Restaurant, a home-cooked meal shared with a local Hanoian family, or a Vespa foodie tour through the lantern-lit streets of the Old Quarter with complimentary drinks throughout.

Arrives On: 10 Dec 27

## Day 6: Hanoi (Vietnam)

Spend the morning at leisure before flying south to Hue, the former imperial capital. Check into the Silk Path Grand Hue Hotel for the evening. Scenic Enrich<br />This evening, traditional Vietnamese cuisine is served family-style in a private garden house, accompanied by Royal Hue court music performed as it has been for centuries, and a welcoming glass of wine.

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

## Day 6: Hue (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

## Day 7: Hue (Vietnam)

The morning begins at the Mausoleum of Emperor Tu Duc, the last independent emperor of Imperial Vietnam, before wandering through the grandeur of the Imperial Citadel ruins and enjoying a vegetarian lunch at Tinh Tam Restaurant at Duc Son Pagoda, which supports the nuns' orphanage.<br /><br />Afterwards travel via the breathtaking Hai Van Pass past the Marble Mountains to the ancient trading town of Hoi An, where three nights await at the Moire Hoi An, Vignette Collection by IHG, within easy walking distance of the old town markets.

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

## Day 7: Hoi An (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

## Day 8: Hoi An (Vietnam)

A walking tour of the World Heritage-listed Old Quarter visits the Japanese Covered Bridge and central market, followed by lunch featuring the town's signature dishes: Cao Lau, Com Gà and Bánh Mì.<br /><br />The afternoon is yours – a 60-minute spa treatment (included for every guest), the hotel pool or the tailors' quarter the town has been renowned for since the 16th century. Scenic Sunset Drinks<br />Scenic Sundowners at Ember & Sip Bar with included beer and wine ease the day toward evening. Scenic Freechoice Dining: <br />Tonight, Scenic Freechoice dining sets the tone: Vietnamese street food at Morning Glory Signature Restaurant, the warmly lit Mango Mango in the heart of the Ancient Town, or The Field, where tables are set among rice paddies and the cuisine blends Vietnamese tradition with a contemporary hand.

Arrives On: 13 Dec 27

## Day 9: Hoi An (Vietnam)

This morning choose from a range of Scenic Freechoice activities. Scenic Freechoice: <br />Head to the ancient Cham ruins of My Son for a glimpse into the majesty of the Champa Kingdom, including a local lunch.<br /><br />Alternatively, a bicycle ride to a fishing village leads to a bamboo basket boat experience and a sampan return through the water palms.<br /><br />Those drawn to community may choose a lantern-making class with the Reaching Out NGO at a historic merchant house, or a Vietnamese cooking class at Red Bridge Cooking School on the banks of the Thu Bon River. The afternoon is yours to spend as you please.

Arrives On: 14 Dec 27

## Day 10: Hoi An (Vietnam)

Your final day in the centre of Vietnam starts with breakfast before checking out and setting off to the airport in Danang to fly to the regional city of Siem Reap. 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: 15 Dec 27

## Day 10: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

## Day 11: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Your Siem Reap exploration starts with a delicious champagne buffet breakfast at the hotel. Scenic Freechoice: <br />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.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />A village walk through Ta Brak offers a quieter, more personal perspective on daily life in the region.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />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: 16 Dec 27

## Day 12: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Scenic Enrich<br />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<br />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: 17 Dec 27

## Day 13: 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.<br /><br />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: 18 Dec 27

## Day 13: Port information not found

Arrives On: 18 Dec 27

## Day 14: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Awake as you approach Wat Hanchey, an ancient hilltop pagoda and monastery to meet the resident novice monks. Walk (or drive) to the top for some of the best elevated views of the cruise. This afternoon is spent sailing upstream along the Mekong River before returning to Kampong Cham, the quaint but largest city in the north and home to most of Cambodia's Muslim population.<br /><br />The remainder of the day is free to discover the main boulevard along the river front filled with its colourfully painted Chinese shopfronts, restaurants and colonial buildings. Be sure to visit the night market once setup.

Arrives On: 19 Dec 27

## Day 14: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 19 Dec 27

## Day 15: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

From Kampong Cham, your Scenic Freechoices this morning provide the chance to learn about the history and industries of the area. Scenic Freechoice: <br />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.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />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. Back on board, spend the afternoon relaxing and getting to know the facilities of the most luxurious ship on the river, Scenic Spirit as she sails to Angkor Ban.

Arrives On: 20 Dec 27

## Day 15: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 20 Dec 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<br />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.<br /><br />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 an outfit 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. Scenic Sunset Drinks<br />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 Sundowners experience, including a private tour and tasting.

Arrives On:  21 Dec 27

## Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On:  21 Dec 27

## Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On:  21 Dec 27

## Day 17: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

After breakfast, it will be time to head out and explore the city. Scenic Freechoice: <br />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.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />Alternatively, travel by remork, a local style of tuk tuk, to explore the French architecture, backstreets 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.<br /><br />Before dinner, enjoy a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children's Organisation on the sun deck.

Arrives On: 22 Dec 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 return to Scenic Spirit, say goodbye to Phnom Penh as we sail to the Cambodian and Vietnamese border.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />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: 23 Dec 27

## Day 18: Port information not found

Arrives On: 23 Dec 27

## Day 18: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 23 Dec 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: <br />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.<br /><br />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.<br /><br />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: 24 Dec 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 enjoying a relaxing afternoon at leisure on board sailing downstream to Cai Be.

Arrives On: 25 Dec 27

## Day 21: Cái Bè (Vietnam)

Start the day with a full gourmet breakfast – complete with champagne – before heading out to explore Cai Be. Scenic Freechoice: 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.<br /><br />Alternatively, take a sampan to Le Longanier, a French colonial house restaurant, to savour a delicious morning

tea. The elegantly-dressed staff will welcome you with tea, coffee and a range of local fruit and snacks. Listen to the local band playing music and traditional Vietnamese songs.<br /><br />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. Back on board, set sail for My Tho.  This afternoon you will have time to relax onboard and overlook life on the Mekong River before watching the gorgeous sunset against the Vietnamese skyline.  Tonight, enjoy your farewell dinner with the crew.

Arrives On:  26 Dec 27

## Day 22: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

Arrives On:  27 Dec 27

## Day 23: 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.<br /><br />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:  28 Dec 27

## Day 24: 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:  29 Dec 27


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