Cruise Details

Name:	Essence of Cambodia, Vietnam & Luxury Mekong
Reference:	SCENICVIMC120328-2
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
Departs On:	12 Mar 28
Departs From:	Hanoi
Arrives On:	03 Apr 28
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: 12 Mar 28

Day 2: Hanoi (Vietnam)

A full day to explore this nostalgic city, beginning with your first Scenic Freechoice. Scenic Freechoice:
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.

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.

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
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: 13 Mar 28

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: 14 Mar 28

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.

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: 15 Mar 28

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:
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: 16 Mar 28

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
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: 17 Mar 28

Day 6: Hue (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 17 Mar 28

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.

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: 18 Mar 28

Day 7: Hoi An (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 18 Mar 28

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.

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
Scenic Sundowners at Ember & Sip Bar with included beer and wine ease the day toward evening. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
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: 19 Mar 28

Day 9: Hoi An (Vietnam)

This morning choose from a range of Scenic Freechoice activities. Scenic Freechoice:
Head to the ancient Cham ruins of My Son for a glimpse into the majesty of the Champa Kingdom, including a local lunch.

Alternatively, a bicycle ride to a fishing village leads to a bamboo basket boat experience and a sampan return through the water palms.

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: 20 Mar 28

Day 10: Hoi An (Vietnam)

Transfer to Danang airport for your flight to Siem Reap in Cambodia, where ancient and contemporary worlds exist side by side.

Check in to the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, a legendary address that has defined Siem Reap's sense of colonial grandeur since the 1930s. French-inspired architecture, richly appointed interiors and service of the highest standard make this a true highlight of the journey. The remainder of the day is yours to settle in and explore the surrounds.

Arrives On: 21 Mar 28

Day 11: 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.

For a different vantage point entirely, a tethered balloon flight reveals the full scale of the Angkor landscape, with the temples visible below as you rise above the canopy. 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: 22 Mar 28

Day 12: 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: 23 Mar 28

Day 13: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

This morning, depart Siem Reap for the journey to Kampong Cham, passing through the Cambodian countryside and calling at the ancient Khmer bridge at Kampong Kdei and Kampong Thom, with a stop at a traditional stone cutters village along the way.

In Kampong Cham, the Scenic Spirit awaits, your five-star floating home for the Mekong River cruise ahead. A welcome cocktail reception hosted by your Cruise Director marks the start of life on board. Take time to familiarise yourself with the ship's beautifully appointed spaces, then settle into your private balcony suite knowing your dedicated butler is on hand whenever needed, day or night.

Arrives On: 24 Mar 28

Day 14: Wat Hanchey (Cambodia)

Rise as the Scenic Spirit approaches Wat Hanchey, an ancient hilltop pagoda and monastery perched above the Mekong. Step ashore to learn about monastic life from those who live it, then take in the sweeping views across the river and surrounding countryside before cruising

back to Kampong Cham. Scenic Freechoice:
This afternoon, choose your Scenic Freechoice experience. Join a guided visit to Phnom Pros, a mountaintop pagoda steeped in local legend and, more recently, the site of a Khmer Rouge killing field, a visit that carries both history and quiet reflection. Continue to Wat Nokor Bachey, a fascinating architectural layering of Angkorian era stonework and a working modern temple built within.

Alternatively, take a drive through Kampong Cham's colonial era shop houses to a French-established rubber plantation, and on to a village known for its betel nut cultivation, an enduring part of Cambodian rural culture.

For those seeking a more remote encounter, Kho Penh Village on Pen Island is accessible only by local remork across a bridge, offering a glimpse into a way of life unchanged by the pace of the wider world. Should you prefer a quieter afternoon, your butler is delighted to arrange dinner served privately in your suite or on your balcony as the Scenic Spirit makes her way toward Angkor Ban beneath the Cambodian sky.

Arrives On: 25 Mar 28

Day 15: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

Arrive in the riverside settlement of Angkor Ban, where wooden houses more than a century old stand as quiet survivors of the Khmer Rouge era. Explore their history with a local guide before visiting a nearby Buddhist pagoda. Scenic Enrich
Receive a traditional blessing from a resident monk, learn how to offer prayers within the pagoda, and participate in an alms ceremony, a contribution to the daily sustenance of the monks and a deeply respectful cultural exchange. Re-board the Scenic Spirit for lunch before cruising to the island of Oknha Tey, known locally as Silk Island and dedicated to the ancient art of silk weaving. A tuk tuk ride to the farm reveals the full process from silkworm to loom.

Back on board, learn the many ways to drape and wear the krama, the traditional Cambodian scarf. The wellness centre and beauty salon are available for those seeking some quiet restoration, and complimentary laundry facilities are on hand ahead of a Scenic Sundowners cocktail reception on the Sun Deck as the Scenic Spirit approaches the illuminated skyline of Phnom Penh. This evening, a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children's Organisation provides a warm and uplifting close to the day.

Arrives On: 26 Mar 28

Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Phnom Penh holds its history with dignity, and this morning's Scenic Freechoice invites you to engage with it meaningfully. Scenic Freechoice:
Visit the Killing Fields and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, a former school and later a prison during the Khmer Rouge regime, for a moving and essential account of Cambodia's most turbulent period and the resilience of its people.

Alternatively, a

hands-on Cambodian cooking class begins at the city's bustling market, selecting ingredients with a local chef before preparing and sharing a lunch of traditional flavours.

Those wishing to take in the city's fabric at street level may choose a remork tour through Phnom Penh's French colonial quarter, finishing at the Art Deco Central Market, a striking building with a bright yellow façade and a labyrinth of stalls within. Return to the Scenic Spirit for lunch, with the afternoon at leisure. This evening, a Scenic Sundowners experience takes you out after dark for a city lights tour of Phnom Penh, with a private visit and tasting at a local rum distillery as the centrepiece.

Arrives On: 27 Mar 28

Day 17: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Begin the morning with an included visit to Phnom Penh's Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda within. Set magnificently on the riverfront, this gilded complex has served as the official royal residence since the 1860s and remains one of Cambodia's most impressive landmarks. Return to the Scenic Spirit and set course for the Vietnamese border.

The afternoon passage invites you to settle into the rhythm of river life. The Scenic Spirit library is a peaceful retreat, the lounge a convivial space for conversation over a glass of wine, and the pool a welcome respite from the warmth of the afternoon. As the ship clears immigration into Vietnam, the evening takes an unexpected turn — a festive themed dinner on the Sun Deck, complete with a lion dance performed by local artists as the Mekong carries you deeper into Vietnam.

Arrives On: 28 Mar 28

Day 18: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

Start the morning as you see fit, a session in the on-board gym, an early Tai Chi class or a quieter start in the sauna, before heading ashore to discover the character of Tan Chau. Scenic Freechoice:
Three Scenic Freechoice options open the region from different angles. At Tra Su Bird Sanctuary, a sampan glides through 850 hectares of protected wetland, flanked by mangroves and waterways that are home to more than 100 species of waterbirds.

On Evergreen Island, join local farmers for a morning of genuine discovery, then ride through the town in a xe loi, a three-wheeled bicycle rickshaw with roots in 19th-century French Indochina, before visiting the brightly hued Cao Dai Temple, a place of worship that draws on Buddhism, Christianity, Taoism and Confucianism in equal measure.

Alternatively, take a speedboat to Chau Doc to visit Tay An Temple at the foot of Sam Mountain, its Indian and Islamic architectural influences making it a striking and singular sight, before a sampan journey along Vinh Te Canal for a riverfront perspective of the city. Back on board, the pool and a fresh cocktail offer a fitting close to the first full day in Vietnam as the Scenic Spirit sets course for Sa Dec.

Arrives On: 29 Mar 28

Day 19: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

Arrive in Sa Dec and step into one of the Mekong Delta’s most atmospheric wet markets by sampan, a two-hour immersion into local trade where the morning wares range from fresh produce to live fish, frogs and snakes. Along the way, pass the ornate home of Mr Huynh Thuy Le, the Chinese merchant whose love affair with a young French woman inspired Marguerite Duras’ celebrated novel L’Amant. Return to the Scenic Spirit for lunch as the ship moves downstream toward Cai Be. Scenic Freechoice:
This afternoon, your choice of Scenic Freechoice shapes the rest of the day. A sampan journey to Tan Phong Island reveals a patchwork of tropical fruit orchards across more than 1,000 lush hectares, with stops at a water hyacinth weaving workshop and a motorised buggy ride through the groves, before discovering the cottage industries of Cai Be where families handcraft rice paper and coconut-based sweets using generations-old methods.

Alternatively, drift by sampan to Le Longanier, a gracious French colonial restaurant set among mature trees, for a relaxed afternoon tea accompanied by live traditional music.

Those who prefer to stay on board are warmly welcomed to a cocktail and mocktail making class with the Scenic Spirit’s bar team, using the freshest local ingredients. As the sun lowers over the delta, settle in to watch the ever-changing life of the Mekong River from the deck.

Arrives On: 30 Mar 28

Day 20: My Tho (Vietnam)

Departing My Tho, the Scenic Spirit enters the Cho Gao Canal, one of Vietnam’s most significant arterial waterways connecting Tien Giang Province with Ho Chi Minh City. Spend the day on board watching the extraordinary volume of commercial traffic navigating this vital channel, with upwards of 1,800 vessels passing through each day. Cargo barges, fishing boats and local craft create a constantly shifting tableau of river life.

As the afternoon unfolds, find your preferred spot on deck, in the library or the cool of the lounge as the Scenic Spirit makes her way toward the city. By evening, the glow of Ho Chi Minh City appears along the riverbank. Due to Vietnamese customs regulations, guests remain on board tonight, but the view from the deck is a compelling one. Gather with your fellow guests and the crew for a farewell dinner, sharing stories that have accumulated over a remarkable cruise.

Arrives On: 31 Mar 28

Day 21: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

Bid a fond farewell to the Scenic Spirit and its crew this morning before commencing a city tour of Ho Chi Minh City. Visit the Reunification Palace, the former Presidential Palace of South Vietnam made famous in 1975 when tanks breached its gates to bring the War of Independence to

its close, before taking an orientation walk around your hotel and checking in to the historic Caravelle Saigon. Situated in the heart of District One directly opposite the Opera House, this iconic address has been at the centre of the city's story for more than six decades. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
This evening, your Scenic Freechoice dining puts the city's most celebrated culinary experiences within reach. For those who want to feel the full energy of Saigon after dark, a Vespa ride through the exhilarating streets stops at the best local food haunts with complimentary drinks throughout.

Alternatively, dine at the elegant Mandarine Restaurant, styled on the imperial courts of Hue and serving refined individual Vietnamese dishes.

Noir Dining in the Dark offers something genuinely different, a restaurant dedicated to supporting the blind and visually impaired community where dining without sight heightens every other sense.

Those seeking a more relaxed evening may opt for a Vintage Jeep street food experience around the streets of Saigon, or dine at Buffet 19 within the hotel.

Arrives On: 01 Apr 28

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: 02 Apr 28

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: 03 Apr 28

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