Cruise Details

Name:	Essence of Vietnam, Cambodia & Luxury Mekong
Reference:	SCENICVIMC170128-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
Departs On:	17 Jan 28
Departs From:	Hanoi
Arrives On:	08 Feb 28
Arrives At:	Siem Reap
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: 17 Jan 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: 18 Jan 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: 19 Jan 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: 20 Jan 28

Day 5: Ha Long Bay (Vietnam)

A leisurely morning cruise back to harbour before returning to Hanoi and a second night 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: 21 Jan 28

Day 6: Hoi An (Vietnam)

Fly south to Danang and continue 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. 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: 22 Jan 28

Day 7: 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.

Arrives On: 23 Jan 28

Day 8: 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: 24 Jan 28

Day 9: Hue (Vietnam)

Travel via the breathtaking Hai Van Pass to Hue, the former imperial capital. A vegetarian lunch at Tinh Tam Restaurant at Duc Son Pagoda supports the nuns’ orphanage before the afternoon brings a wander through the grandeur of the Imperial Citadel ruins and a cyclo ride back through the city streets to the Silk Path Grand Hue Hotel. 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: 25 Jan 28

Day 10: Hue (Vietnam)

The morning begins at the Mausoleum of Emperor Tu Duc, the last independent emperor of Imperial Vietnam, before a flight south to Ho Chi Minh City. The Caravelle Hotel Saigon in the heart of District One is home for two nights.

The evening is best spent on foot – Notre Dame Cathedral, the ornate Central Post Office and the Opera House are all within easy reach, and the city comes fully alive after dark.

Arrives On: 26 Jan 28

Day 11: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

The morning is spent at the Cu Chi Tunnels, where more than 250 kilometres of underground passages dug by hand during the war reveal themselves with staggering ingenuity. Return to the city for a Pho lunch, with the afternoon at leisure. Scenic Freechoice Dining:
This evening, Scenic Freechoice dining offers a Vespa night tour stopping at the city's finest street food haunts with complimentary drinks; a refined dinner at Mandarine Restaurant styled on the imperial courts of Hue; a table at Noir Dining in the Dark, dedicated to supporting the visually impaired community; a vintage jeep street food experience; or Buffet 19 at the hotel.

Arrives On: 27 Jan 28

Day 12: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

After breakfast, visit the War Museum and the Reunification Palace, whose gates were famously breached by tanks in April 1975.

Then transfer to Saigon Port where the Scenic Spirit awaits. Lunch is on board as the ship departs down the Saigon River, the city giving way to the delta. By evening, anchored at the entrance to the Cho Gao Canal, the quiet rhythm of the Mekong has already begun to settle. Your dedicated personal butler is on hand at any hour.

Arrives On: 28 Jan 28

Day 13: Chợ Gạo (Vietnam)

The day opens with a champagne breakfast as the Scenic Spirit transits the Cho Gao Canal, one of the Mekong Delta's great arterial waterways, with upwards of 1,800 vessels navigating it every day. Scenic Freechoice:
Once on the Mekong itself, Scenic Freechoice in Cai Be: a sampan journey to Tan Phong Island through fruit

orchards and cottage industries producing rice paper and coconut sweets; afternoon tea at the colonial Le Longanier restaurant with live traditional music; or a cocktail and mocktail masterclass on board using fresh local ingredients.

Arrives On: 29 Jan 28

Day 14: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

A sampan into Sa Dec's lively wet market reveals two hours of local trade — live fish, frogs, produce and the grand home of Mr Huynh Thuy Le, whose love affair with a young French woman inspired Marguerite Duras' celebrated novel L'Amant.

Return to the Scenic Spirit for an afternoon at leisure as the ship sails the six-hour journey toward Tan Chau. After anchoring before dinner, a festive themed evening on the Sun Deck with a lion dance performed by local artists brings the day to a memorable close.

Arrives On: 30 Jan 28

Day 15: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

Start the morning with a yoga class, the gym or the sauna before heading ashore for Scenic Freechoice around Tan Chau. Scenic Freechoice:
A sampan through the 850-hectare Tra Su Bird Sanctuary drifts through protected wetland home to more than 100 species of waterbirds. On Evergreen Island, join local farmers for a morning of discovery before a xe loi rickshaw ride to the Cao Dai temple, a remarkable fusion of Buddhist, Christian, Taoist and Confucian belief. A third option takes a speedboat to Chau Doc and the elaborate Tay An Temple at the foot of Sam Mountain. After lunch on board, the Scenic Spirit clears the Vietnamese-Cambodian border and sails onward overnight, Vietnam slipping quietly behind.

Arrives On: 31 Jan 28

Day 16: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

The Cambodian capital comes into view as the Scenic Spirit approaches in the early morning. Scenic Freechoice:
After breakfast, Scenic Freechoice offers a sombre but essential visit to the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum; a hands-on Cambodian cooking class starting at the local market; or a remork tour through the French colonial quarter and the Art Deco Central Market. Return to the Scenic Spirit for lunch, with the afternoon at leisure. This evening, a city lights tour leads to an exclusive Scenic Sundowners experience at a local rum distillery, with a private tasting.

Arrives On: 01 Feb 28

Day 17: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

A morning drive to Oudong, Cambodia’s ancient capital, to experience the rhythms of a working monastery — resident monks, peaceful courtyards and, if timing allows, a traditional festival. Back in Phnom Penh, the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda command the afternoon, before a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children’s Organisation on board and a Sundowner cocktail reception on the Sun Deck as the Scenic Spirit sets sail toward Silk Island.

Arrives On: 02 Feb 28

Day 18: Silk island (Cambodia)

A tuk tuk ride to the silk weaving farm on Oknha Tey reveals every stage of a craft that has defined this community for generations. After lunch, the ship calls at Angkor Ban, a small riverside settlement of century-old wooden houses that somehow survived the Khmer Rouge intact. On board as the ship sails toward Kampong Cham, guests are invited to learn the many ways of wearing a krama, the traditional Cambodian scarf.

Arrives On: 03 Feb 28

Day 19: Wat Hanchey (Cambodia)

Step ashore at Wat Hanchey, an ancient hilltop pagoda offering some of the finest elevated river views of the entire journey. Scenic Enrich
Receive a traditional blessing from a resident monk, learn to pray within the pagoda, and participate in the alms ceremony – a contribution to the daily sustenance of the monks and a quietly profound experience. Scenic Freechoice:
The afternoon brings Scenic Freechoice around Kampong Cham: the mountaintop pagoda of Phnom Pros with its blend of legend and difficult history; the layered temples of Wat Nokor Bachey; a drive through colonial shop houses, a French-established rubber plantation and a betel nut village; or a crossing to the remote Kho Penh Village on Pen Island by bamboo bridge. The farewell dinner with the Scenic Spirit crew closes the evening.

Arrives On: 04 Feb 28

Day 20: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

After disembarkation this morning your journey moves to Siem Reap via Kampong Thom and the ancient Angkorian bridge at Kampong Kdei, with a stop at a traditional stone cutters’ village along the way. Check in to the Raffles Grand Hotel d’Angkor for three nights, a legendary colonial address with French-inspired architecture and service that feels entirely of another era.

This evening, VIP seats await at the Phare Circus, where Cambodian performers weave storytelling, music, dance and acrobatics into a show of genuine artistry.

Arrives On: 05 Feb 28

Day 21: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

The second day of your Siem Reap exploration starts with a delicious champagne buffet breakfast at the hotel. Scenic Freechoice:
Your Scenic Freechoice takes the morning in any direction: the rose-pink sandstone of Banteay Srei temple and the Landmine Museum; artisan workshops at Senteurs d'Angkor; a village walk through Ta Brak; life on the Tonle Sap floating villages (July to February); a behind-the-scenes tour of the Angkor Wildlife Aquarium; or a tethered balloon flight over the temple complex with Angkor Wat visible below. The afternoon belongs to Angkor Wat itself, best seen as the afternoon light plays across its galleries and towers. After the day of adventure, tonight is free to shop away at the night markets of Siem Reap or venture to Pub Street, both in walking distance or a short tuk tuk ride from your hotel.

Arrives On: 06 Feb 28

Day 22: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Scenic Enrich
An early departure brings its own reward as the sunrise shifts across Angkor Wat's moat, followed by a champagne breakfast prepared by a Scenic-supported NGO bakery school near the temples. The morning continues through the jungle-enveloped Ta Prohm and the many-faced Bayon at Angkor Thom. Scenic Enrich
The afternoon is free before the final Scenic Enrich brings the Siem Reap chapter to a close: a private gala dinner within the grounds of the 10th-century Prasat Kravan temple, Apsara dancers performing by candlelight among the ruins with complimentary drinks throughout.

Arrives On: 07 Feb 28

Day 23: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

It is time to bid farewell to your fellow travellers and Scenic team as you get ready to depart Cambodia for your homeland or extended travels. Transfer to the airport and 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: 08 Feb 28

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