



## Cruise Details

Name:	Journey along the Mekong
Reference:	SCENICVIML050125-1L
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
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Departs On:	05 Jan 25
Departs From:	Ho Chi Minh City
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Arrives On:	22 Jan 25
Arrives At:	Vientiane
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Cruise Nights:	17
Total Vacation Days:	18

## Itinerary

### Day 1: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

Welcome to Vietnam and step foot into a world of luxury starting with your air-conditioned airport transfer en-route to your hotel, located downtown in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City. Meet your Tour Director and fellow guests at your welcome dinner.

Arrives On: 05 Jan 25

### Day 2: 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 lunch and the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.

**Freechoice Dining:** Tonight, choose your Scenic Free Choice dining option from an exhilarating Vespa ride at night as your experienced driver winds in and out the hectic traffic of the streets, stopping at all the best local spots for the most

scrumptious Vietnamese cuisines. Sample the best authentic street food and an unlimited supply of drinks and eating however much your stomach desires. Alternatively, dine at Home Saigon restaurant, a themed Vietnamese restaurant that is a quintessentially Vietnamese house or for something totally different dine at Noir Dining in the Dark, a restaurant dedicated to helping the blind and visually impaired community. Alternatively, see and taste the street food of Vietnam's commercial centre by vintage Jeep or diner at Buffet NINETEEN location at Caravelle Saigon.

Arrives On: 06 Jan 25

### Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam)

After breakfast and checkout, visit the War Museum and Reunification Palace. The former Presidential House of South Vietnam 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.

After lunch, a coach will transfer you to My Tho where the breathtaking Scenic Spirit awaits. Start 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, settle into your private suite. At any time, your dedicated personal butler is available to assist with a nightcap and delivery of your preferred pillows. A calm 4-hour sail brings you to halt off Cai Be where the ship will anchor overnight.

Arrives On: 07 Jan 25

### Day 4: Cái Bè (Vietnam)

Enjoy a full gourmet champagne breakfast before heading out on your chosen Scenic Freechoice excursion.

**Freechoice:** Choose to board a sampan, gliding through a floating market and soaking in the local life on your way to visit Cai Be before stopping at local cottage industries and a French colonial or traditional Vietnamese house. Alternatively take a sampan to savour a delicious morning 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. Alternatively, if you are enjoying the comforts of the luxurious Scenic Spirit, our highly skilled bar team is ready to welcome you for a hands-on cocktail/mocktail making class featuring fresh local ingredients. Create delicious favourites from the Scenic Spirit menu.

After your morning activity, head back to the ship for lunch whilst sailing to Sa Dec. You may wish to unwind in the Scenic Spirit library to learn more about each port you will visit and the exciting activities ahead. Or head to the heart of this ship, the Scenic Spirit Lounge, which is a great place to unwind with a glass of wine and meet other guests.

Later, upon arrival in Sa Dec, re-board your sampan to explore and interact with the sellers in the lively wet market where you will see live fish, frogs and even snakes.

This 2-hour exploration lets you dive deep into the local lifestyle. You can also see the home of Mr. Huynh Thuy Le who inspired Marguerite Duras novel *L'Amant* a story of tragic love told by your entertaining expert.

After returning to the ship, you will have time to take an evening dip in the pool overlooking the Mekong as the sun sets. The ship will set sail after your arrival back on board for the 6-hour journey to Tan Chau. After dinner, retire in your suite for a restful cruise up the Mekong River.

Arrives On: 08 Jan 25

#### Day 4: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 08 Jan 25

#### Day 5: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

You may wish to start your day with some exercise in the on board gym, try stretching at the early morning yoga class or relax in the sauna before setting off to a Scenic Freechoice excursion of your choosing in the areas surrounding Tan Chau.

**Freechoice:** A prime example of leaving the city life behind will be found at Tra Su Bird Sanctuary in Tra Su Forest where you travel by sampan through endless waterways flanked by mangroves and lush greenery. This eco reserve spans 850 hectares and is known as an ecological haven for fauna and flora, with more than 100 species of water birds known to reside here.

If you would like to experience the community side of Vietnam, look no further than Evergreen Island for a morning of discovery about the local farmers. Back in Tan Chau, experience a ride in a Xe Loi. This commonly used form of transportation in rural Vietnam will take you to the recently renovated Cao Dai temple. The religion of Cao Dai is a syncretic, monotheistic religion established in southern Vietnam in the city of Tây Ninh in 1926. Here, you will learn more about the mix of ideas that form the basis of this fascinating religion.

Your third Scenic Freechoice excursion to choose from is boarding a speedboat to visit Chau Doc, a major city in the Mekong Delta. Upon arrival, continue on board a coach to visit Tay An temple, which is a mixture of Indian and Islamic style architecture located at the foot of Sam Mountain. Then board another sampan to visit Vinh Te canal and view life along the riverfront of Chau Doc, stop at a family-operated fish farm and then return to the Scenic Spirit.

After lunch upon your arrival back on board, enjoy sailing to the Vietnamese and Cambodian border. 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. Whilst the ship clears immigration into Cambodia at the border, you will experience a fantastically themed dinner on board Scenic Spirit along with a lion dance performed by locals on the expansive Sun Deck. Settle in for an overnight sail towards Phnom Penh, bidding farewell to Vietnam.

Arrives On: 09 Jan 25

## Day 5: Port information not found

Arrives On: 09 Jan 25

## Day 6: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Welcome to Cambodia, arriving into the capital of Phnom Penh early this morning. Soak in Cambodia's rich history; from the food, the people, and the remarkable temples that have stood for thousands of years. After breakfast, it will be time to head into Phnom Penh.

**Freechoice:** Your Scenic Freechoice excursions provide the option to journey to the Killing Fields and tour Tuol Sleng Prison. These locations are a sobering reminder of the terrors unleashed by the Khmer Rouge regime. Although not a delightful tour, visiting these monuments unlocks the keys to understanding the development of this country. You will then return to Scenic Spirit for lunch.

The second Scenic Freechoice excursion today is a hands-on cooking class. Take a trip to the local market with a local chef to purchase your ingredients. Head back to the kitchen to cook your own lunch, testing out the styles and flavours of the Cambodian cuisine.

The third option is to travel by Remok, a local style of Tuk Tuk to visit the French architecture and history of Phnom Penh. Finish this tour with a stop at the unique designed Central Market for some shopping. At the conclusion of this choice, you can head back to the Scenic Spirit for lunch.

The remainder of the afternoon is at your leisure.

**Sunset Drinks** Later this evening revel in our Phnom Penh by City Lights tour, giving you an insight to the nightlife of the capital before stopping at a distillery for an exclusive Sundowners tour and tasting behind closed doors.

Arrives On: 10 Jan 25

## Day 7: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Board your coach for the short drive to the former capital of Cambodia, Oudong. Witness the life of the monks and nuns who reside at the monastery and if you are lucky, you may be able to join in one of the many festivals and customs often held here. Experience the opulent side of Phnom Penh this afternoon at the Royal Palace with the famous Silver Pagoda, during your included visit to this must-see attraction. This evening, you may wish to dress up for the Scenic Sunset Drinks cocktail reception on the Sun Deck against the backdrop of Phnom Penh's lights. Enjoy the passing scenery and panoramic views as the ships sets sail towards Oknha Tey, commonly known as Silk Island.

**Sunset Drinks** Cocktail reception on the sundeck.

Arrives On: 11 Jan 25

## Day 7: Oudong (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 11 Jan 25

#### Day 8: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

This morning we explore 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 for lunch and some free time. You may wish to socialise by the pool with a refreshing cocktail and swim.  
Next port after lunch is Angkor Ban. Explore its historical rural wooden houses, which survived the Khmer Rouge and visit a school that teaches English to the local students after their regular school lessons. Back on board, continue sailing to Kampong Cham. Immerse yourself in local culture with our team by learning how to make and wear the Cambodian scarf.

Arrives On: 12 Jan 25

#### Day 8: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 12 Jan 25

#### Day 9: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 13 Jan 25

#### Day 9: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Meet the novice monks at Wat Hanchey, an ancient hilltop pagoda and monastery. Walk (or drive) to the top and soak in some of the best elevated views of the cruise.  
**Enrich**  
Receive a blessing from a monk and learn how to pray in a Buddhist pagoda before partaking in a ceremony, which contributes to the daily meal of the resident monks.  
**Freechoice:** Back in Kampong Cham, your Scenic Freechoice excursions this afternoon provides the chance to learn about the history and industries of the area. First option is to learn about the local folklore with stops at Phnom Pros (Man Hill and Wat Nokor). Phnom Pros was part of a traditional local legend but more recently was used as a Killing Field during the Khmer Rouge era. The temple now features a Buddha garden and is home to a local troop of monkeys. Wat Nokor Bachey is a unique architectural experiment blending an Angkorian era temple with a new temple built inside it. This enriching experience can be completed in under 2 hours leaving the rest of the day to either explore independently or enjoy the luxurious facilities located on Scenic Spirit.  
Alternatively explore Kampong Cham's history and industry with a drive through past shop houses, remnants of the French colonial era and the large Central Market. Visit a local rubber plantation established by the French, followed by a tour to view the processing of the raw rubber at a rubber factory before stopping at a village known for growing betel nut, a popular item in Cambodian culture.

Cambodia is known for its villages so your third option is to visit Kho Penh Village. Only accessible by local remork and located on Pen (Bamboo) Island, across the bamboo bridge / ferry from Kampong Cham, this remote village gives a good insight into the simple rural lifestyle of farmers in Cambodia.

Back on board Scenic Spirit, enjoy some time to relax and overlook the gorgeous sunset of the Cambodian skyline before your engaging farewell dinner with the crew.

Arrives On: 13 Jan 25

#### Day 10: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 14 Jan 25

#### Day 11: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

The second day of your Siem Reap exploration starts with a delicious champagne buffet breakfast at the hotel.

**Freechoice:** As part of Scenic's Freechoice you have multiple options to choose from.

Explore the 10th-century Banteay Srei Temple; a temple commonly referred to as the Ladies Temple because of its pinkish sandstone and dedication to the Hindu god Shiva. Afterwards visit the Landmine Museum, founded in 1997 with the aim to make the country safe through the removal of mines.

Visit Senteurs d'Angkor workshop: try your hand at producing your own local souvenir. Through different hands-on workstations, discover how the artisans make by hand soap with coconut oil, natural cosmetics, subtly scented balms, aromatic candles and local spices in traditional ways.

Alternatively, if you have enjoyed being on the water, sail on Tonle Sap Lake (July to February), a picturesque UNESCO biosphere reserve and dive deep into discovery when visiting and experiencing the life of a floating village.

Or take flight in a tethered balloon to discover the aerial beauties of the combination between traditional and modern Siem Reap. Enjoy the fresh air and take some remarkable photographs of the skyline as you lift into the skies of Siem Reap overlooking Angkor Wat below before visiting a Lotus Flower workshop. (Not available in November and December 2024).

Alternatively choose the Market Shopping Excursion, transfer to the central market by tuk tuk and shop independently.

Later this afternoon explore Angkor Wat itself, the largest religious monument in the world. Originally constructed as a Hindu temple dedicated to the god Vishnu for the Khmer Empire, it was gradually transformed into a Buddhist temple towards the end of the 12th century. An afternoon visit provides the perfect light for those idealic pictures of this colossal structure.

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: 15 Jan 25

### Day 12: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Begin the day with an early morning Scenic Enrich, marvel at the sunrise over the magnificent Angkor Wat before moving to a special location near a temple for a scrumptious champagne breakfast with food prepared by an NGO supported local bakery school which also Scenic sponsors. After breakfast, visit the atmospheric, jungle covered Ta Prohm Temple, before stopping at Angkor Thom and the multi-faced Bayon Temple. Fortunately, you have the remainder of the afternoon to discover more of the Siem Reap markets or relax at your luxury hotel after your early morning start. The final Scenic Enrich is truly a special and exclusive one, one that is best experienced first hand to fully appreciate it's scale. Your tour directors and Scenic team will leave you in awe as you enter a private magical gala themed dinner at Prasat Kravan, a small 10th-century temple consisting of five reddish brick towers on a common terrace. Including free flow drinks and a show featuring Apsara dancers in front of the candle lit temple ruins, this evening brings a most incredible end to what is a remarkable trip.

Arrives On: 16 Jan 25

### Day 13: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Checkout this morning and transfer to Siem Reap Airport. Fly to Luang Prabang, the spiritual capital of Laos, for a three night Special Stay. Your luxury property is in a prime location of this UNESCO heritage city. The vast amount of greenery and island like décor provides the ultimate stay in this colonial style building. Later walk to the top of Luang Prabang's highest mountain, Mount Phousi and watch the sunset over this historical town.

Arrives On: 17 Jan 25

### Day 13: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Arrives On: 17 Jan 25

### Day 14: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Today visit the city's main sites including the former Royal Palace now converted into the National Museum, Wat Xieng Thong, one of the most important and oldest temples in Laos and Wat Mai, the city's largest temple. Later, enjoy a 2-hour cruise along the Mekong River to explore the Pak Ou Caves (locally called Tam Ting) flooded with thousands of gold Buddha statue buried within a limestone cliff. This well known attraction is a must-see in Laos. When returning by road, stop at Ban Xang Hay, a village specialising in rice wine. Tonight is yours at leisure leaving you with free time to shop in the well-known night market for those gifts to take back home.

Arrives On: 18 Jan 25



### Day 15: Luang Prabang (Laos)

A truly beautiful and empowering moment awaits upon the streets of Luang Prabang. Attend the morning ritual and admire the silent movements of the local monks as they collect their daily alms. Afterwards return to the hotel for breakfast before heading out for the day. Begin with a journey to Kuang Si waterfalls, a set of picturesque, tiered waterfalls and swimming holes set amongst the dense jungle. En route back to town stop at a small village, home to one of the area's many ethnic minorities, to learn about their traditions and culture.

**Enrich**

Immerse yourself in local spirituality during a traditional Baci ceremony and pay respects to ancient traditions of Laos. The Baci is performed in celebration of an important event such as weddings, births, or for welcoming guests and is a means of expressing good will and good luck to others. The Lao believe that each person has 32 spirits which constitute their spiritual essence and the Baci is the ritual used to call back any escaped spirits into the body. During the Baci, special flower trays and food treats are prepared which you then touch while a Buddhist mantra is chanted. After the chanting is completed, cotton threads are tied around your wrist whilst you receive an individual blessing.

Arrives On: 19 Jan 25

### Day 16: Luang Prabang (Laos)

Take in the surrounding views from Mt Phousi, a 100m high hill which lies in the heart of the old town peninsula and is bordered on one side by the Mekong River and on the other side by the Nam Khan River.

Transfer to the local train station to experience travelling on the new high-speed train to Vang Vieng. Check into your resort located alongside the Mekong River and take in the dramatic vista of the surrounding mountains and countryside from the pool lounge or your balcony.

Arrives On: 20 Jan 25

### Day 16: Vang Vieng (Laos)

Arrives On: 20 Jan 25

### Day 17: Vang Vieng (Laos)

Vang Vieng is home to some amazing natural formations and beautiful landscapes. Take in this natural beauty of the region with visits to the beautiful turquoise 'Blue Lagoons' and Chang Caves, discovered by villagers seeking refuge deep in the forest during the wars.

Later drive to the capital, Vientiane, a city full of a mix of French colonial architecture and Buddhist temples. Upon arrival, visit The Cooperative Orthotic and Prosthetic Enterprise (COPE). COPE's mission is to help people with mobility-related disabilities



move on by supporting access to physical rehabilitation services in the Lao PDR.

Check into your hotel for an overnight stay. This evening enjoy your delicious farewell dinner and relive the memories together from your journey.

Arrives On: 21 Jan 25

#### Day 17: Vientiane (Laos)

Arrives On: 21 Jan 25

#### Day 18: Vientiane (Laos)

After your breakfast, commence a morning tour of the capital including visits to Pha That Luang, a national symbol that is a gold-covered large Buddhist stupa in the centre of the city and Patuxay Monument, a war monument built between 1957 and 1968 that is dedicated to those who fought in the struggle for independence from France.

Then say farewell to Laos with many wonderful memories and fly to Bangkok where your journey ends on arrival.

Please book your flight to depart out of Bangkok after 07:00 PM.

This itinerary is a guide only and may be amended for operational reasons such as high and low water. As such, disruptions to cruising and alteration to itinerary arrangements may occur. Hotels are indicative and are subject to change.

Arrives On: 22 Jan 25

#### Day 18: Bangkok (Thailand)

Arrives On: 22 Jan 25

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

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