Cruise Details

Name:	Meandering along the Mekong and Temple Discovery Cruise
Reference:	SCENICVIMR091227-19
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
Departs On:	09 Dec 27
Departs From:	Ho Chi Minh City
Arrives On:	21 Dec 27
Arrives At:	Siem Reap
Cruise Nights:	12
Total Vacation Days:	13

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 the Caravelle Hotel Saigon, located downtown in the heart of HCMC. Meet your Tour Director at 12:00 to run through an overview of your upcoming trip and drop off your luggage and passport. Then head to a local restaurant for lunch with your group of eager travellers ready to explore the mysteries of the Mekong River.

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, 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. A calm 4-hour sail brings you to halt off Cai Be where the ship will anchor overnight. Please book your flight to arrive into Ho Chi Minh City prior to 08:00 AM.

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

Day 1: Port information not found

Arrives On: 09 Dec 27

Day 2: 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.

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. After your morning activity, head back to the ship for lunch whilst sailing to Sa Dec. Relax and soak in the beauty of the scenery, visit the on-board library to read up on future ports, or head to the Scenic Spirit lounge to unwind with fellow guests over a glass of wine.

Arrives On: 10 Dec 27

Day 3: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

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 returning to the ship, you will have time to take an evening dip in the pool overlooking the Mekong as the sun sets. Before dinner, experience a fantastically themed dinner on board the Spirit along with a lion dance performed by locals on the expansive Sundeck. The ship will set sail after your arrival back on board for the 6-hour journey to Tan Chau.

Arrives On: 11 Dec 27

Day 4: Tân Châu (Vietnam)

You may want to start with some exercise in the on-board gym, try stretching at the early morning yoga class or relax 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.

Arrives On: 12 Dec 27

Day 5: Port information not found

After clearing the border crossing procedure, the morning is at your leisure. Attend an on-board demonstration, enjoy some solitude in the library and observation lounge, or soak in the scenery from your private balcony whilst sailing upstream from the Vietnamese border to Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia.

Even the most developing countries have a standard of luxury and opulence. You can experience this this afternoon after arriving in Phnom Penh at the Royal Palace with the famous Silver Pagoda within, on your included visit to this must-see attraction. 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: 13 Dec 27

Day 5: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 13 Dec 27

Day 6: 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, 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. Later this evening before dinner enjoy a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children's Organisation.

Arrives On: 14 Dec 27

Day 7: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Board a bus this morning for the short drive to the ancient capital of Cambodia, Oudong. Here, experience the life of the monks and nuns who reside at the peaceful monastery. If you are lucky, you may be able to partake in one of the many festivals and traditional rituals often held here.

Return to Scenic Spirit for lunch before setting sail towards Oknha Tey, dedicated to the art of silk weaving. Travel by tuk tuk to the farm and learn about the process of silk production. If you are running out of clean clothes, be sure to utilise the complimentary laundry facilities and get an outfit ready for an evening of style with a Sundowner cocktail reception on the sundeck against the backdrop of Phnom Penh's stunning scenery as the ships departs to Angkor Ban.

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

Day 7: Oudong (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

Day 7: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 15 Dec 27

Day 8: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

With travelling throughout South-East Asia comes the heat and what better way to cool down than socialising with a fresh cocktail and dipping your toes in the pool during your morning sail towards Angkor Ban. Learn the many ways to wear a krama, the traditional Cambodian scarf.

After lunch, you will call at Angkor Ban, a small settlement where time stands still. Explore its historic wooden houses, which date back over 100 years and survived the destruction of the Khmer Rouge. Back on board, learn the many ways to wear a krama, the traditional Cambodian scarf, as the ship sails towards Kampong Cham and Wat Hanchey.

Arrives On: 16 Dec 27

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. 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. 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.

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 9: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 17 Dec 27

Day 10: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 18 Dec 27

Day 11: 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); or a behind-the-scenes tour of the Angkor Wildlife Aquarium. 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: 19 Dec 27

Day 12: 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: 20 Dec 27

Day 13: 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: 21 Dec 27

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