Cruise Details

Name:	Luxury Mekong and Temple Discovery Cruise
Reference:	SCENICVIMR180527-1
Operator:	Scenic River Cruises
Cruise Type:	River
Cruise Rating:	Luxury
Ship:	Scenic Spirit
Regions:	Mekong
Departs On:	18 May 27
Departs From:	Ho Chi Minh City
Arrives On:	28 May 27
Arrives At:	Siem Reap
Cruise Nights:	10
Total Vacation Days:	11

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: 18 May 27

Day 1: Port information not found

Arrives On: 18 May 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.

Later, upon arrival 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 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: 19 May 27

Day 2: Sa Déc (Vietnam)

Arrives On: 19 May 27

Day 3: 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. 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. After the ship clears immigration into Cambodia at the border, settle in for an overnight sail towards Phnom Penh, bidding farewell to Vietnam.

Arrives On: 20 May 27

Day 3: Port information not found

Arrives On: 20 May 27

Day 4: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

Welcome to Cambodia, arriving into the capital of Phnom Penh early this morning. 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. 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: 21 May 27

Day 5: 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.

After you return to the city, discover the opulence of Phnom Penh's Royal Palace and the famous Silver Pagoda within. Set on the riverfront, this dazzling palace was built in the 1860s and still serves as the official residence of the King of Cambodia. After returning to the ship and before setting sail, enjoy a cultural performance by the Cambodian Student and Children's Organisation.

Get ready for an evening of style with a Sundowner cocktail reception on the sundeck against the backdrop of Phnom Penh's lights and stunning scenery as the ships sets sail towards Oknha Tey, commonly known as Silk Island.

Arrives On: 22 May 27

Day 5: Oudong (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 22 May 27

Day 6: Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

This morning, you will explore the island of Oknha Tey, dedicated to the art of silk weaving. Travel by traditional tuk tuk to the farm, meet the workers and learn about silk production. Return to Scenic Spirit for lunch and some free time. This could be the perfect opportunity to escape the heat of a Southeast Asian afternoon with a swim in the pool and a refreshing cocktail.

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.

Arrives On: 23 May 27

Day 6: Angkor Ban (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 23 May 27

Day 7: 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. Back on board you will have time to relax and overlook the gorgeous sunset of the Cambodian skyline before your engaging farewell dinner with the crew.

Arrives On: 24 May 27

Day 7: Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 24 May 27

Day 8: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Arrives On: 25 May 27

Day 9: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

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

Other options include a visit Senteurs d'Angkor workshop to 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 or undertake a village walk through Ta Brak Village.

Alternatively, if you have enjoyed being on the water, sail on Tonle Sap (July to February), a picturesque UNESCO biosphere reserve and experiencing the life of a floating village or visit the Angkor Wildlife Aquarium and learn all about the Mekong eco system with a special behind-the-scenes tour where you can see animal care in action, participate in feeding sessions, and even meet some park stars up close.

Visit the Angkor Wildlife and Aquarium for an in-depth exploration of Tonle Sap Lake's aquatic ecosystem. Guided by a marine biologist, learn about the lake's species, environmental threats and the conservation efforts dedicated to preserving this unique environment.

You might like to experience a glimpse of rural Cambodian life during a visit to Ta Brak Village. Explore the vibrant market and immerse yourself in villager's daily life. Share a meal with friendly locals, learn about fish smoking and be blessed in a traditional Buddhist ceremony.

Or stay at your hotel and indulge in a 1-hour massage, followed by a set-menu lunch. 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: 26 May 27

Day 10: Siem Reap (Cambodia)

Scenic Enrich
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 a Scenic sponsored, NGO supported local bakery school. 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: 27 May 27

Day 11: 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.

Arrives On: 28 May 27

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