



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 9

THE MEKONG: FROM LUANG PRABANG TO CHINA

10 NIGHTS

The Mekong River is perhaps one of the most scenic rivers in Asia, with cliffs, jungle, and remote villages and caves making for the most beautiful and interesting of river adventures. We are very pleased to offer the opportunity to travel for a few days by day river cruiser from Luang Prabang to Chiang Saen (staying in charming riverbank lodges) before embarking on the beautifully crafted new Laos Pandaw for a 7-night Pandaw cruise to China.

Not only is this arrangement exceptional value, you will experience the mighty and magical Mekong in 4 countries (Laos, Burma, Thailand and China) and enjoy this great river from the perspective of a luxury river ship as well as well appointed country lodges.

You will also be the first to sail the Upper Mekong into China's Yunnan Province where there is so much to discover, from China's second largest botanical garden to tea plantations and local villages.

Exclusive departures in March and April 2016 only.

IMPORTANT NOTE: These are reconnaissance voyages and the itinerary is indicational only subject to daily revisions and many a change. Travellers should be up for a real adventure and be prepared for such uncertainties. This will be the first time a river expedition ship will have made this four country expedition and there may be delays at border crossing points when dealing with formalities. Travellers who might find sudden changes of plan or delays

stressful should not book this trip. Our guides will do their best to ensure that we cover as much of this indicational itinerary as possible but some excursions may be changed for others. We can assure we will see and do as much as we can, hopefully more than indicated in the itinerary below.

Cruise Price Includes: Port dues, transfers to/from Luang Prabang airport, 1-night stay at the Bela Rive Boutique Hotel (or similar) on a bed and breakfast basis, 2-night Mekong River cruise from Luang Prabang to Huay Xai including lunch on board and all excursions, 2-night stay at the Mekong River Lodge including dinner and breakfast, transfer to/from Huay Xai to Chiang Saen, 7-night Pandaw cruise including all meals, all excursions, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and crew gratuities.

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, visas, travel insurance, all tips on the Luang Prabang to Huay Xai cruise and tips to tour guides and all non-ship drivers and guides on the Laos Pandaw cruise, all drinks on the non-Pandaw cruise element of this trip, transfers to Jinghong airport.

UPSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

LUANG PRABANG

You will be met at Luang Prabang airport (or your hotel) and transferred to the delightful, Kiridara Resort (or similar) located just two minutes drive from the town centre and the Mekong River for a 1-night stay on a bed and breakfast basis. Afternoon at leisure in Luang Prabang, a relaxed and inspiring city.

Please Note: For your Chinese visa application please write "Guan Lei" as your entry point to China.

[MORE ABOUT LUANG PRABANG](#)

DAY 2

MEKONG RIVER CRUISING AND LODGE STAY

Embark your Mekong river cruiser and set sail upstream to the mouth of the Nam Ou River, near Pak Ou village. We visit the Tam Thing cave, famous for over 2,500 Buddha statues of all sizes and for being a place of pilgrimage for local people. Continue to Kamu Lodge (or similar) for a one-night stay including lunch, dinner and breakfast. In the afternoon, either visit Kamu village or enjoy rice planting and harvesting, traditional fishing and gold panning.

DAY 3

PAKBENG

After breakfast, re-join the Mekong river ship and cruise upstream amidst beautiful jungle scenery and remote villages towards Pakbeng. We pass granite cliffs and sparkling sandy shores and stop at the hill tribe village of Baw, where we observe the traditional process of making Lao whiskey. Late afternoon, arrive at Luang Say Lodge (or similar) near Pakbeng before sunset, giving plenty of time to refresh, enjoy the scenery of the river and admire the surrounding nature. A Laotian dinner is served on the open-air terrace overlooking the Mekong River.

[MORE ABOUT PAK BENG](#)

DAY 4

HUAY XAI

More scenic river cruising this morning, After lunch on board, we stop and enjoy a walking tour of a traditional village. This is a chance to observe rural life along the Mekong and witness the daily life of ethnic minorities and their talented craftsmanship. Late afternoon, arrive in Huay Xai where we disembark our Laos River cruise boat and continue through immigration on the Laos/Thailand border to Chiang Saen for 7-night cruise on the new and stunning Laos Pandaw on the Upper Mekong all the way to China. Set sail on the second leg of our adventure.

DAY 5

TACHILEIK, BURMA

Visit The Shwedagon Pagoda in Tachileik, one-fifth the size of the more famous original in Yangon. We also visit the local market and the Two Dragon Monastery, a Chinese Buddhist temple. Bright colours and ornate carvings made the temple an enchanting place. Finally, visit the Chinese Monastery, built in 1999, and perhaps the largest and most beautiful in Tachileik.

[MORE ABOUT TACHILEIK, BURMA](#)

DAY 6

CRUISING THE MEKONG

Continue up the Mekong with Burma on our left and Laos on our right and stop to explore a jungle village on the Laos side and if possible trek in the jungle.

[MORE ABOUT CRUISING THE MEKONG](#)

DAY 7

MUANG LONG

Moor at Xiang Kok and travel inland by car to the town Muang Long and visit Aka tribal villages.

[MORE ABOUT MUANG LONG](#)

DAY 8

INTO CHINA

After a visit to a local village, we leave Laos and cross the border into China. Here the Mekong River turns to a beautiful emerald green. Continue to Gang Lei where we go ashore for a walking tour.

DAY 9

MENGLUN BOTANICAL GARDEN

A morning visit to the famous Menglun Botanical Garden, built in 1959 and one of China's most important botanical research centres. Explore the impressive gardens, home to many rare, exotic and endangered plant species here such as the dragon tree, the poisonous upas tree; the "Clock Flower" that opens and closes along with the sunrise and sunset and the "Dancing Grass" that responds to sound. After lunch, sail upstream and stop at Mengzhan where we explore Mangza temple.

[MORE ABOUT MENGLUN BOTANICAL GARDENS](#)

DAY 10

MANGFEILONG MONASTERY & TEA PLANTATION

Sail to Jinghong. Morning excursion to the impressive Mangfeilong Monastery. After lunch, visit a Chinese tea plantation including tasting and Manting Park Temple, the third most important Buddhist temple in Yunnan province. After our farewell dinner tonight, enjoy a traditional dancing show in Mengbalanaxi theatre.

[MORE ABOUT MANGFEILONG MONASTERY AND TEA PLANTATION](#)

DAY 11

JINGHONG

Disembark after breakfast.

Note: A taxi from Jinghong airport to the jetty takes about 30 minutes in normal traffic conditions.

[MORE ABOUT JINGHONG](#)

STATEROOM

The Pandaw stateroom is the most celebrated feature of our ships.

Finished in brass and teak, the main and upper deck rooms are very spacious at 168 square feet (15.6 sqm). Much loved by all our passengers we have ensured that with each ship we build the stateroom remains the same. Our cabins do not have mini-bars, satellite TV's, internet or phones. Pandaw passengers usually want to escape from the tiresome features found in international business hotels.

Many passengers describe life on board a Pandaw more like being a guest on a private motor yacht than a cruise ship. Where we go and what we see is intrepid in extreme. What you come back to is a floating base of discreet comfort, caring service and all the good things one looks for in life. All our cabins have the same size and Pandaw signature amenities. Choose from Main Deck, Upper Deck or Premium Upper Deck (Mekong only).

Special to Your Stateroom

- Fruit and flowers on arrival
- Kimonos and slippers
- Spa-branded amenities
- Unlimited mineral water

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

LUANG PRABANG

You will be met at Luang Prabang Airport and transfer to the Kiridara Luang Prabang Hotel (or similar) for a 2-night stay on a bed and breakfast basis.

DAY 2

LUANG PRABANG

Full day to enjoy and explore the charms of Luang Prabang at your own pace.

DAY 3

LUANG PRABANG

Further day at leisure, as part of the 10-night Luang Prabang to China program.



DISCOVER

2 Nights at Kiridara Luang Prabang Pre Tour

2 nights at the Kiridara Luang Prabang Hotel (or similar) on a bed and breakfast basis.

Rates include:

2-nights at the Kiridara Luang Prabang Hotel on a bed and breakfast basis. Automatic room upgrade to the next category subject to availability. One complimentary cocktail/mocktail per guest per stay. Airport transfer with guide.

Rates exclude:

International flights, visas, travel insurance, tips, items of a personal nature.

Note:

- The airport transfers are included as part of the price of the cruise programme.

KIRIDARA LUANG PRABANG

22/13 North Road

Ban Naviengkham

Luang Prabang

Lao PDR

Tel: +856 71 261 888

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

River Conditions Warning!

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any Pandaw expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience - not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

Useful Links

[**Terms & Conditions**](#)

[**General Information & Life on Board**](#)

[**Visa Information**](#)