



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 16

HANOI, HALONG BAY, SAIGON & SIEM REAP

18 NIGHTS

Combine the fascinating and varied Mekong River, with its striking cultural contrast between the bustling Vietnam delta and the tranquility of Cambodia, with exploring the key sites of Northern Vietnam by traversing the Red River delta and its main tributaries, connecting the wonders of Halong Bay with the excitements of down town Hanoi, and then on into the interior, well off the beaten track. Inbetween cruises spend a day at leisure to explore Saigon.

DOWNSTREAM ITINERARY

April to November

DAY 1

HOA BINH

Transfer to Hoa Binh, visiting a museum and local village where villagers still wear traditional dress. In the afternoon, set sail downstream for sunset and a night on the Da River.

[MORE ABOUT HOA BINH](#)

DAY 2

HOA BINH

Hoa Binh was the site of a major battle with the French in 1951 & 1952 and is home to the Muong ethnic group.

The Hoa Binh Dam at the Black River is the largest hydroelectric dam in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Take a morning boat ride on the reservoir of Hoa Binh and explore the inner workings of the power station. In the afternoon, we sail downstream on the Da River before being treated to a traditional performance by local hill tribe people. We moor overnight mid-River.

[MORE ABOUT HOA BINH](#)

DAY 3

THE DA RIVER

Day sailing downstream while admiring the unspoilt beauty of the Da River. We stop to visit K9 Ho Chi Minh Memorial House, a small museum newly opened to international visitors introducing the life of President Ho Chi Minh and his contributions to the country's revolution.

[MORE ABOUT THE DA RIVER](#)

DAY 4

VIET TRI

After breakfast by coach through beautiful scenic countryside to the UNESCO praised village of Duong Lam then continue cruising downstream to Viet Tri. Take in the sights and sounds of the bustling river with all kinds of craft and activity.

Meet your guide in the dining room for a lecture on Vietnam, its history, geography and the boat people.

[MORE ABOUT DUONG LAM](#)

DAY 5**LO - RED RIVERS**

Take in the sights and sounds of the bustling river with all kinds of craft and activity. In the morning cruise to Tien Du ferry station to visit the Hung Lo Temple.

[MORE ABOUT LO AND RED RIVER](#)

DAY 6**THE LOWER RED RIVER**

Go ashore to visit a timeless Arcadian Vietnam with emerald green rice paddies punctuated by limestone rock formations. Of particular interest are the Thay and Tay Phuong Pagodas.

[MORE ABOUT THAY AND TAY PHUONG PAGODAS](#)

DAY 7**HANOI**

Drop anchor in the capital and bustling city of Hanoi to visit some highlights of this Asian metropolis. Must-sees include the notorious Vietnam War prison known as the Hanoi Hilton, temple of literature where Confucius did his thinking, and the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.

[MORE ABOUT HANOI](#)

DAY 8**LUOC - THAI BINH - KINH THAY RIVERS**

Observe the lively and interesting life on the river before reaching next destination in the afternoon.

Afternoon excursion to Thanh Ha Commune with village walk and a private water puppet show set under the shade by a beautiful pond of lotus and lilies.

Drop anchor near Hai Phong Port.

[MORE ABOUT THANH HA AND WATER PUPPETS](#)

DAY 9**HALONG BAY**

Cast off early morning along the river before entering Halong Bay's amazing island scenery with its 2,000 dramatic limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations dating back 20 million years.

[MORE ABOUT HALONG BAY](#)

DAY 10

HALONG BAY

Morning sail around Halong Bay and beyond with its 1,500 dramatic limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations, dating back 20 million years.

Stop at Viet Hai Village and explore on mountain bike or electric buggy, visiting the village's vegetable farm and typical village houses. It is a breath-taking trip along a small road winding its way through the limestone rocks.

[MORE ABOUT LAN HA BAY](#)

DAY 11

HALONG BAY - HANOI - SAIGON

Morning sail to Tuan Chau Jetty. Disembark and transfer to Hanoi Airport for your flight to Saigon and your hotel, with stop for lunch at a local restaurant.

[MORE ABOUT HALONG BAY](#)

DAY 12**SAIGON - MY THO - BEN TRE**

Transfer from Saigon to the river port for embarkation. After lunch, we journey by sampans through mangroves and bamboo forests to the fruit orchards of Ben Tre. This is an area rich in birdlife which we will explore via local transport before transferring to a local rowboat. We will journey slowly through the bamboo covered canals before arriving at a village specialising in making local products. In the evening you will be entertained by a Vietnamese dance troupe on deck.

[MORE ABOUT SAIGON](#)

DAY 13**GAO GIONG**

Sailing through the delta offers a real insight into life along this vast waterway. After lunch, a short coach journey through the lush countryside to Gao Giong 'green oasis', a 1,000-acre eucalyptus forest and listed wildlife sanctuary. Here a diverse selection of water birds and egrets gather in their tens of thousands across the Duong Tharp Muoi or 'Plain of Reeds'. Rowboats traverse the canals to take us to view the principal nesting areas where photo opportunities abound.

DAY 14**CHAU DOC - SAM MOUNTAIN -
VIETNAM/CAMBODIA BORDER**

We go alongside at the picturesque border town of Chau Doc where we visit the floating markets & fish farms by sampan. We make a stop at a Chham Village and observe the lives of Vietnamese Muslims before taking minivans for a short drive to Sam Mountain, location of Phuoc Dien Tu or the Hang Pagoda. We climb the 400 steps to the top to visit the pagoda. Upon return to ship, we navigate a web of canals before dropping anchor on the Vietnam/Cambodia border to undergo Immigration formalities.

DAY 15**PHNOM PENH**

We go alongside in the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. Morning orientation of the city by cyclo, visiting the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda followed by the National Museum with its marvellous collection of Angkor statuary. In the afternoon, we visit by coach the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng Genocide. Optional half-day and full-day tours are available during our stay in Phnom Penh at extra cost. Please contact us in advance or see your in-cabin information manual for further details. Overnight in Phnom Penh city port with its lively bars, restaurants and nightlife.

DAY 16

SILK ISLAND

Morning at leisure in Phnom Penh with its café life and many smart boutiques. After lunch sail up the Tonle River to Koh Nghe Tei (Silk Island) to study the entire silk-making process from worms to weavers. We visit silk makers and can buy from them their lovely silk scarves and other fabrics. This village is a centre of the ancient martial art of L'bokator which roughly translates as 'pounding a lion'. It includes weapons techniques and is one of the oldest combat techniques in Cambodia and believed to date back to the Angkor empire.

[MORE ABOUT PHNOM PENH](#)

DAY 17

TONLE SAP RIVER - PREK KDAM - OUDONG

Sail further up the Tonle River to Prek Kdam and travel by coach to the ancient capital of Cambodia, Oudong. On the way we stop to visit the Vipassana Dhura Meditation Centre for meditation before taking a drive around the old capital. We re-join our ship at Kompong Trollach. After lunch, we travel on ox-carts ride to visit river-side villages, markets and temples. In the evening cocktails are round a village fire pit where we will be joined by village folk keen to show us their traditional dancing show us more of the delightful Khmer culture.

DAY 18

KAMPONG CHHNANG - TONLE SAP FLOATING VILLAGES & MARKETS

A highlight of any Mekong journey is the navigation of the web of tight channels as we approach the mouth of the Tonle Sap. From Kampong Chhnang we embark on country boats to explore floating villages and markets, observing fisheries and aquatic horticulture. Back on land at Kampong Chhnang we can walk the riverbank to see the towering stilt houses.

DAY 19

KAMPONG CHHNANG - SIEM REAP

Disembark and travel by coach from Kampong Chhnang through stunningly lovely countryside to reach Siem Reap, adjacent to Angkor Wat.</p>

[MORE ABOUT SIEM REAP](#)

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

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](#)