



Pandaw Cruises

EXPEDITION No 39

DEEPER AND FURTHER ON THE MEKONG RIVER

10 NIGHTS

Sailing port to port from central Saigon to Siem Reap inland port, venture deep into Vietnam's vast Mekong Delta, explore the norther reaches of the Mekong River at the dolphin grounds at Kratie and discover the picturesque Tonle Sap as we cross the the 150 mile-long lake. This is a new itinerary never attempted in total before and only operable aboard Pandaw's ultra-low draft vessels and only during the high water season until October.

No ship could be more appropriate for this expedition than the much-loved Mekong Pandaw that was the first ship to pioneer the river in 2002 and historically open the river border between Vietnam and Cambodia. Only the Mekong Pandaw has the shallow draft to go so far on these rivers and the low air draft to get under recently constructed bridges. Thanks to improvements in inland water navigation in these countries we can now take the ship from Saigon to Siem Reap with no long road transfers required on arrival or departure, something unimaginable in previous years.

This pioneering route is very much aimed at Pandaw club members who seek more immersive experiences in the countries Pandaw ships ply and wish to spend more days in the comfort and lively atmosphere of our beautifully crafted ships.

With 24 staterooms the Mekong Pandaw has been refitted with a sumptuous spa, library and gym this ship, built in Burma from golden teak. This is the

most spacious of all Pandaw's nineteen ships with broad promenades running around each deck and a vast sun deck of over 600 square meters on top.

YOUR SHIP - [RV MEKONG PANDAW](#)

[MORE IMAGES OF THE RV MEKONG PANDAW](#)

Cruise Price Includes: Entrance fees, guide services (English language), gratuities to crew, main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes. Transfer to Siem Reap from Ship on Day 11 (Upstream) or Transfer from Siem Reap to Ship on Day 1 (Downstream).

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and tips to tour guides, local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers, other transfers not stated in the itinerary.

UPSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

SAIGON

Embark 1200 at Saigon city port and sail according to the tide for My Tho passing through a complex network of shipping canals linking the Saigon River with the Mekong itself.

[MORE ABOUT SAIGON](#)

DAY 2

BEN TRE

Today 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.

DAY 3

CHAU DOC - VIETNAM/CAMBODIA BORDER

In the morning we go alongside at the picturesque border town of Chau Doc. Taking minivans for a short drive to Sam Mountain, location of Phuoc Dien Tu or the Hang Pagoda. We climb the steps to the top to visit the pagoda with breath-taking viewpoints available along the way for those who do not want to climb the full distance. We then return to the river and visit the floating fish farms by sampan, making a stop at a Chham Village on the way to observe the lives of Vietnamese Muslims. A traditional Lion dance is presented at the Cham Village. Upon return to ship, we navigate a web of canals before dropping anchor on the Vietnam/Cambodia border to undergo Immigration formalities.

DAY 4

ANGKOR BAN VILLAGE

Sunrise cruise to Angkor Ban village to see how local villagers live and visit the library which was donated by Pandaw to Angkor Ban secondary school.

NOTE: if you want to donate books, please bring along some Children's books in English language (suitable for age 8 to 15 yrs) which you can personally gift to the library.

DAY 5

KOH TRONG ISLAND

Visit Koh trong Island, a community based tourism site since 2008. We explore the fruit orchards and sample the local delicacies before we head to a community tree project and plant trees together with the local people. Moor overnight alongside the island.

DAY 6

KRATIE AND THE DOLPHIN GROUNDS

Morning excursion by coach and sampan to spot the Irrawaddy dolphins abundant in the waters below Stuc Treng. Whilst numbers have increased in recent years, they remain endangered and we learn more about the work of locals to support dolphin numbers and how Pandaw is supporting. This is a real highlight of the expedition.

DAY 7

PHNOM PENH

Morning orientation of Phnom Penh by cyclo visiting the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda followed by the National Museum with its marvelous collection of Angkorian statuary. In the afternoon we visit the Killing Fields and Genocide museum to learn more about the brutal Khmer Rouge regime. Overnight in Phnom Penh city port with its lively bars, restaurants and night life.

[MORE ABOUT PHNOM PENH](#)

DAY 8

KAMPONG TRALACH AND THE TONLE RIVER

We leave the dock at Phnom Penh early morning and sail up the winding channels of the Tonle River to Kampong Tralach. We travel by ox-cart around the river-side villages, markets and temples to get a sense of life along the river. 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 9

KAMPONG CHHNANG AND THE TONLE SAP

By local boat we explore the backwaters with fish farms around this important trading town. In the wetlands around the mouth of the lake are elaborate bamboo fish traps. Returning to ship, enter the Tonle Sap to moor overnight in open waters savoring the peace and tranquility of this lake that in high water covers 6,200 miles and in low water shrinks to 1,000 square miles.

DAY 10

TONLE SAP

Continue the traverse of the great lake stopping to visit a floating village and reaching Siem Reap inland port in the evening. Bird life along the lake's edges is profuse and look out for the grey headed fish eagle. Crocodiles and snakes abound in these shallow waters which are home to the giant Mekong catfish, the largest ever caught being 648 pounds in May 2004. There are 148 other species of fish in the lake which provide the main source of protein for the entire Cambodian population.

DAY 11

SIEM REAP (ANGKOR)

Disembark Siem Reap Port and transfer the short distance to Siem Reap city by car.

[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

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN SAIGON

Our guide will be waiting for you at the airport to transfer you to your hotel. Free time in the evening, we suggest heading to Nguyen Hue walking street to see the various artists, performers and local residents relaxing in true Vietnamese style.

Overnight Saigon

Meals: none

DAY 2

SAIGON CITY TOUR - CUCHI TUNNELS

In the morning, drive to the extraordinary Cu Chi tunnels, about 65 Km (1.5 hours drive) from Saigon. The complicated system of underground network was built by the Viet Cong guerillas. We return to the city for lunch at a local restaurant before taking in the sights of Saigon. Visit the Reunification Hall, Notre Dame Cathedral, General Post Office, Former US Embassy, City Hall and War Museum of Remnants. End the day with some shopping at Ben Thanh market, one of the earliest surviving structures in Saigon and symbol of the city turned tourist shopping hotspot.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

After breakfast, check out and transfer to the ship at My Tho.

Meals: Breakfast



5 STAR

Pre Tour Saigon & Surroundings (Hotel Des Arts)

Discover the vibrant and dynamic Ho Chi Minh City, the largest and most populous city in Vietnam. On this two-night pre or post-cruise tour, you will experience the city's rich history, culture, and cuisine staying in our specially selected hotel partners. Visit the iconic landmarks such as the Notre-Dame Cathedral, the War Remnants Museum, and the Cu Chi Tunnels as well as soaking up the hectic atmosphere of central Saigon.

Rates include:

Transfer from Saigon Airport to hotel, two nights accommodation with daily

breakfast, one lunch at local restaurant and excursion as per itinerary, transfer from hotel to ship.

Note

- Please advise arrival flight details in order to arrange your transfer accordingly
- Check out time from hotel at 1200hrs

* Please note that your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you an alternate accommodation if the requested hotel would not be available.

Airport Arrival Transfer Notes

Please take note your driver/guide will be waiting for you at Column No 12 outside the arrival area (either the International Arrival area or Domestic Arrival area, depending on your flight). Upon exiting the Arrival Terminal please look for column No 12. In case you do not see the driver/guide at column No 12, please call the Pandaw hotline number and remain standing at the column No 12 in order for the guide/driver to locate you. Please be on the lookout for the Pandaw welcome sign in front of Column No 12.

HOTEL DES ARTS SAIGON

76 78 Nguyen Thi Minh Khai St

District 3

70000

Ho Chi Minh City

Tel: +84 28 3989 8888

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN SAIGON

Our guide will be waiting for you at the airport to transfer you to your hotel. Free time in the evening, we suggest heading to Nguyen Hue walking street to see the various artists, performers and local residents relaxing in true Vietnamese style.

Overnight Saigon

Meals: none

DAY 2

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In the morning, drive to the extraordinary Cu Chi tunnels, about 65 Km (1.5 hours drive) from Saigon. The complicated system of underground network was built by the Viet Cong guerillas. We return to the city for lunch at a local restaurant before taking in the sights of Saigon. Visit the Reunification Hall, Notre Dame Cathedral, General Post Office, Former US Embassy, City Hall and War Museum of Remnants. End the day with some shopping at Ben Thanh market, one of the earliest surviving structures in Saigon and symbol of the city turned tourist shopping hotspot.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

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Meals: Breakfast



5 STAR

Pre Tour Saigon & Surroundings (The Myst Dong Khoi)

Discover the vibrant and dynamic Ho Chi Minh City, the largest and most populous city in Vietnam. On this two-night pre or post-cruise tour, you will experience the city's rich history, culture, and cuisine staying in our specially selected hotel partners. Visit the iconic landmarks such as the Notre-Dame Cathedral, the War Remnants Museum, and the Cu Chi Tunnels as well as soaking up the hectic atmosphere of central Saigon.

Rates include:

Transfer from Saigon Airport to hotel, two nights accommodation with daily

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Note

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THE MYST DONG KHOI

6-8 Ho Huan Nghiep St.

Ben Nghe Ward

District 1

Ho Chi Minh City

Tel: +84 28 3520 3040

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN HUE

Welcome to Vietnam. After arrival at Hue Airport meet your guide and driver for the transfer to your hotel. Rest of day at leisure.

Meals: none.

DAY 2

HUE

This morning we take a boat on the serene Perfume River to the best known pagoda in Middle Vietnam, Thien Mu. We then pay a visit to the impressive tomb of former Emperor Tu Duc and a beautiful garden once belonging to royalty followed by a royal style lunch at a local restaurant. In the afternoon, visit Hue citadel including Noon Gate, Thai Hoa Palace, Royal Urns and the ruins of the Forbidden Purple City.

Meals: Breakfast at the Hotel, Lunch at local restaurant.

DAY 3

HUE - HOI AN

After breakfast we leave Hue for Hoian. En route we pause to unwind on top of the Ocean Clouds Pass, on the Non Nuoc Beach and then visit the fascinating Cham Museum. We then proceed to the quaint town of Hoian for check in and to relax. In the afternoon, there is time to explore this charming and wonderfully preserved merchant town that retains Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and European influences from its flourishing old days.

Meals: Breakfast at the hotel.

DAY 4

HOI AN

Day at leisure. Explore the beautiful old town of Hoi An or relax at the beach.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel.

DAY 5

HOI AN - DANANG - SAIGON

Transfer to the airport for a flight from Danang 08.00 to Saigon 09.25 (flight times subject to change). Upon arrival, drive to the extraordinary Cu Chi tunnels, about 65 Km (1½ hours' drive) from Saigon. This complicated underground network was built by Viet Cong guerillas. En route, you have the chance to see how rural people live and work such as cashew nut farming, duck breeding, rice farming and production of rice paper, a key ingredient in Vietnamese cuisine. After lunch in a local restaurant, return to Saigon. In the afternoon, visit to Reunification Hall, Notre Dame Cathedral, General Post Office, Former US Embassy, City Hall, War Museum of Remnants. Shopping at Ben Thanh market.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel, Lunch at local restaurant.

DAY 6

SAIGON DEPARTURE

Morning at leisure. Transfer with your fellow Pandaw passengers to My Tho to embark your ship.

Meals: Breakfast at Hotel.



DISCOVER

5 Night Vietnam's Heritage Road: Hue, Hoi An & Saigon Pre Tour

Hue and Hoi An are two of Vietnam's scenic and historic highlights and a 'must see' on most people's visit to this most wonderful country. Our trip includes a fascinating ride along the Perfume River and a visit to the enormous Hue Citadel. Hoi An is best explored independently and retains a charming village feel which comes alive after sunset with the glow of red lanterns and the senses of Asia. And, of course, plenty of time to relax at your beach resort.

We are pleased to offer a pre and post extension including connecting domestic flight, all transfers, excursions in Hue, a scenic journey from Hue to Hoi An and a 2-night stay in Hoi An. You will be staying in a delightful selection of boutique hotels. It is possible to extend your stay in Hoi An if required.

Your trip ends in the Oriental Pearl Saigon with tour and overnight stay before your cruise.

This is a Pandaw group tour.

Rates include:

English speaking guide on tours, 2x lunch at local restaurant, economy one-way domestic air ticket Danang to Saigon, hotels as advertised,

transportation by AC vehicle, daily breakfast, and entrance fees.

Rates exclude:

International flights, visa, travel insurance, not mentioned beverages and meal.

Note

- Please advice arrival flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Check in time at hotel is 1400hrs
- Check out time from hotel at 1200hrs
- Early check in and late check out are subject to hotel room availability

* Please note that your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you alternative accommodation if the requested hotel is not available.

Airport Arrival Transfer Notes

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POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL SIEM REAP - ANGKOR WAT

Your guide will meet you upon arrival to Siem Reap and transfer you to the Jaya House Hotel for lunch before check in. In the afternoon we visit the most famous temple of Cambodia, Angkor Wat. It is visually, architecturally and artistically breathtaking with its massive three tiered pyramid crowned by five beehive-like towers rising 65 meters from ground level. This temple is the centerpiece of any visit to the temples of Angkor. Take in the romantic view at sunset from Bakheng Hill.

Overnight at hotel

Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

Following breakfast in your hotel, set out for a day of exploration amongst the various temples and ruins of the Angkor Empire. The morning we will cover the large complex surrounding the imposing Bayon Temple. After lunch at a local restaurant, we discover more secluded temples including the awe inspiring and overgrown Ta Prohm, made famous by the Tomb Raider movie.

In the evening we experience a true highlight of Cambodia and meet talented young performers in a breathtaking and original Cambodian show at Phare Ponleu Selpak's Circus. Not just for entertainment, Phare is also a social enterprise supporting the youth of Cambodia gain skills and employment.

Overnight at hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

After breakfast check out of your hotel and head to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast



DISCOVER

Exploring Angkor (Jaya House Riverpark) Post Tour

Explore the magnificent temples of Angkor including the world famous Angkor Wat, high on any bucket list destination. With our specially selected hotels and local guide at your service throughout, this 2-night add-on to your Pandaw expedition it is the perfect choice for your trip in Cambodia.

Rates include:

One way transfer (ship to hotel and hotel to airport), two nights accommodation at Jaya House Riverpark, meals and excursion as per itinerary.

Note

- Please advice arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Visa on arrival to Cambodia not inclusive (USD 30 per person downstream if arriving at Siem Reap Airport, USD 35 upstream if crossing the water border between Vietnam/Cambodia)
- Check out time from hotel at 1200hrs

* Please note that your hotel will be confirmed after we have received your deposit payment. Prices are subject to change. Hotel subject to availability. We will try to offer you an alternate accommodation if the requested hotel would not be available.

JAYA HOUSE RIVERPARK

River Road

Treang Village

Siem Reap - Slor Kram Commune

Tel: +855 639 62 555

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL SIEM REAP - ANGKOR WAT

Your guide will meet you upon arrival to Siem Reap then arrange lunch before check in. In the afternoon we visit the most famous temple of Cambodia, Angkor Wat. It is visually, architecturally and artistically breathtaking with a massive three tiered pyramid crowned by five beehive-like towers rising 65 meters from ground level. This temple is the centerpiece of any visit to the temples of Angkor. Take in the romantic view at sunset from Bakheng Hill.

Overnight at hotel

Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

Following breakfast in your hotel, set out for a day of exploration amongst the various temples and ruins of the Angkor Empire. The morning we will cover the large complex surrounding the imposing Bayon Temple. After lunch at a local restaurant, we discover more secluded temples including the awe inspiring and overgrown Ta Prohm, made famous by the Tomb Raider movie.

In the evening we experience a true highlight of Cambodia and meet talented young performers in a breathtaking and original Cambodian show at Phare Ponleu Selpak's Circus. Not just for entertainment, Phare is also a social enterprise supporting the youth of Cambodia gain skills and employment.

Overnight at hotel

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 3

DEPARTURE

After breakfast check out of your hotel and head to the airport for your onward flight.

Meals: Breakfast



DISCOVER

Exploring Angkor (FCC Angkor) Post Tour

Explore the magnificent temples of Angkor including the world famous Angkor Wat, high on any bucket list destination. With our specially selected hotels and local guide at your service throughout, this 2-night add-on to your Pandaw expedition it is the perfect choice for your trip in Cambodia.

Rates include:

One way transfer (ship to hotel and hotel to airport), two nights accommodation at the FCC Angkor by Avani, meals and excursion as per itinerary.

Note

- Please advise arrival/departure flight details in order to arrange the transfer accordingly
- Visa on arrival to Cambodia not inclusive (USD 30 per person downstream if arriving at Siem Reap Airport, USD 35 upstream if crossing the water border between Vietnam/Cambodia)
- Check out time from hotel at 1200hrs

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FCC ANGKOR

Pokambor Ave

next to Royal residence

Siem Reap

Cambodia

Tel: +855 63 760 280

[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**](#)