



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.

DOWNSTREAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

EMBARK SIEM REAP

After a short 45 minute drive to Siem Reap inland port, we embark and set sail into the Tonle Sap lake. 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. In the afternoon we visit a floating village and learn more about life on the lake.

[MORE ABOUT SIEM REAP](#)

DAY 2

TONLE SAP AND KAMPONG CHHNANG

Continue crossing this tranquil lake before reaching Kampong Chhnang, an important trading town that focusses on fishing and creating local pottery. We explore the back waters by local boat before returning to the boat and sailing downstream to moor alongside a remote fishing village where we enjoy evening cocktails around the campfire with the village people.

DAY 3

KAMPONG TRALLACH

Arriving in the morning to Kampong Trallach, We travel by ox-cart around the river-side villages, markets and temples to get a sense of life along the river. After lunch we visit the ancient capital of Oudong and discover the Vipassana Dhura meditation centre before mooring alongside Koh Chen, a silversmith village know for furnishing the royal families for centuries.

DAY 4

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 5

ANGKOR BAN

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 6

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 7

KRATIE AND THE DOLPHIN GROUNDS

Morning excursion by coach and sampan to hopefully spot the Irrawaddy dolphins abundant in the waters below Stuc Treng. This is a real highlight of the expedition.

DAY 8**BORDER CROSSING – CHAU DOC**

We cross into Vietnam by the river border in the morning before going alongside the picturesque border town of Chau Doc in the afternoon. 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 breathtaking 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.

DAY 9**CON PHUOC**

Today the ship sails to Con Phuoc for the shore excursion. We pass through a small canal and head ashore to Con Phuoc Island where we visit local craftspeople weaving bamboo baskets the traditional way. After a demonstration, we try our hand at making our own. We then take a local tuk tuk for a drive through this peaceful village, stopping at a 100 year old church and meeting more of the friendly local community.

DAY 10**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. We sail the afternoon through the Chao Gao canal on the way to central Saigon, entering the city and enjoying a sunset dinner cruise along the Saigon river before we dock centrally. Please note we will be unable to leave the ship during this evening due to immigration formalities.

DAY 11**DISEMBARK SAIGON**

After breakfast, disembark in the heart of Saigon for your onward journey.

[MORE ABOUT SAIGON](#)

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 SIEM REAP - ANGKOR

Our guide will pick you up at Siem Reap International airport or local Hotel in Siem Reap and transfer to the Jaya House Hotel for lunch before check in at the hotel. 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: Lunch at hotel

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

ANGKOR - DEPARTURE

Check out the hotel and transfer to the meeting point at 09:00am for registration and transfer to your Pandaw ship.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel



DISCOVER

Exploring Angkor (Jaya House Riverpark) Pre 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 (airport to hotel and hotel to ship), 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](#)

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL SIEM REAP - ANGKOR

Our guide will pick you up at Siem Reap International airport or local Hotel in Siem Reap and transfer to the FCC Angkor by Avani for lunch before check in at the hotel. 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: Lunch at hotel

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

ANGKOR - DEPARTURE

Check out the hotel and meet in the lobby at 09:00am for registration and transfer to your Pandaw ship.

Meals: Breakfast at your hotel



DISCOVER

Exploring Angkor (FCC Angkor) Pre 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 (airport to hotel and hotel to ship), two nights accommodation at the FCC Angkor by Avani, 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

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would not be available.

FCC ANGKOR

Pokambor Ave

next to Royal residence

Siem Reap

Cambodia

Tel: +855 63 760 280

[Visit Hotel Website](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN SAIGON

Disembark your ship and transfer to your hotel in in Saigon. Free time to explore the city, we suggest heading to Nguyen Hue walking street of the evening 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 transfer to the airport for your onward journey.

Meals: Breakfast



5 STAR

Post 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 ship to hotel, two nights accommodation with daily breakfast, one lunch at local restaurant and excursion as per itinerary, transfer from hotel to Saigon Airport.

Note

- Please advise departure 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.

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](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

ARRIVAL IN SAIGON

Disembark your ship and transfer to your hotel in in Saigon. Free time to explore the city, we suggest heading to Nguyen Hue walking street of the evening 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 transfer to the airport for your onward journey.

Meals: Breakfast



5 STAR

Post 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 ship to hotel, two nights accommodation with daily breakfast, one lunch at local restaurant and excursion as per itinerary, transfer from hotel to Saigon Airport.

Note

- Please advise departure 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.

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](#)

POST-TOUR EXTENSION

DAY 1

DISEMBARKATION - SAIGON CITY TOUR - CU CHI TUNNELS

Arrive Hotel des Arts Saigon after disembarkation. Upon arrival at Hotel des Arts Saigon, meet your local guide and drive to extraordinary Cu Chi tunnels, about 65 Km (1.5 hours drive) from Sai Gon. The complicated system of underground network was built by Viet Cong guerillas. En route, you have chance to see rural people live and work. View occupations such as cashew nut farming, duck breeding, rice farming and production of rice paper, a key ingredient in Vietnamese cuisine. After lunch in 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 ship. Lunch at local restaurant

DAY 2

SAIGON - HUE

A morning flight from Saigon to Hue. Arrive Hue airport, meet your local guide and transfer to the hotel. The balance of the day is free at leisure.

Meals: Breakfast at the hotel

DAY 3

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 4

HUE - HOI AN

After breakfast, we leave Hue for Hoi An. 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 5

HOI AN

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

Meals: Breakfast at hotel

DAY 6

HOI AN - DEPARTURE

Morning at leisure. Transfer to Danang airport.

Meals: Breakfast at hotel.



DISCOVER

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

Start this extension after your cruise at Saigon with a two-night stay and full day tour of the city.

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.

It is possible to extend your stay in Hoi An if required.

This is a Pandaw group tour.

Rates include:

English speaking guide on tours, 2x lunch at local restaurant, economy one-way domestic air ticket Saigon to Hue, 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 advise 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

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.

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**](#)

