

## Vietnam & Cambodia

### EXTENDED MEKONG RIVER CRUISE

#### Why join this Voyage?

- In-depth 11 day Mekong River cruise uniquely including the chance to see the rare Irrawaddy dolphin in the wild, along with exploration of this iconic river's colourful local markets and floating villages
- Exciting range of daily guided excursions as you leisurely travel The Mekong through rural Vietnam and Cambodia between bustling Saigon and the great Khmer temple complex at Angkor
- Travel aboard a small, characterful 66 passenger boat, with acres of teak decking, air conditioned cabins and an impeccable crew, through two countries with the distinct advantage of only having to unpack once



#### Trip Summary

This extended 11-day Mekong River cruise incorporates all of the main excursions and points of interest of our 8-day voyage with the unique chance to travel further upriver, close to the border with Laos, to try to get a glimpse of the rare and endangered Irrawaddy dolphin. At one time found in considerable numbers throughout the lower parts of The Mekong River and Tonle Sap Lake, their numbers have now sadly dwindled. Few boats travel this far up The Mekong and only four departures are available for 2010, travelling in October and November only.

# Itinerary



## Day 1 London/ Ho Chi Minh (Saigon)

Depart London Heathrow to Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) via Bangkok, flying overnight.

## Day 2 Saigon

Arrive late afternoon, where you will be met on arrival. Overnight in Saigon.

## Day 3 Saigon/ My Tho/ Embark

Transfer by road south to the Mekong Delta and embark your ship. Afternoon excursion in Cai Be by traditional junk including visit to the An Kiet House.



## Day 4 Cai Be/ Chau Doc

Half day excursion on board traditional sampans experiencing the bustle of daily river life, including Cai Be's colourful floating market and Sa dec, a little "Venice" with its numerous narrow canals. Afternoon exploring Chau Doc, visiting Cu Lao Gien island and a Catholic monastery built in 1875 by French nuns.

## Day 5 Chau Doc / Border Crossing

On board small local boats we visit a Cham tribal village and a cat fish farm before taking a trishaw ride round this fascinating town and see its bustling market. We cross the Cambodian border in the afternoon.

## Day 6 Phnom Penh

The capital of Cambodia retains its French charm, but pride of place goes to the Royal Palace and to the spectacular Silver Pagoda. Afternoon *optional* excursion to the Killing Fields and the Khmer Rouge's grim Tuol Sleng or S21 detention centre.



## Day 7 Tonle River/ Kampong Chhnang

Excursion up the Tonle River to Kampong Chhnang, for a wonderful motor boat excursion into the lakeside wetlands that form the mouth of the river. Here a stunning variety of birdlife and many fish traps may be seen.

## Day 8 Mekong River

We stop at the little-known Chong Koh silk-weaving village in the morning. In the afternoon we stop at the traditional Peam Chi Kang village to visit the monastery and school, learning about local village life.



## Day 9 Wat Hatchey/ Chhnang

Morning visit to the hilltop temple of Wat Hanchey . In the afternoon, you will visit the French colonial town of Chhlong, once the centre of the coffee and tea trade. This is a great little place to potter around and enjoy some of the amazing old colonial houses.



## Day 10 Kratie/ Dolphin Sanctuary

We travel by expedition boat to this WWF protected area where we hope to see the rare river dolphins. The river here is rocky and not navigable for larger vessels. In the afternoon, time to explore the town of Kratie, another remnant of French colonialism.



## Day 11 Sam Bor

Morning excursion by local bus to visit these important pre-Angkorian temples situated about 40km north of Kratie. Afternoon cruising downstream.

## Day 12 Kampong Cham Area

Travel by bus to visit a 12th century Angkorian temple called Wat Nokor, the eco village of Chenungkok and the Pandaw-supported Kampong Cham orphanage, where you are guaranteed a very warm welcome.

## Day 13 Disembark/ Siem Reap

Early morning coach transfer to Siem Reap, stopping at Kampong Thom for a picnic lunch. Arrive at Siem Reap mid afternoon with the rest of the day to relax. Overnight in Siem Reap.



#### Day 14 Angkor

Private guided tour of the great Khmer temple complex at Angkor.

#### Day 15 Siem Reap/ Bangkok/ London

Morning guided tour of either more outlying Angkor temples or the Tonle Lake. Evening departure from Siem Reap on overnight flight via Bangkok back to London.

#### Day 16 London

Arrive back into the UK



**Please note:** The Mekong is subject to seasonal changes in water level. Sudden rises can impede progress and even prevent passing under certain bridges, while a sudden fall can close off access to certain places or going as far upstream as hoped. Published itineraries are thus an indication only and subject to change. In such events, alternative itineraries will be provided and the boat's crew will do their best to ensure that any missed stops will be made up. Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in SE Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience and quite different to cruising the controlled waterways of Europe, for example.

## The Boat

### RV Mekong Pandaw



Specially designed and built along traditional lines, this characterful ship provides comfortable accommodation for up to 66 passengers, accommodated in a choice of well-appointed Twin and Single cabins, all with en suite bathroom, individual air-conditioning and hand-finished in brass and teak. Their shallow drafts allow them to access areas larger ships can't and to tie directly up to the river bank for excursions in remoter areas.



Cruising the river, the ship's spacious shaded upper Observation deck provides the perfect place to relax and observe the ever changing vista of river life. On the Main Deck there's an elegant air-conditioned sitting room/ saloon bar, with a light and airy dining room with glazed folding back doors on both sides in which all meals are taken. The delicious and plentiful food on board draws heavily from local South-east Asian recipes, with plenty of choice to suit all palates.

The service onboard provided by the mixed staff of Vietnamese, Cambodian and Burmese is impeccable and a real highlight of the whole trip. You are waited on hand and foot with nothing being too much bother, while shore excursions are always accompanied by an experienced English-speaking guide.

## 2010 Expedition Dates

### Upstream: Saigon to Siem Reap

10<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> October 2010  
1<sup>st</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### Downstream: Siem Reap to Saigon

20<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> October 2010  
10<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> November 2010

## Guide Prices for 2010

### Cabin Type

(from guide price quoted per person)

Main Deck	£2,995
Upper Deck	£3,590

### Includes

- International flights
- Airport transfers and pre & post voyage hotel accommodation in Siem Reap & Saigon
- 10 night/11 day cruise based on full board
- All locally-produced drinks (alcoholic and soft)
- Entrance fees, guide services and excursions
- Gratuities to crew

### Excludes

- Imported beverages
- Travel insurance & vaccinations
- Visas
- Potential fuel surcharges
- Any additional items of a personal nature, e.g. souvenirs and discretionary tips

Please note: The above prices are a guide price only based on 2 people sharing a cabin and are subject to exchange rate fluctuations and possible fuel surcharges.

## Single Supplement

For those solo travellers preferring their own cabin, typically a multiplier of 1.3 on the cost of a single berth is used to calculate the single supplement on those ships without dedicated single cabins.

## Flight Information

Our prices include flights with Thai Airways via Bangkok. Journey time approx. 14½ hours. Other flight options are available - please contact us to discuss.

## Visa Information

At all times it remains your responsibility to organise your entry visas, although we are more than happy to help and provide supporting documentation where necessary. Visas are required for both Vietnam and Cambodia for most nationalities. Tourist visas for Cambodia are issued on arrival at the airport or border for a fee, while your Vietnamese visa must be obtained prior to departure via your nearest Vietnamese embassy.

## Pre & Post Extension Ideas

For those travellers wishing to take the opportunity to explore SE Asia further, we know this whole region well and would be delighted to help design a tailor-made pre &/ or post voyage land based extension for you. Here are a few possible ideas:

- Siem Reap extension with time to relax and explore the great ruins in more detail
- Explore bustling Saigon, the highlands and beaches of vibrant Vietnam
- Alternatively take a short flight to either Thailand or Laos

## Want to discuss this trip?



Please call Alex on 01285 880981 for more details or to check cabin availability

Fostered by a childhood in the West Indies, the travel bug bit Alex early. Propelled by his enthusiasm for diverse cultures and hot food, he's travelled to over 50 countries across 7 continents, including both poles. Some of his most memorable recent experiences include dog sledding in The Arctic, kayaking in Alaska, snorkelling with whale sharks off Mexico and piranha fishing in The Amazon.

Alex is General Manager of Steppes Voyages.

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