

Saigon – Phnom Penh by Mekong Eyes Explorer

Itinerary Overview

UPSTREAM: SAIGON – PHNOM PENH

Note*: This tour departs weekly on very Friday.

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	SAIGON – CAI BE – SA DEC – CAO LANH	L/D
Day 2	CAO LANH – TAN CHAU	B/L/D
Day 3	TAN CHAU – BORDER CROSSING – PHNOM PENH	B

DOWNSTREAM: PHNOM PENH - SAIGON

Note*: This tour departs weekly on Sunday from Phnom Penh

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	PHNOM PENH – TAN CHAU – CAO LANH	L/D
Day 2	CAO LANH – CU LAO GIENG – SA DEC	B/L/D
Day 3	CAO LANH – CAI BE	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Travel Map



Detailed Itinerary

Upstream: Saigon - Phnom Penh

Day 1 SAIGON – CAI BE – SA DEC – CAO LANH

Pickup at the hotel in Saigon at 8:00, transfer to Cai Be (note*: this option is included if you book shuttle services). Arrive Cai Be jetty at 11:30. Embarkation and enjoy traditional lunch.

In the afternoon we arrive in the laid back town of Sa Dec for a city tour. There you can see the busy and colorful local market, enjoy a coffee on the nice riverside promenade or visit a nearby flower village with orchards. The charming town still has a lot of colonial architecture, in particular the old market, the church and many old villas and traders' houses. We visit one of them, a beautifully renovated traditional house of a Chinese trader's family. This sumptuous building belonged to the main character of the novel „The Lover” and indeed to the lover of Marguerite Duras.

In the late afternoon we return to the Mekong Explorer Eyes explorer and enjoy a sunset cruise with more fantastic photo opportunities from aboard.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Eyes Explorer Cruise

Day 2 CAO LANH – TAN CHAU

The Mekong Eyes Explorer cruise arrives Cao Lanh in the morning. After breakfast on the top deck, you can enjoy the visit to Tan Thuan Dong Islet, which is famous for its orchards full of mangoes, longans, and ambarellas. It is totally off-the-beaten track and rarely visited by tourists. As the boat maneuvering through the scenic Cho Vam Canal, you are invited to a sunset cocktail party on the top deck, which also allows you to fully enjoy one of the most magnificent moments that Mekong river has to offer.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Eyes Explorer Cruise

Day 3 TAN CHAU – BORDER CROSSING – PHNOM PENH

After breakfast the tour with Mekong Eyes Explorer ends. Disembarkation, then you embark our speedboat for an exciting ride to Cambodia. Arrival in Phnom Penh around lunchtime. Trip ends.

Note*: If you do not travel to Cambodia, and would like to explore Vietnam, please contact us for more details.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Downstream: Phnom Penh - Saigon

Day 1 PHNOM PENH – TAN CHAU – CAO LANH

In the morning we pick you up at your hotel in Phnom Penh and bring you to the jetty where our boat departs. An English speaking guide accompanies all our speed boats to ensure your comfort and well being on board and to support the immigration to Vietnam. Drinks and snacks area available on our comfortable speed boats.

Around 13h the speed boat arrives in Tan Chau and you board your Mekong Eyes Explorer cruise. After a refreshing welcome drink, we show you our on-board facilities and your cozy cabin. Enjoy your lunch while the boat starts cruising through the branches and canals of the Mekong. Sit back on the sundeck or in our lounge and marvel the amazing sights – the lush vegetation and the diverse daily life of the people in the Mekong Delta. Round the day off with a Sunset Cocktail Party at the bar while the sun sets over the magnificent water landscape.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Eyes Explorer Cruise

Day 2 CAO LANH – CU LAO GIENG – SA DEC

Wake up well rested to the sound of the river and get ready for another exciting day of sightseeing in the Mekong Delta. At 6:30h the cruise vessel sets off for a sunrise cruise. Watch the locals go about their daily work drying exotic fruits and building ships on the wooden yards while enjoying an early breakfast.

We cruise towards the Island of Cu Lao Gieng. Located between Chau Doc and Sa Dec on the small island of Cu Lao Gieng, the monastery here was once an important convent. It could accommodate more than 1,000 people and included an orphanage, a school, a hospice and a leprosy centre. Today, Cu Lao Gieng is mainly a retreat for retired nuns. The large building is completely cut off from villages and located in the middle of fields and green jungle. You will be very surprised to see such an architectural impressive monastery in the middle of nowhere. If you have time you should take the opportunity to visit the Catholic monastery which was built on the island in 1875 by French nuns of Saint Paul de Chartres.

In the afternoon we cruise towards the charming city of Sa Dec. There you can see the busy and colorful local market, enjoy a coffee on the nice riverside promenade and visit a nearby flower village with orchards. The charming town still has a lot of colonial architecture, in particular the old market, the church and many old villas and trader's houses. We visit one of them, a beautifully renovated traditional house of a Chinese trader's family. This sumptuous building belonged to the main character of the novel „The Lover” and indeed to the lover of Marguerite Duras.

Get back on board and enjoy a drink at the bar or relax on deck as the sun sets over the magnificent water landscape of the Mekong River. The cruise boat anchors for the night. The day ends with a delicious on-board dinner.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Eyes Explorer Cruise

Day 3 CAO LANH – CAI BE

After breakfast, we enjoy a rowing boat excursion through the hidden small canals of Tan Phong Islet on a sampan. We also visit some of the local candy or rice cake making production or boat through the green water landscape to see local villages, verdant orchards or rice paddies. Disembark at about 10am and take your shuttle to the hotel in Saigon. Trip ends.

Note*: transfer to Saigon is included only if you book shuttle service

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Trip itinerary and routing as described in the itinerary English speaking tour guide
- Guided walk and side trips as mentioned in the itinerary
- Accommodation in cosy double or twin bedded cabins
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Mineral water placed in your cabin on board
- Entry fees, and service charge

Exclusions:

- Transfers from/to Saigon to/from port of embarkation
- Drinks
- Tour guide gratuities
- Any visa fees

Note:

- PROGRAMS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASING ON ACTUAL SITUATION.
- For overnight registration, we will need passport information (Full name, sex, Nationality, passport number, date of birth) of passengers at least four weeks prior to cruise date.

Important Information

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 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!

For itineraries that include flights in the price of the ticket it should be noted that regional airlines can change departure times or cancel flights at very short notice. In such an event we endeavour to arrange alternative flights but note that this can result in delays often resulting in embarking or disembarking on a different day to that indicated in the itinerary. In such an event the company will cover the cost of hotel accommodation and main meals only, but will not be liable for any claims for compensation for missed days on board a ship, drinks or curtailment of the said itinerary.

Clothes

We recommend wearing loose and comfortable clothing made of cotton or modern material that can readily cool off sweat and body heat. The type of shoes will depend on the excursion types so best to have both light, open toed shoes as well as good walking/hiking shoes with you. A sun hat is always a good idea to bring along.

Southern Vietnam and Cambodia are warm all year-round, but our other cruise destinations can get chilly during the winter months (Laos, Myanmar or northern Vietnam). Therefore, it is always recommended to bring a pullover or a warm jacket with you during this period.

Many of our cruises include visits to local temples or pagodas. When visiting these holy sites, make sure to wear appropriate clothing which covers your shoulders and knees.

Sea sickness

Generally speaking, the rivers we are cruising on in Southeast Asia are very calm and there is hardly any motion on any of our ships. A bit of motion can occur during monsoon rains with stormy winds, but the amount of motion is much less than one would feel during bad weather on the open ocean.

Sea cruises as we offer in Halong Bay or Lan Ha Bay can sometimes encounter heavier waters and ship motion, although this happens very rarely and port authorities will most likely not allow sailing under any such circumstances anyway.

If you are new to cruising or prone to motion sickness, it does not hurt to bring along some motion sickness medication. Drinking a nice hot fresh ginger tea is a natural remedy and tasty alternative our staff is always happy to make for you.

Food and Beverage

All food and beverage on board is completely safe to eat and enjoy, including the ice cubes you enjoy in your chilled drinks. We do not recommend drinking water straight from the tap anywhere, including onboard. We provide you with complimentary clean drinking water throughout your cruise.

You may want to be bit careful with local dishes as they can be spicier than you are used to from home. Approach new dishes slowly and carefully. If you have a sensitive stomach, then you may like to double check with our chef or onboard managers about specific dishes or meals.

On excursions, it may be a good idea to avoid local foods and snacks unless offered by our tour guides. Besides the above, in general we recommend the following motto for your pre- and post-cruise travelling in the Southeast Asian tropics: boil it, peel it, cook it, wash it or forget it!

Health risks

The most effective protection from personal contamination is ensuring strict attention to personal hygiene and in particular, frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water and refraining from hand-to-mouth contact. Colds and other viruses can spread quickly in an enclosed area such as a ship. Continue to practice common-sense hygiene and respiratory courtesy. Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneeze. It is recommended that passengers carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, which does not require rinsing with water. Use sanitizer frequently and throughout the day, particularly after shore excursions and prior to meals. If you have any questions regarding your health or safety, please do not hesitate to ask your cruise director.

Motion sickness can be a problem for some people when cruising, flying or travelling on coaches and trains and it is a good idea to take precautionary measures. Over-the-counter drugs for treating motion sickness can be purchased at pharmacies in most countries, though a side effect can be drowsiness. Alternatives such as ginger tablets and acupressure wristbands are also available and work well for some people.

Visa requirements for Cambodia

Cambodia visas are easily obtained for most travelers on arrival. Note that passports must have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Cambodia.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Cambodia embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Visa requirements for Vietnam

With the exception of visa exemptions, all travelers must arrange their visa prior to arrival in Vietnam. Passports must also have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Vietnam.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Vietnam embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Insurance

We recommend at least purchasing travel health insurance which covers both in- & outpatient visits and medical repatriation. Buying additional trip cancellation and interruption coverage may also be beneficial in case you have to cancel your travel plans due to unforeseen circumstances.

Electrical adapters

We always recommend bringing a travel adapter as a standard item in your travel kit. You can borrow an adapter on board, but these may be limited.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.