

Vietnam, Cambodia, and Mekong River

River Cruise Tour January 14-27, 2028

Arrival Airport: Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) | SGN

Departure Airport: Hanoi | HAN

Pricing

\$8399 per photographer (double occupancy suites)

Non-photographer companions save \$500

Deposit: \$1400pp (Save \$500 when you book by May 1st!)

Minimum Group: 6

Maximum Group: 14

Tour Overview

- Discover the colonial charm of Hanoi as well as the vibrant energy of Ho Chi Minh City - also known as Saigon - on a guided tour, including an excursion to the historic Cu Chi tunnels.
- Explore Cambodia's capital - Phnom Penh - and enjoy a guided visit to the Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda, then gain deeper insight into Cambodia's past with visits to the Killing Fields and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.
- Experience daily life in traditional fishing villages in Vietnam and Cambodia, witness local crafts and visit cottage industries during your ports of call on your boutique Mekong river cruise.
- Prepare to be amazed by the Cambodian Phare Circus, a unique fusion of contemporary acrobatics and traditional storytelling.
- Uncover the awe-inspiring Angkor temple complex, including the iconic Angkor Wat, the jungle-clad Ta Prohm, and the enigmatic faces of Bayon.
- During the trip, you'll get professional photography instruction, tips, and inspiration from Jason Odell, along with onboard photo sharing sessions.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Saigon

- *Free time in Saigon*
- *Stay at Pullman Saigon Centre*

Arrive at your accommodation in Saigon, in the heart of the city, where we'll be staying for three nights. Should you arrive ahead of the standard check-in time, we'll ensure your room is ready so you can settle in comfortably. Take the opportunity to rest and recharge, or venture out to discover the nearby attractions and enjoy the hotel's amenities at your own pace.



Day 2 - Saigon

- *Guided tour of Saigon City*
- *Free afternoon in Saigon*

Guided tour of Saigon

We'll begin the day with a guided tour of Saigon's most iconic landmarks. Our journey starts at the historic Reunification Palace, where a tank famously crashed through the gates in 1975, marking the end of the Vietnam War. We'll also visit the powerful War Remnants Museum and the bustling Ben Thanh Market - an energetic hub where you can browse everything from souvenirs to street food, all at fantastic prices. We'll also stop at the beautifully preserved Central Post Office, a gem of French colonial architecture.

Free afternoon in Saigon

Following the tour, we return to the hotel, and the rest of the day is yours to enjoy. You might like to wander through Tao Dan Park, a peaceful green oasis in the heart of the city, home to over a thousand species of tropical flora. For a true taste of local culture, try a traditional Vietnamese coffee - rich, buttery

beans slowly filtered over sweetened condensed milk. It's a treat not to be missed!

Day 3 - Cu Chi Tunnels

- *Tour of Cu Chi Tunnels*
- *Free afternoon in Saigon*

Cu Chi Tunnels

This morning, we journey 30 miles from Saigon to the remarkable Cu Chi Tunnels, an intricate underground labyrinth stretching over 120 miles.

Originally dug during the final years of French colonial rule in the 1940s, and significantly expanded in the 1960s, these tunnels served as a strategic base for the Viet Cong, the communist-

driven organization fighting for North Vietnam against the US and South Vietnam. These tunnels housed everything from command centers and kitchens to sleeping quarters and field hospitals.

Our guided visit offers a compelling glimpse into Vietnam's wartime history. You'll see sections of the tunnels up close, along with cleverly concealed traps and defensive features used to protect them. Despite relentless bombing campaigns, the tunnel system remained largely intact. For those interested, there's even an opportunity to experience a firing range with authentic period weapons.



Afternoon at leisure

After returning to the hotel, the afternoon and evening are yours to enjoy at your own pace. Feeling hungry? Treat yourself to a classic banh mi—a crispy baguette filled with savory meats, pickled vegetables, and fresh herbs. Or warm up with a comforting bowl of pho, Vietnam's beloved noodle soup, simmered for hours to develop its rich, aromatic broth. Pair it with fresh rice paper rolls for a light and flavorful meal. With so many delicious options, you're sure to find something to satisfy your appetite!

Day 4 - Board the ship

- *Embark the ship*
- *Transfer to My Tho and embark on the ship*

Historically referred to as Mae Khong, or the “Mother of all Rivers,” the Mekong is a mighty waterway that carries vast amounts of water from the surrounding plains and the lofty peaks of the Chinese Himalayas, making an incredible 3,000-mile trek. Life in this region is closely tied to its rivers:

traditional wooden boats, or sampans, have plied these waters for generations, and colorful floating markets brim with vibrant produce.



In the early afternoon, we'll transfer to My Tho port, where you'll board our elegant cruise vessel: *Riviera Alba*. Once settled in your suite, we'll have a welcome reception and safety briefing. Afterward, relax with a drink as the ship sets sail.

Note: The following cruise itinerary and description of visits is based on a high-water itinerary and may change depending on water levels and local conditions.

Day 5 - Cai Be & Sa Dec

- *Visit to Cai Be*
- *Visit to Sa Dec*

Cai Be

Begin your morning with a delightful breakfast on board before setting off on a small, motorized rowing boat to journey through narrow waterways shaded by lush nipa palms and apple mangroves. Upon reaching land, we'll visit a local village for a tasting of seasonal fruits and maybe try



your hand at making a traditional local cake. You may complete your visit at a local apiary where beekeepers tend to their hives before returning to the ship by boat.

Sa Dec

After lunch back on board, disembark this afternoon and take a boat ride to Sa Dec. Once ashore, we'll have a walking tour of this vibrant place, including a visit to the famous house written about in the novel *The Lover* by French writer Marguerite Duras. Now a museum, it dates back to 1895 and is a blend of French, Chinese and Vietnamese influences. Experience the colorful Chinese temple as well as the sights and smells of the local market, then return to the ship for dinner and a drink!

Day 6 - An Giang – Dong Thap

- *Guided tour of an island in An Giang*
- *Guided tour of a village in Dong Thap*

An Giang

Affectionately nicknamed “Mango Island,” Cu Lao Gieng is a charming islet nestled in the Upper Mekong, famed for its abundant mango orchards. Your guided tour by local vehicle begins with a stop at a traditional village where artisans have been handcrafting bamboo baskets for generations – a skill passed down through time. Travel along scenic lanes shaded by mango trees, perfect for capturing beautiful photos. You’ll get to sample the island’s famously sweet mangoes and discover how farmers naturally alter their color using time-honored techniques.



Dong Thap

In the afternoon, join a local boat for a cruise to a village in the Dong Thap province, where floating fish farms line the waterways. Disembark and join a motorized tuk-tuk style vehicle for a visit to lush green rice fields which are

also adorned with ornate graves of local farmers. You can also enjoy a vibrant unicorn dance performance—a traditional spectacle full of color and rhythm.

Day 7 - Cruising the Mekong

- *Free day sailing*

Spend today unwinding as your vessel glides along the Mekong River, crossing the border into Cambodia. Today, we'll have an onboard image review session to share some of our favorite images from the trip so far.

We'll reach Phnom Penh later in the evening, where the ship will dock overnight, setting the stage for tomorrow's exciting discoveries.



Day 8 - Phnom Penh

- *Guided tour of Phnom Penh*
- *Free afternoon in Phnom Penh*

This morning, hop aboard a tuk-tuk for a guided tour of Cambodia's vibrant capital. Our first destination is the iconic Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda, an exquisite complex established in 1866 that reflects the elegance and heritage of Khmer architecture. Wander through its ornate halls, including the Throne Hall and Moonlight Pavilion, and marvel at the Silver Pagoda's



gleaming floor made up of 5,000 silver tiles. Inside, you'll find dazzling Buddha statues adorned with gold and precious gems - true national treasures. Next, we'll visit the National Museum, housed in a graceful red sandstone building. This cultural gem holds the world's largest collection of Khmer art, featuring sculptures and artifacts from both the Angkorian and pre-

Angkorian periods. The exhibits span over a thousand years, offering deep insight into Cambodia's artistic legacy.

The afternoon is yours to enjoy at your own pace - perhaps explore local markets, relax at a café, or stroll along the riverside promenade. In the evening, gather for a special cultural treat: a traditional Apsara dance performance by local children, celebrating Cambodia's rich artistic traditions before dinner.

Day 9 - Phnom Penh

- *Visit Choeung Ek Memorial*
- *Visit Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum*
- *Free afternoon in Phnom Penh*

This morning, our journey takes a solemn turn as we explore Cambodia's tragic history under the Khmer Rouge regime. Travel just beyond the city limits to Choeung Ek, one



of the most well-known Killing Fields. This peaceful-yet-powerful memorial marks the site where over a million innocent lives were lost between 1975 and 1979. At its heart stands a glass stupa filled with human skulls and bones, carefully arranged by age and gender, serving as a stark reminder of the atrocities committed.

Our next stop is the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, once a high school turned into the notorious S-21 prison. Here, thousands were imprisoned, tortured, and executed. The preserved classrooms and haunting photographs offer a deeply moving insight into the horrors endured during this dark chapter of Cambodian history.

Following this emotional morning, the afternoon is yours to enjoy at your own pace. You might choose to browse the bustling Central Market, known for its striking Art Deco architecture and wide array of local goods and

snacks. Or take a peaceful walk along Sisowath Quay, the city's riverside promenade, lined with cafés and views of the Tonlé Sap and Mekong rivers. Later in the day, our ship will depart Phnom Penh, continuing our journey along the Mekong.

Day 10 - Wat Roka Kaong – Opopel Village

- *Visit to Wat Roka Kaong*
- *Visit to Opopel Village*

Wat Roka Kaong

Originally established in 1840, Wat Roka Kaong underwent significant restoration in 1998 following the discovery of a revered emerald statue believed to be over 180 years old. This sacred find led to the temple's alternate name, Wat Keo Moni Chort, or the Emerald Temple. The complex features a mix of wooden structures and striking golden columns that rise 53 meters into the sky. Within the grounds, you'll find two temples: Preah Keo Preah Kor to the north and the remnants of Bak Sei Chamkrong to the south, which was sadly damaged by a landslide in 2020. During your visit, explore the vibrant main pagoda and, if you wish, receive a traditional water blessing from the resident monks.



Opopel Village

After returning to the ship, enjoy a scenic cruise toward Opopel Village. Later in the day, step ashore for a guided walk through this peaceful rural community. As you wander past stilted homes and banana groves, you'll see Brahim cattle grazing and experience the unhurried rhythm of village life. Meet friendly locals and stop by the village school for a warm welcome and a glimpse into daily education in the region. Before heading back to the ship, you'll also pause at the local monastery for a brief visit.

This evening, celebrate your journey with a farewell gathering hosted by the ship's crew, followed by a special Cambodian dinner to mark the end of your adventure.

Day 11 - Kampong Cham – Siem Reap

- *Visit to Kampong Kdei Bridge*
- *Lunch at a local restaurant*
- *Phare Circus performance*
- *Stay at Borei Angkor Resort & Spa*

This morning, say a warm goodbye to the wonderful crew as

we begin the next chapter of our Cambodian adventure. Travel by coach through the countryside,

taking in scenes of rural life along the way. A highlight of the journey is a stop at the historic Kampong Kdei Bridge, an impressive Angkor-era structure built during the reign of King Jayavarman VII. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant, we'll continue on to Siem Reap, where we'll check in for a two-night stay. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon to relax at the hotel.



Phare Circus

Tonight, experience a vibrant blend of modern performance and traditional storytelling at the Phare Cambodian Circus. This dynamic show, created and performed by young Cambodian artists, combines acrobatics, theatre, music, and dance to tell powerful stories rooted in the country's culture and history. More than entertainment, Phare supports the work of PPSA, a non-profit organization dedicated to using the arts to help disadvantaged youth.

Day 12 - Temples of Angkor

Guided tour of the Temples of Angkor

Begin your day early to witness the ethereal beauty of Angkor's temples bathed in the soft light of dawn. As the mist lifts from the jungle canopy and birdsong echoes through the



trees, the mystical atmosphere of this sacred site comes to life. It's an experience that will stay with you forever. Our first stop is the grand city of Angkor Thom, once the heart of the Khmer Empire. Surrounded by a vast moat and entered through five towering gates, this 3rd-century citadel houses one of the most iconic temples in the complex— Bayon. With over 50 stone towers, each adorned with four serene faces gazing outward, Bayon is a breathtaking example of Khmer artistry and spiritual symbolism. After a break for lunch at your leisure, continue to the hauntingly beautiful Ta Prohm. Unlike other temples, this site has been left largely untouched, with massive tree roots weaving through crumbling stone walls, creating a dramatic fusion of nature and architecture. As the day draws to a close, visit the majestic Angkor Wat. Facing west, the temple is perfectly positioned to catch the golden hues of sunset, casting a warm glow over its intricate carvings and towering spires. It's a fitting finale to a day filled with awe and wonder.

Evening: At your leisure

Day 13 - Siem Reap and Hanoi

- *Free morning in Siem Reap*
- *Fly to Hanoi*

Start your day with a leisurely breakfast, indulging in that second cup of coffee as you unwind and make the most of the hotel's facilities. Whether you choose to take a refreshing dip in the pool or

pamper yourself with a spa

treatment, the morning is yours to

enjoy. For those with a sense of adventure, the vibrant markets of Siem Reap are waiting to be explored. Following a relaxed lunch at your own pace, we will head to the airport for our early evening flight to Hanoi, where our journey continues. Upon arrival in Hanoi, we'll transfer to our hotel and check in for an overnight stay. A light dinner is included this evening.



Day 14 - Hanoi

Guided tour of Hanoi

Embark on the final leg of your Vietnamese adventure this morning with a delightful guided tour that whisks you through the enchanting tapestry of Hanoi's history and modernity. Born from French imagination, the city is a symphony of colonial charm, where tree-lined boulevards, grand belle

époque villas, and majestic public buildings create a picturesque setting. The Opera House, a proud sentinel, graces the landscape amidst over a dozen serene lakes, each contributing to the city's peaceful allure. This refined scene seamlessly blends with the bustling Old Quarter, a labyrinth of narrow streets that has served as the commercial hub for centuries, now brimming with quaint shops, sacred pagodas, and the constant hum of bicycles and mopeds weaving through the crowds. Our guided tour takes us to the remarkable Temple of Literature, dedicated to Confucius and Vietnam's first university, offering a glimpse into the country's intellectual heritage. We also visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, a solemn and imposing structure. After our tour, we'll transfer back to the hotel for some free time. A late check-out will be arranged for you to freshen up before your journey home.

Note: Most flights depart Hanoi (HAN) quite late, between 11pm and 12:30am the following day.



What's Included

- Photography instruction and image review sessions with Jason Odell
- 3 nights accommodations in Saigon at Pullman Saigon Centre
- 7-night river cruise with all meals
- 2-nights accommodations in Angkor at Borei Angkor Resort & Spa
- 1 night accommodation in Hanoi (Hotel TBA)
- All transfers, including flight to Hanoi
- 14 guided tour experiences
- Port charges & all taxes
- Complimentary water and refillable water bottle, tea and coffee throughout the day and selected drinks (including soft drinks, local wine or beer) with lunch and dinner whilst on board the ship. Complimentary daily sundowner cocktail.

Not Included

- International airfare
- Additional hotel nights (can be arranged)
- Cabin upgrades (if available)
- Meals while on land (other than those specified in the itinerary)
- Gratuities
- Trip Insurance (required for accident/illness coverage)

How to Book

A \$1400 per person deposit* reserves your seat on this tour. The remaining balance will be paid in installments, with the final payment due approximately 120 days before the tour.

*Deposit is refundable if the event is canceled by the organizer