

**Saigon to Siem Reap, 8 days
(Pandaw Cruise)**

Travel Map



Full Itinerary

Day 1 Saigon – My Tho – Cai Be

Registration is at 10.30am Purple Jade Bar (Level One) 39 Le Duan, Ben Nghe Saigon Vietnam
Registration is at 1030 at the INTERCONTINENTAL ASIANA SAIGON HOTEL (39 Le Duan, Ben Nghe - Saigon) and transfer at 11:00 to the Delta Port of My Tho by coach arriving at 13:00 for check in

followed by port and immigration formalities. My Tho is the hub of the Delta, but not of great cultural interest, so once on board we set sail at 1300 and have lunch. In the afternoon we moor near Cai Be and make a fascinating trip by traditional junk to explore evergreen islands and at the former Imperial residence, the An Kiet House. We board the RV Pandaw Cruise. Surviving members of the Kiet family will welcome us with tea and we can wander in the fruit orchards around the house. Overnight moor mid-stream Cai Be.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 2 Cai Be – Sadec – Chau Doc

Half day cruise excursion on board traditional sampan boats to Sad Dec via Vinh Long, along small canals and back waters. We begin by visiting Cai Be and its colorful floating market which takes place daily in front of the catholic church. A further stop on the river bank then allows us to see local factories where rice pasta, coconut candies and other specialties are traditionally made. Also visit a Mandarins house dating from late 19th century.

Cruise further by Sampan to Dong Hoa Hiep islet to explore the rural life and the daily activities of the delta inhabitants seeing palm tree leave weaving, traditional wooden boat factories and fruit orchard plantations. Back on board your sampan, we will cruise up with Pandaw to the Tien River where we see water hyacinths, an important Mekong delta product used for furniture and baskets and then visit a traditional brick and tile factory.

Sa Dec will then appear like a little “Venice” with its numerous narrow canals and various kinds of traditional activities on the banks. You will disembark at the local market for a visit, then proceed to the splendid ancient house of Mr. Huyn Thuy Le, the “lover” of Marguerite Duras, famous French novelist and inspiration for the film L'Amant-The Lover directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud .

After lunch on board the Pandaw, cast off for Chau Doc. En route visit Cu Lao Gien island and a Catholic monastery called “La Providence” built in 1875 by the French nuns of “Saint Paul de Chartres”. Cu Lao Gien became an important Catholic centre with mission, an orphanage, school, hospice and leprosy centre that can treat 1,000 people. During the Japanese invasion the monastery was abandoned; operations were resumed after 1945 until 1977. Nowadays Cu Lao Gian serves as a retreat for 180 retired nuns taken care of by novices.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 3 Cha Doc – Border Crossing – Phnom Penh

From the main Mekong channel we travel down to Chau Doc jetty where we transfer to small boats to visit a Cham tribal village and a cat fish farm. We take a trishaw ride round this fascinating town of fine French-colonial buildings and see its bustling market. Return to the RV Pandaw Cruise by boat for lunch and cast off for the Cambodian border for the usual formalities. Evening cruise up the broad Mekong channel, which is an international shipping route.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 4

Phnom Penh

The capital of Cambodia retains its French charm. The city has several impressive wats, including Wat Ounalom, Wat Phnom and the newly-painted Wat Lang Ka. Pride of place goes to the Royal Palace and to the spectacular Silver Pagoda, one of the few places in Cambodia where artifacts embodying the brilliance and richness of Khmer culture were preserved by the Khmer Rouge. The National Museum is another highlight, with outstanding displays of Khmer crafts.

For the morning excursion we are delighted to have teamed up with The Cyclo Centre Phnom Penh to offer an alternative to a conventional coach tour. The Cyclo Centre is a charity that provides basic welfare and medical services to cyclo drivers, many of whom are very poor. They will provide us with trained drivers with basic English and a good knowledge of the key sights. You decide where you want to go and what you want to see and off you go on your private cyclo for the morning. (For groups if a conventional guide and coach are required we are happy to supply).

In the afternoon an optional excursion (by coach) is arranged to the Killing Fields and the Khmer Rouge's grim Tuol Sleng or S21 detention centre situated in the suburbs of the city then shopping at the Russian market or Central market. This tour is included in the cost of your cruise but must be requested at the time of booking in the Booking Comments box or at the latest on board the first day of the cruise. More happily, Phnom Penh has a lively night life, and some passengers choose to dine ashore or try one of the capital's many watering holes; a favorites being the Foreign Correspondents' Club

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 5

Phnom Penh – Tonle River

Early morning sail the Tonle River which connects Tonle Lake with the Mekong and Bassac Rivers that merge at Phnom Penh.

1. Low water, approximately November to July

The river journey to Kampong Chhnang is one of the highlight of the trip. Temples abound along the river banks at Kampong Chhnang, and we see the rich tapestry of Cambodian rural life. This is a busy rural port town with bustling markets. Mooring mid-stream, we make a truly wonderful motor boat excursion into the lakeside wetlands that form the mouth of the river. Here a stunning variety of birdlife may be seen and of considerable interest are the great fish traps.

2. High water, approximately July to November

Stop at Preak Dom Bridge. Proceed by coach to Kampong Chhnang where we can see the rich tapestry of Cambodian rural life. This is a busy rural port town with bustling markets. We make a truly wonderful motor boat excursion into the lakeside wetlands that form the mouth of the river. Here a stunning variety of birdlife may be seen and of considerable interest are the great fish traps. Back to the ship at lunch time. We make a late afternoon departure from Kampong Cham heading for Phnom Penh.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 6 **Kampong Cham**

We stop at the little-known Chong Koh silk-weaving village for a morning walk at leisure. In the afternoon we stop at Peam Chi Kang village to visit the wat or monastery and school. In the wat the splendid village racing boats are stored.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 7 **Kampong Cham - Kampong Chnang**

Passengers visit the hilltop temple of Wat Hanchey in the morning. In the afternoon, travel by bus to visit the Twin Holy mountains of Phnom Pros and Phnom Srey (Man and Woman Hill). Continuation to the ecotourism village of Choeungkok supported by the French-Cambodian NGO Amican.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Cruise

Day 8 **Tonle - Siem Reap**

Early morning coach transfer to the Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa in Siem Reap. Refreshments will be provided and we will stop at Kampong Thom along the way. Arrive at Siem Reap mid afternoon.

* Transfer by coach from Kampong Cham to Siem Reap takes approx 5 hours..

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: N/A

Inclusion:

- Vietnam visa approval letter
- Mekong 8 days package by Pandaw Cruise
- Local English speaking guides
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Port tax and services charge

Exclusion:

- Vietnam and Cambodia Visa stamping fee
- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, boat crew, and personal, non-itinerary services