

# MEKONG RIVER CRUISE

## Siem Reap, Mekong Delta, Phnom Penh & Saigon



*Journey along one of the world's greatest rivers, the mighty Mekong - discovering a land of forgotten temples, enigmatic cities and emerald green landscapes. Cruising in comfort through Cambodia and Vietnam, our 13 day itinerary leads you on an unforgettable voyage from the ancient beauty of Siem Reap and the legendary Angkor Wat, to the dynamic and vibrant city of Saigon. Imbued with traditions, culture and history the infectious Mekong spirit abounds with smiling locals and delicious cuisines.*

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to the Mekong. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour.

It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

#### DAY 1: UK to Siem Reap

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Siem Reap international airport.

#### DAY 2: Siem Reap L/D

On arrival you will be met by your guide and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure to relax by the pool before enjoying a welcome dinner.

#### DAY 3: Siem Reap B/L/D

A full day tour of the ancient ruins in the Angkor area starts at the South Gate of Angkor Thom, famous for its series of colossal human faces carved in stone. Explore the impressive Bayon temple with its countless sculptural decorations before continuing to the famous Angkor Wat. Constructed in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and covering an area of around 210 hectares, this architectural masterpiece contains pavilions, courtyards and large ponds reflecting the towering temple. The nearby jungle covered temple of Ta Prohm is an incredible sight with enormous fig trees and

gigantic creepers growing through the structure's stone foundations. Return to your hotel for dinner.

#### DAY 4: Siem Reap to Mekong Cruise B/L/D

This morning you will transfer to Tonlé Sap, a designated UNESCO Biosphere. Containing more fish than any other lake in the world, it is also home to an incredible variety of birds including many rare and endangered species of storks, ibises and cranes. Here you will board your cruise ship, which will be your home for the next seven nights. The French colonial style vessel oozes the elegance of the Art Nouveau period in Paris and offers unrivalled comfort and luxury on board. As the cruise begins, take the afternoon to relax as you meander through the waters. The ship will moor overnight on the lake where you will experience the stillness of the surroundings, lit by the moon and the radiance of the stars.

#### DAY 5: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

The cruise will set sail before dawn as the sun begins slowly rising above the lake. Cruising along the Mekong to Kampong Tralach, you will disembark to enjoy an ox-cart ride. Then travel by coach to Oudong, the royal capital of Cambodia from 1618 until 1866, to visit the monastery for a unique Buddhist blessing experience before returning to the ship.

#### DAY 6: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

Wake to embark on a trip to the little-known copper manufacturing village of Koh Chen where residents have been perfecting a craft handed down to them

over generations. Cruising on you will enjoy dinner and moor overnight on the ship midstream near Phnom Penh.

#### DAY 7: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

Join a sobering excursion to the infamous Killing Fields and the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum today. Then after lunch on your ship, visit the opulent Royal Palace, the residence of the king, and visit the impressive Silver Pagoda. After dinner, perhaps step out for an evening walk through this fascinating capital.

#### DAY 8: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

Cruising along the main Mekong Channel's international shipping route you can choose to take in a fruit-carving demonstration by one of the chefs on board whilst the crew complete the necessary paperwork for the border crossing. Entering Vietnam, the ship will moor for dinner and overnight.

#### DAY 9: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

Today you will transfer to a small boat to travel along the tiny tributaries that snake around Tan Chau, visiting remote islands to witness authentic rural Mekong life where local inhabitants live on houses poised on high stilts. Later, venture ashore for a wonderful rickshaw tour of Tan Chau town passing local artisan workshops and markets. Back on board your ship this afternoon, you might choose to attend a lecture on Vietnam in your ship's lounge or relax and socialise.

### DAY 10: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

This morning's excursion is to the charming colonial town of Sa Dec for a guided sightseeing tour. Famous for its beautiful flower gardens, the small, sleepy town is truly a hidden gem in the Mekong Delta. Passing authentic markets and examples of colonial architecture you will return to your ship in time for lunch. This afternoon, the cruise will arrive in the atmospheric town of Cai Be where you will start your tour at the busy, vivid, floating market where around 500 boats filled with fruits and vegetables are brought by locals to trade along the network of rivers. After discovering the nearby canals, lush landscapes and rustic life along the river, you will go ashore to see the French Gothic Cathedral and visit a local rice paper manufacturer. This evening, head back to the ship for a tranquil night cruise towards

My Tho. Celebrate the end of the Mekong cruise with a farewell dinner on board before spending your last evening on the waters.

### DAY 11: Mekong Cruise & Saigon B/D

Arriving into My Tho this morning on the upper Mekong River, the crew will bid you farewell as your Mekong cruise comes to a close. Here your land transport will transfer you to your hotel in Saigon.

### DAY 12: Saigon B/L/D

This morning travel to the underground village of Cu Chi and discover the incredible and complex underground network of tunnels, stretching for 200 kilometres, where the Viet Cong lived and fought during the war. On the return journey you will pass through rural farming communities before arriving back into Saigon where a half day tour of the city

will commence, visiting all the major sights including the Cathedral, Reunification Palace and the lively Ben Thanh market. Dinner will be served in a local restaurant where you can enjoy your last evening with the group.

### DAY 13: Saigon to the UK or Extension B

Today is left at leisure before your evening flight back to London or continue on to your chosen extension.

#### Mekong Cruise Information

The ship used on the Magnificent Mekong Cruise is the **RV La Marguerite** (operated by Travelmarvel by APT), which is of a 4★ standard. All cabins have an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning and a safety deposit box. There are 4 decks on the ship: a Lower Deck, Main Deck, Upper Deck and Sun Deck. The ship has Wi-Fi in selected areas, however please note that in remote locations the connection may temporarily drop out. Lunch, Breakfast and Dinner will be taken in the Mekong Restaurant on board the ship. Drinks included whilst on board are local beer and soft drinks, house branded spirits, bottled water and tea and coffee. Local wine is also served during dinner. Other spirits, liquors, wines and coffees are available at a supplement. Other facilities available on board the ship are as follows: gym, spa, sun deck, swimming pool and a gift shop.

#### Your Hotels

**Siem Reap (2 nights):** 4★ Tara Angkor - Charles De Gaulle, Siem Reap, Cambodia. Contact number: 00855 63 966 661

**Saigon (2 nights):** 4★ Golden Central Hotel - 140 Ly Tu Trong, Ben Thanh Ward, District 1, Saigon. Contact number: 0084 838 270 666



All accommodation is 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning/heating, TV and coffee making facilities. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available, alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

#### Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner where stated will be taken in local Vietnamese restaurants. During your cruise breakfast, lunch and dinner will be taken in the restaurant on board the ship and complimentary local spirits, beer and soft drinks are also included (Not included on the land portion).

#### On your arrival

On your arrival in Siem Reap you will be met by a representative from our local agent holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Vietnam representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact your agent during your land stay the details are:

**Lac Viet Travel (LV) Head Office, Hanoi**  
Floor 18, VTC Online Building,  
No 18, Tam Trinh Str,  
Hai Ba Trung District,  
Hanoi, Vietnam  
Telephone : 0084 439 413 748

**Emergency contact information**  
Please find the **emergency** contact details for LV Travel head office, Hanoi

**Contact Telephone number**  
Jenny Tinh Mobile: 0084 987 206 908  
Ms Ly Office: 0084 439 413 750  
Mobile: 0084 989 200 119

Please find below the **emergency** contact details for APT, should you need assistance during your cruise  
Vietnam 0084 96 320 9196  
Cambodia 0085 51 722 2696

### Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to Siem Reap with Vietnam Airlines (VN), departing from London Heathrow Terminal 4.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
London Heathrow - Saigon	11:15	09:40	12 hours 25 minutes	VN50
Saigon - Siem Reap	12:00	13:00	1 hour	VN3825
Saigon - Hanoi	20:00	22:00	2 hours	VN270
Hanoi - London Heathrow	00:55	07.40	12 hours 45 minutes	VN55

**IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times/numbers are given for guidance and are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.**

### Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 30kg of hold luggage. Hand luggage: One piece not exceeding 7Kg and with maximum total dimensions not exceeding 115 cm (56 cm x 36cm x 23 cm). Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in.

### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

### Visas

Until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 a visa is not required for stays up to 15 days. From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and for longer stays a visa is required for entry into Vietnam. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa is £98.50. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of entry. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. You will also need to purchase a visa for Cambodia costing \$30 on arrival at the airport. Please note that you will also require two passport photos for your Cambodian Visa, as well as \$30 cash. Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding passport validity.

### Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135
Up to 24 days cover	£48	£94	£146

### Worldwide (excluding USA)

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

### Health and Vaccinations

It is strongly recommended that you check the latest health recommendations for travel to Vietnam and Cambodia with your GP at least 4-6 weeks before travel. Alternatively up to date information can be obtained by telephoning the MASTA Travel health line on 09068 224100. Any medicines you may need during your journey should be packed in your hand luggage. Please note that it is not advisable to drink the tap water.

### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot, and includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

### Group Size

The maximum number of passengers on your cruise will be 92 passengers. If in the unlikely event the tour does not go ahead then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour with a dedicated tour director throughout as well as local guides ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge throughout.

### Tipping

All tipping has been included during your stay on the cruise, however tips are not included during your land stay. It is customary to tip both your driver and guide approximately £2.00 (\$3.00) per person per day in total. This will be collected at the end of each destination visited for your convenience. Tips are accepted in the local currency, US dollars and British pounds.

### Currency Exchange

The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong, known as VND. You can exchange your currency in Vietnam, however US Dollars are widely

accepted in Vietnam should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any lunches and dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200-£400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour, depending on how much of a bargain-hunter you are!

### Credit card information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events & sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

### What to Pack

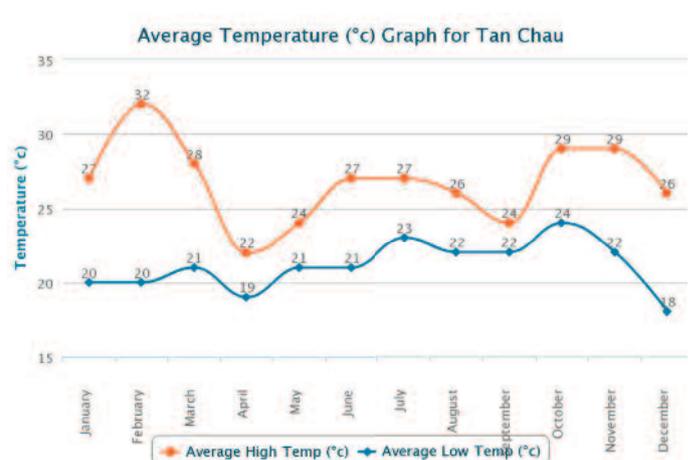
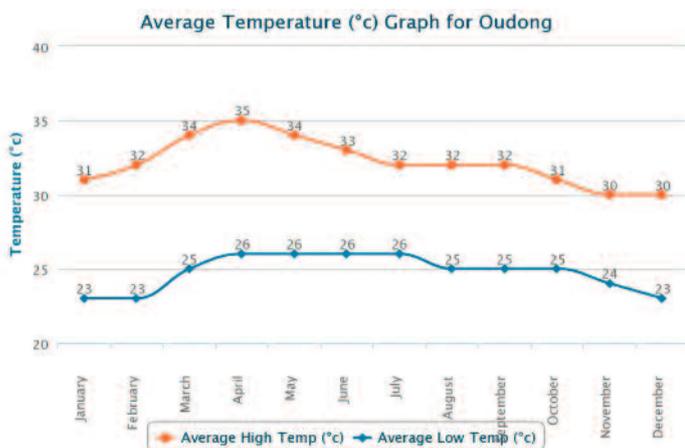
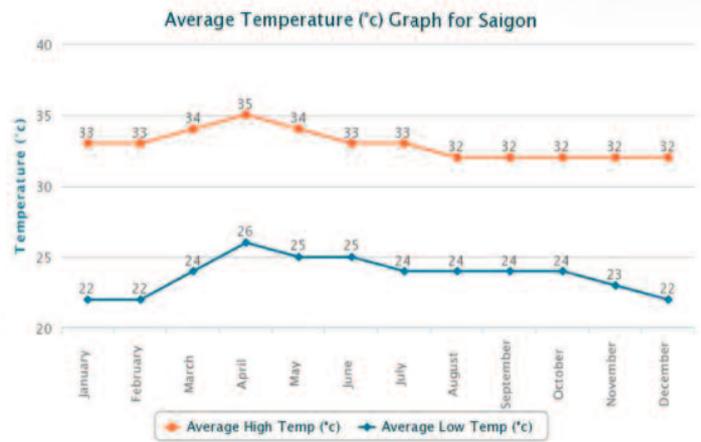
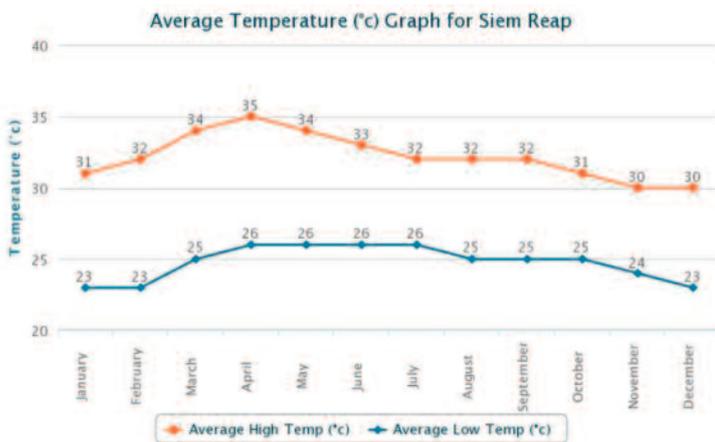
- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- Loo paper for public WCs
- An electric plug converter - the electricity in Vietnam/Cambodia is 220-240 V. You will need a 2 round pin plug or 2 flat pin plug adapter

Leave plenty of space in your case for shopping



### Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



# HOI AN BEACH STAY



Five days, four nights in Hoi An is the perfect way to complete your tour. Relax and unwind by the turquoise ocean waters, sample local cuisine and explore the historic Old Town.

**Your included meal guide:**

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

A former port town, Hoi An is a historic town with narrow streets, riverside cafes and a stunning nearby beach. The traditional Old Town is now a UNESCO World Heritage site with numerous pedestrianised streets. The Hoi An beach sits close to the town, enjoying palm fringed shores and powder white sands.

**Tour Guides**

Your stay in Hoi An is not escorted by a tour guide.

**Hotels**

**Hoi An (4 nights)**

Depending on your preference your Hoi An stay will take place at the 4★ Le Belhamy Hotel on Bed & Breakfast or the 5★ The Sunrise Hotel on Half Board. This will have been confirmed at booking.

**Hotel Information**

4★ Le Belhamy Hotel - Hamlet 1, Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban District, Hoi An. Tel: 0084 510 3941 888

5★ The Sunrise Hotel - Cua Dai Beach, Hoi An. Tel: 0084 510 3937 777

**DAY 13: Hanoi to Danang B**

Depart Hanoi on your scheduled flight to Danang for your transfer to Hoi An and your first night.

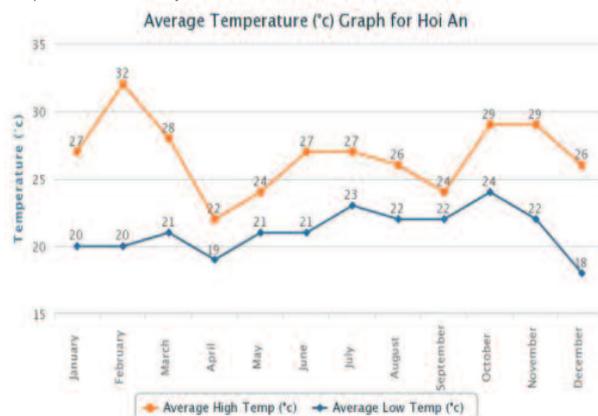
**DAY 14-16: Hoi An B**

At leisure at your choice of hotel.

**DAY 17: Hoi An to London B**

After your transfer to Danang depart on your scheduled flight to London.

**Weather and Climate** Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate chart below.



**Flight Information for Hanoi & Halong Bay**

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
Saigon - Danang	08:00	09:15	1 hour 15 minutes	VN104
Danang - Hanoi	20:15	21:30	1 hour 15 minutes	VN174
Hanoi - London Heathrow	00:55	07:40	12 hours 45 minutes	VN55

**IMPORTANT: Flight times/numbers are for guidance only & are subject to change.**

**Baggage Allowance**

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to 30kg of hold luggage. Hand luggage: One piece not exceeding 7Kg and with maximum total dimensions not exceeding 115 cm (56 cm x 36cm x 23 cm). Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in.