
11-DAY MEKONG RIVER CRUISE THROUGH LAOS AND THAILAND FROM CHIANG RAI TO VIENTIANE

Trip Code: RVLALT1IDS

Duration: 12

Destination: Laos-Thailand

Travel Dates: 2022 / 2023

DAY 1 The Golden Triangle—Boarding (D)

Between 8 and 9 pm you transfer from Chiang Rai Airport or a local hotel to the famous Golden Triangle region. You enjoy a sightseeing city tour, which includes the Golden Buddha of Sop Ruak and the Hall of Opium Museum. The Hall of Opium, sponsored by the royal family of Thailand, provides an in-depth look at the history and politics of the opium trade and health impact of opium use.

Later you board the Mekong Pearl, a boutique German–Laotian river ship, and settle into your comfortable cabin and unpack for an 11-day cruise. In the evening, you enjoy the ship's spacious decks and lounge before attending a welcome dinner and reception.

Overnight on board.

DAY 2 The Golden Triangle—Huay Xay and Pak Tha (B/L/D)

This morning your exciting voyage on the mighty Mekong River really gets underway, with your departure from the Golden Triangle region, where Myanmar, Laos and Thailand meet. Today's destination is the nearby Laotian town of Huay Xay on the Laos–Thailand border.

Your ship then takes you through the stunning scenery of northern Laos to the small village of Pak Tha. From there you take a long-tail boat excursion on the Namtha River to visit a Khmu village. You then continue downstream until your cruise ship anchors at a sandbank for the night.

Overnight on board.

DAY 3 Astonishing Landscapes and Remote Villages (B/L/D)

The river traffic increases as you pass through a densely populated region accessible only by water. Here you discover some of the wild Mekong's most beautiful landscapes: hills covered with tropical vegetation, dramatic rock formations, and a fascinating mixture of rapid currents and slow rivulets.

The power of the mighty Mekong gives your cruise the feeling of a real expedition. Relax on deck, in your

cabin, or in the lounge as you enjoy the otherworldly atmosphere of these spectacular surroundings. A short while later you arrive in Oudomxay Province.

Overnight on board.

DAY 4 Pak Ou Caves (B/L/D)

After a relaxing morning on board, your boutique ship stops at a small riverside village to visit the famous Pak Ou Caves, where thousands of small Buddha statues dwell within. From there, you can go on a short jungle trek through the forest to a local village to see their traditional distillery. Alternatively, you can reach the village comfortably by boat.

Nearby you can see elephants working, unless they are employed elsewhere at the time of your visit. You enjoy your dinner on board surrounded by impressive limestone mountains.

Overnight on board.

DAY 5 The UNESCO World Heritage City of Luang Prabang (B/L)

Today you reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Your day begins with a city walk to the famous Wat Xieng Thong temple with its gold-trimmed tile roofs, which leave you in awe. Later you explore other highlights during this full-day excursion through Luang Prabang. In the evening, you walk up Mount Phou Si, which offers a spectacular view of the Mekong and Khan Rivers and the surrounding mountains. You enjoy a stroll along the Mekong promenade or visit the colorful Hmong night market.

Luang Prabang offers many opportunities for fine dining, and tonight you are free to choose from the numerous offerings in town or along the Mekong River.

Overnight on board.

DAY 6 The Royal Capital, Luang Prabang (B/D)

In the early morning, you can observe the traditional giving of alms in the streets of Luang Prabang and explore the traditional morning market. After your breakfast on board, you join our guided city tour, which includes the National Museum of Luang Prabang, situated in the former royal palace, and a local handicraft village. After exploring the city center, the afternoon is yours to enjoy. You can choose from dozens of local restaurants and eateries. Before dinner on board, you attend a celebration featuring a traditional Lao dance performance and a Baci friendship ceremony.

Overnight on board.

DAY 7 Kuang Si Falls (B/L/D)

After breakfast on board, you enjoy the beautiful views and possibly spot local fishermen onshore as you cruise further downstream. After a few hours of cruising downriver, you stop and continue by tuk-tuks to visit the

famous Kuang Si Falls, some of Laos' most remarkable waterfalls.

In the afternoon, don't miss the Xayabouri Dam, the biggest hydroelectric power plant in Laos. That evening you enjoy our famous Mekong River Cruises barbecue dinner in a beautiful riverside location.

Overnight on board.

DAY 8 The Farming Village of Ban Don Saingam (B/L/D)

Today you visit a hidden cave and experience nature on some easy hiking trails. In the afternoon, you take in the beautiful views on the sun deck or attend presentations on the history and culture of Laos.

Later you relax on board, enjoying the easy comfort and expert service of your boutique ship in an exclusive, yet casual atmosphere.

Overnight on board.

DAY 9 Powerful Rapids and the Town of Salakham (B/L/D)

Downstream you discover some of the most remarkable, impressive landscapes of the wild Mekong. The scenery becomes more and more spectacular: hills covered with tropical vegetation, awe-inspiring rock formations along the riverbanks, and a diverse array of rapid currents and slow rivulets.

Later you visit the dreamy town of Salakham. The power of the mighty Mekong gives your cruise the feeling of a real expedition. You enjoy the beautiful views and watch nature's wonders along the riverbanks before your ship heads further downriver and stops for the night.

Overnight on board.

DAY 10 Vientiane, the Capital of Laos (B/L/D)

You continue downstream on the Mekong, known locally as the "Mother of All Waters". Today's destination is the Laotian capital, Vientiane, where you see the Pha That Luang stupa—an architectural symbol of Laos—as well as the Patuxai, also known as the Arc de Triomphe of Vientiane.

You celebrate the last evening of your cruise with a farewell dinner on board, together with your friendly crew, cruise director, and captain.

Overnight on board.

DAY 11 Disembarkation in Vientiane (B)

After breakfast you say goodbye to your Laotian crew, check out and disembark your boutique river ship. Your unforgettable journey comes to an end as you transfer to the airport or to your local hotel.

DAY

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