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## **12-DAY MEKONG RIVER CRUISE THROUGH LAOS AND THAILAND FROM VIENTIANE TO CHIANG RAI**

**Trip Code:** RVLAT11US

**Duration:** 13

**Destination:** Laos Thailand

**Travel Dates:** 2022

### **DAY 1                      Vientiane—Boarding (D)**

At 2 pm you check in and board the Mekong Pearl, a comfortable German–Laotian cruise ship. This unique river vessel is the first of its kind to offer cabins on the upper Mekong. First you settle into your comfortable cabin and unpack for a 12-day cruise.

In the afternoon, you join a guided city tour that includes highlights of the Laotian capital such as the Pha That Luang stupa and Patuxai, known as the Arc de Triomphe of Vientiane.

Back on board your river vessel, you enjoy its spacious decks and lounge before attending your welcome reception and dinner. A selection of Asian and European food is provided throughout the cruise.

Overnight on board.

### **DAY 2                      Wild Nature Along the Mighty Mekong (B/L/D)**

Today your Mekong River cruise experience starts. During the day, you cruise upriver, where you discover some of the most remarkable, impressive landscapes.

In the afternoon, you enjoy the beautiful views and watch nature's wonders along the Mekong's shores before your boutique ship stops at a quiet place to stay for the night.

Overnight on board.

### **DAY 3                      Powerful Rapids and the Town of Salakham (B/L/D)**

Further north the landscape 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. During the day, 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 north again and stops for the

night.

Overnight on board.

#### **DAY 4                      The Farming Village Ban Don Saingam (B/L/D)**

Upstream you stop at the small farming village Ban Don Saingam, where you can participate in a 30-minute trek to explore a hidden cave visited exclusively by Mekong River Cruises guests.

The purely natural landscape is only broken by the seldom sights of small villages and local herds of cattle.

Overnight on board.

#### **DAY 5                      Xayabouri Dam (BLD)**

During and after breakfast on board, you enjoy the beautiful view and possibly watch local fishermen along the shore. On the way, don't miss the Xayabouri Dam, the biggest hydroelectric power plant in Laos. In the afternoon, you meet the inhabitants of a small hill tribe village regularly visited by our guests and supported by donations.

Overnight on board.

#### **DAY 6                      Kuang Si Falls and Luang Prabang (B/L/D)**

In the morning, you join a guided shore excursion that takes you to the Kuang Si Falls, some of the most beautiful waterfalls in Laos. In the afternoon, you reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

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 and visit the colorful Hmong night market before having dinner on board and attending a traditional Lao dance performance and a Baci friendship ceremony.

Overnight on board.

#### **DAY 7                      The Royal Capital, Luang Prabang (BL)**

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 breakfast on board, you join a guided city tour, which includes the National Museum of Luang Prabang, situated in the former royal palace, and a local handicraft village.

In the afternoon, you are free to explore the city on your own. Luang Prabang offers many opportunities for fine dining. Tonight you can choose from the numerous restaurants in town or along the Mekong River.

Overnight on board.

#### **DAY 8                      Pak Ou Caves (BLD)**

During breakfast, your cruise takes you upstream until your boutique ship stops at the famous Pak Ou Caves, within which thousands of small Buddha statues dwell. From there, you can go on a short jungle trek through the forest to a small riverside village and visit their distillery.

Alternatively, you can reach the village comfortably by boat. Nearby you can see work elephants in action, unless they are employed elsewhere at the time of your visit. That afternoon, your ship continues cruising upstream towards Oudomxay Province.

Overnight on board.

## **DAY 9                      The Mighty Mekong (BLD)**

The river traffic thins out as you proceed upstream, and you can enjoy the fantastic landscapes surrounding you.

You can relax on deck, in your comfortable cabin or in the lounge and soak up the sun as the gorgeous landscape 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. The power of the mighty Mekong gives your cruise the feeling of a real expedition.

Overnight on board.

## **DAY 10                    Relaxation and Village Life (BL)**

Today you relax on deck, enjoying astonishingly diverse landscapes and the tranquility of northern Laos—a real retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life back home. As you cruise along the green hills, you start heading toward Pak Tha. That evening, you enjoy our famous Mekong River Cruises barbecue dinner in a beautiful riverside location.

Overnight on board.

## **DAY 11                    Pak Tha and Huay Xay (B/L/D)**

In the small village of Pak Tha, you join a long-tail boat excursion on the Namtha River, which takes you to a nearby Khmu village, whose school has been supported by donations from Mekong River Cruises guests for many years. The purely natural landscape is only broken by the seldom sights of small villages and local herds of cattle. In the afternoon, you proceed to the Thailand–Laos border at Chiang Khong, Thailand, and Ban Huay Xay, Laos. In the evening, you enjoy your last dinner on the Mekong.

Overnight on board.

## **DAY 12                    Farewell, Mekong! (B)**

After breakfast you say goodbye to your Laotian crew. You check out and disembark your boutique ship before transferring to the airport or your local hotel.

## **DAY**

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