

Cruising the Mekong River

Vietnam and Cambodia
aboard the 12-cabin *Mekong Princess*

December 4-17, 2017





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Dear Traveler,

Begin your exotic journey with two days in Ho Chi Minh City (still known by many as Saigon), a busy and dynamic metropolis that exudes energy and buzzes with activity, then embark on a seven-night Mekong River cruise aboard the beautiful *Mekong Princess*, a charming riverboat with only 12 suites, elegant French colonial appointments, an ultra-shallow draft that allows us to access the nooks and crannies of the river, and all the modern comforts.

As you cruise from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap, visit magnificent Buddhist and Hindu temples, observe floating markets bursting with colorful produce, and delve into the everyday lives of those who call the Mekong River home. Conclude with two glorious days to explore the world-famous Khmer temples and monuments of legendary Angkor, the largest religious monument in the world.

If you would like to broaden your experience in the region, we also offer an optional pre-tour extension to Hanoi, plus a post-tour extension to Luang Prabang, the capital of neighboring Laos.

With a guest capacity of only 22, the *Mekong Princess* will surely fill quickly, so I encourage you to reserve your suite today!

Sincerely,

Steve Ridgway

President, Criterion Travel

Angkor Wat

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- ❖ **TRAVEL** for seven nights aboard the elegant *Mekong Princess*, designed to evoke the French Colonial era.
- ❖ **VISIT** awe-inspiring Angkor, with two full days to explore its temples and monuments.
- ❖ **TASTE** the best of local cuisine on the *Mekong Princess* and carefully curated restaurants along the way. Take time to peruse some of the most charming and inviting shops and markets.
- ❖ **ENJOY** a performance of Apsara, a classical Khmer dance.
- ❖ **GLIMPSE** authentic rural river village life along stretches of the river not accessible by most larger vessels.
- ❖ **CLIMB** aboard the many colorful modes of transportation common in Southeast Asia, including elephants, sampans, cyclos, and tuk tuks.

COVER PHOTO: At a floating market along the Mekong



STUDY LEADER

Regional expert **Dr. Julian Brown** made Paris his home thirty years ago. Family holidays introduced him to the joys and fascination of travel and foreign cultures at a very young age and he began leading tours around Europe in the early 1980s whilst studying French and Spanish at the University of Durham. He now spends much of each year conducting museum visits and historical walking tours in the French capital and leads tours through the French provinces. When not in France, he is probably lecturing on tours in Italy, Spain or Southeast Asia, where he spends time each winter. His passion for this region began with a more or less chance visit to Vietnam in the early 1990s, and he has travelled extensively in Asia ever since, studying its art and culture, and leading tours throughout the region. He holds a PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, on the colonial and museological contexts of the ancient art of Champa (Vietnam), and has lectured on his research at universities, museums, royal societies and international conferences. Books and classical music compete with travel, art and history as his main passions.

TOUR MANAGER

Dana Conley fell in love with international travel during college while studying art and politics at the Stanford-in-Florence program. She majored in International Relations and has traveled to over 50 countries in search of authentic adventures, beautiful meals, and life-changing moments to share with her private and organizational clients. Via Conley & Silvers LLC, her goal is to provide guests with the highest level of customer service while creating unique and magical itineraries and events. Before co-founding Conley & Silvers with long-time Stanford mate Alison Silvers, Dana's career spanned from being a researcher at the Pentagon and International security think tanks to art appraisal and directing a gallery. When Dana is not tour managing or on a reconnaissance mission, she divides her time between Europe and New York City where cheese consumption, museum going, antiques and urban biking reign as her favorite pastimes.





TRIP ITINERARY

MONDAY–TUESDAY, DECEMBER 4–5

HOME / HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Depart the U.S. on an overnight flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Upon arrival, you are met by our local representative and transferred to the hotel. Gather for a cocktail reception this evening at the hotel.

PARK HYATT SAIGON (R)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON)

Explore Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's most dynamic city. We will show you all the highlights including Chinatown, the Notre Dame Cathedral, City Hall, and the Old Saigon Post Office. The Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum will provide insights into the local government's perspective of the Vietnam War. After lunch together in Saigon, enjoy an afternoon at leisure to choose the activities that best suit your personal interests. We can help you arrange a visit to the infamous Cu Chi tunnels, a somber but powerful reminder of the Vietnam War. Others may choose to explore the local area, visit an art museum or simply enjoy the hotel's pool or spa.

PARK HYATT SAIGON (B,L)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7

HO CHI MINH CITY / EMBARKATION

Check out of the hotel mid-morning and visit the Ben Thanh market, where anything and everything is for sale. Embark the *Mekong Princess* and enjoy lunch as you cruise along the Mekong River.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

BEN TRE / TRA ON

Float by sampan through a mangrove-lined channel to visit a coconut candy maker and a

local orchard. Walk to a local pier and board small boats to explore narrow creeks lined with Nipah palms. Cruise through a remote portion of the Mekong Delta to Tra On and visit the historic Phuoc Hau pagoda.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9

CAN THO / THOT NOT

Explore by sampan the fascinating Cai Rang market, weaving among floating water craft loaded with produce. Stop at a factory to learn how instant noodles are made. In Thot Not ride a *xe lam* (motorized trishaw) to a bird sanctuary, where a special platform offers incredible views of the nesting area of protected egrets.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

LONG XUYEN

Board sampans for a visit to the bustling Long Xuyen market. Explore the colorful Cao Dai temple and stop at a crocodile farm, where efforts are made to preserve a dwindling Mekong species.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11

HONG NGU

At several family homes in Hong Ngu, a small island hamlet, observe residents weaving and embroidering traditional Khmer scarves. Visit a temple dedicated to a form of Buddhism called Hòa Hao, which focuses on aiding the

poor. Cross the border into Cambodia and continue upstream.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12

PHNOM PENH

Enjoy a cyclo tour of Phnom Penh, which retains vestiges of its French colonial legacy. Visit the Silver Pagoda, home to an "Emerald Buddha" made of Baccarat crystal and a life-size Maitreya Buddha encrusted with diamonds. At the National Museum, view a spectacular collection of artifacts excavated in Angkor and brought here for safekeeping. Examine the darker days of Cambodian history at the infamous Choeung Ek killing fields and Tuol Sleng, a Khmer Rouge prison. Back on board this evening, enjoy a dance performance by children from a local orphanage.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

ANGKOR BAN

Enjoy a leisurely morning cruising along the Mekong River. After lunch, disembark for a walking excursion in Angkor Ban, a traditional Khmer village. Visit with nearby families and farms to see how the locals live. Continue to an English language primary school to meet the children and see what a typical school day is like. Gather this evening for the Captain's farewell reception, followed by your final dinner on board.

MEKONG PRINCESS (B,L,D)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14

KAMPONG CHAM / SIEM REAP

Disembark in Kampong Cham and drive by coach (4-5 hours) to Siem Reap, the gateway to the magnificent complex at Angkor, a UNESCO World Heritage site. The afternoon is at leisure with dinner on your own.

PARK HYATT HOTEL (B,L)

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15

ANGKOR

Spend the morning exploring fabled Angkor Wat, the largest religious monument in the world. Enjoy an afternoon of independent exploration or relaxation. In the late afternoon, visit Ta Prohm, a silent and mysterious ruin shrouded in jungle vegetation.

PARK HYATT HOTEL (B,L)

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16

ANGKOR

Early this morning visit Bakheng Temple for a panoramic sunrise view over Angkor Wat and the surrounding plain. After a picnic breakfast, travel by elephant to Angkor Thom to visit the Bayon, a temple whose 55 towers are topped by carved heads, each one wearing a mysterious smile. Back in Siem Reap, board *tuk tuks* (auto rickshaws) for a tour of art galleries and artisan workshops. Enjoy an enchanting final evening at a temple with a private farewell dinner and local performers.

PARK HYATT HOTEL (B,L,D)

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17

SIEM REAP / HOME

This morning transfer to the airport for return flights home, crossing the International Date Line and arriving the same day. (B)



Apsara dancer

**OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS**

PRE-TRIP

HANOI/HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

Spend three nights in Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. A panoramic city tour includes the Temple of Literature, the "Hanoi Hilton," the mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, and the modest "House on Stilts" in which Ho Chi Minh lived for many years. Take a cyclo tour through the alleyways of the city's charming historic quarter and enjoy a performance by traditional water puppets. After a morning at leisure in Hanoi, fly to Saigon for a pre-tour night and a morning art tour before the main group arrives.

POST-TRIP

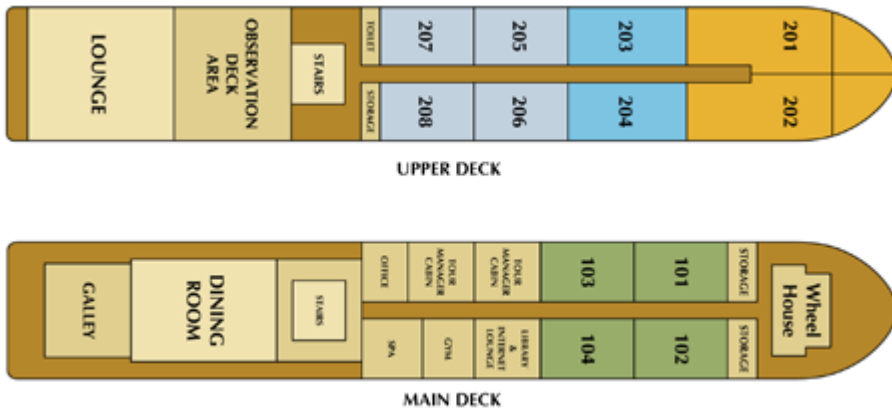
LUANG PRABANG, LAOS

Once the capital of an early kingdom, Luang Prabang is a leafy timeless place nestling in a valley at the confluence of the Mekong and Nam Kan rivers. Filled with ancient red-roofed temples and processing monks, Luang Prabang is a center of serene spirituality. You will also find here, however, bustling markets and wonderful cafés and restaurants.

Additional details and pricing will be sent to confirmed participants.

MEKONG PRINCESS

Launched in 2015, the *Mekong Princess* offers 12 luxurious suites combining the elegance of French Colonial style with the peacefulness and comfort of a Southeast Asian spa. Modern conveniences and amenities rival those at the finest hotels, including a spacious seating area; en suite facilities with shower (plus separate soaking tub in the Tonle and Angkor Suites), hair dryer, and spa robes and slippers; individual climate control; daily butler service and housekeeping with nightly turndown; premium mattress, duvet, bed linens, and your choice of pillows; in-room electronic safe; and flat-screen televisions with satellite service. Breakfast and lunch are served buffet-style, while a single-seating dinner offers sumptuous French Indochine and gourmet spa cuisine featuring locally sourced fresh herbs, fruits, and vegetables. Public spaces include open-air lounges with comfortable chaises, spa with menu of treatments, small fitness center, and library with internet access (subject to availability). The small size and ultra-shallow draft of this elegant riverboat allow visits to villages and tributaries not accessible to larger vessels, and the one-to-one guest-to-staff ratio ensures an unparalleled river cruise experience.



PROGRAM RATES (per person)

CATEGORY	DOUBLE	SINGLE
Saigon Suite MAIN DECK 235 sq. ft., French balcony	\$8,980	\$15,280
Apsara Suite UPPER DECK 235 sq. ft., French balcony	\$9,980	\$16,980
Tonle Suite UPPER DECK 305 sq. ft., French balcony	\$10,680	—
Angkor Suite UPPER DECK 495 sq. ft., French balcony, private veranda	\$11,980	—

Program Rates Include

All accommodations, meals, and excursions as specified in the itinerary • Airport transfers upon arrival in Saigon and for departure from Siem Reap • Baggage handling • Gratuities to porters, wait staff, guides, drivers, and shipboard personnel • Port charges • Entrance fees • Local beer, coffee, tea, and soft drinks at lunch and dinner on land; Local beer, liquor, coffee, tea, and soft drinks at all times on board the *Mekong Princess*; Wine during all dinners as well as the welcome and farewell receptions • Bottled water on motor coaches, at hotels, and on board ship • Professional tour manager throughout

To reserve a place on **Cruising the Mekong River**, please call (888) 328-2089 or (650) 328-2089, or email res@criteriontravel.com

GENERAL INFORMATION

PROGRAM RATES DO

NOT INCLUDE

U.S. domestic and international airfare
• Passport and visa expenses • Medical expenses and immunizations • Airport transfers except as noted as included
• Travel insurance • Deviations from the scheduled tour • Excess-baggage charges • Meals not specified in the itinerary • Dishes and beverages not part of the included meals • Liquor or soft drinks except as noted • Laundry or dry cleaning • Room service Telephone, fax, Internet, and email charges • Other items of a personal nature

AIRFARE

U.S. domestic and international airfare is not included in the program rates. Information about making flight arrangements will be sent to all participants.

WHAT TO EXPECT

This is a moderately active program. Participants should be able to walk unassisted for extended periods (typically three hours) over uneven surfaces, and up and down narrow stairs. In December, the average temperature in Cambodia and Vietnam is in the low to high 80s F, and the average humidity is 70–80 percent, with little rain. Although our riverboat, hotels, and motor coaches are air-conditioned, temples and traditional conveyances such as cyclos and sampans are not, nor are some restaurants and museums. Travelers should be able, with assistance, to climb in and out of small boats and other local vehicles such as bicycle- driven and motorized rickshaws.

GROUP SIZE

This program is limited to just 22 participants.

INSURANCE

Travel insurance for trip cancellation and interruption, medical problems, baggage loss and delay, etc., is highly recommended, and we hope that you will obtain it for this expedition. Trip cancellation policies that apply to this expedition are included in this brochure. Please be sure to carry the details of your travel insurance coverage with you on the program. Travelers are free to purchase the travel insurance of their choice. It is recommended that travelers clearly understand the difference between “primary” and “secondary” travel insurance.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS

To reserve space, please call (888) 328-2089 or email res@criteriontravel.com. Final payment deadline is August 1, 2017, 120 days prior to departure.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Upon payment of a \$1,000 deposit per person, all reservations are subject to the cancellation provisions set forth below and by which the passenger agrees to be bound. Cancellations shall not be effective until they are received in writing and confirmed by Criterion Travel. Deposits are refundable (less a \$250 per person administration fee) if written notice of cancellation is received within 30 days of reservation; after that, deposits are 100% nonrefundable. Final payment is due August 1, 2017 (120 days prior to departure). Cancellations within 120 days of departure are 100% nonrefundable. For this reason, we strongly urge participants to purchase trip cancellation insurance. If the program is cancelled by Criterion Travel, you will receive a full refund, without further obligation on our part. No refunds will be made for any part of this program on which you choose not to participate. Note: Criterion Travel does not accept liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable ticket in conjunction with this tour.

ITINERARY CHANGES

The itinerary presented for this tour is subject to modification and change by Criterion Travel. Every reasonable effort will be made to operate the program as planned; however, should unforeseen world events and conditions require the itinerary to be altered, Criterion Travel reserves the right to do so for the safety and best interest of the group. Any extra expenses incurred in this situation are the responsibility of the participant.

California Seller of Travel Program
CST #2088800-40

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Vietnam and Cambodia aboard the Mekong Princess

December 4–17, 2017

To reserve a place, please complete and return this form with your deposit of \$1,000 per person, payable to Criterion travel.
Mail to: 145 Forest Ave, Palo Alto, CA 94301 or fax to: 650.560.6400
For more information or to register by phone, please call Criterion Travel at **888.328.2089** or 650.328.2089
www.criteriontravel.com; res@criteriontravel.com

PAYMENT

☐ Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ (\$1,000 per person, payable to Criterion Travel), to reserve _____ place(s) on **Cruising the Mekong River**
OR Please charge my deposit to: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMEX ☐ Discover

CARD NUMBER

EXP. DATE

CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE

SECURITY CODE

☐ I/we understand that final payment is due August 1, 2017, 120 days prior to departure. For registrations after August 1, 2017, full payment is due.

NAME #1

DATE OF BIRTH

NAME #2

DATE OF BIRTH

STREET ADDRESS

CITY/STATE

ZIP/POSTAL CODE

HOME PHONE

WORK PHONE

EMAIL

FAX

SINGLE TRAVELERS

If this is a reservation for one person, please indicate:

☐ I prefer to have single accommodations. OR
☐ I plan to share accommodations with _____ OR
☐ I'd like to know about roommates. I am a smoker / non-smoker.
I understand that if a roommate cannot be found by the final payment deadline of August 1, 2017, I will pay the single rate.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Bed preference in hotels (not guaranteed): ☐ One bed ☐ Two beds

I/We have read the tour information and agree to the Terms & Conditions therein:

SIGNATURE

DATE

SIGNATURE

DATE

CRITERION
travel