

A photograph of a person on a boat on the Mekong river, with the title text overlaid.

# CRUISE ALONG THE MEKONG, FROM SAIGON TO THE TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

Born from the snows of the Himalayan range in Tibet, the Mekong, one of the greatest rivers in Asia, begins its irresistible journey through southern China. Over more than 4,000 km, the deep gorges of Yunnan, the four thousand islands of Laos, the lakeside villages of Tonle Sap, the emerald rice fields and the incessant traffic of boats in Vietnam make up the identities of this king of rivers. At the end of its course, on the edge of the China Sea, it languishes in a delta so vast that it could be a country in itself. Through the monumental splendors of the successive capitals of the ancient Khmer Kingdom, through the lukewarm languors of My Tho or Vinh Long, through the bustling Cholon, the Chinese quarter of Saigon, you will cross worlds, marked by an ancestral tradition and a smiling modernity... In Cambodia, you will discover the universe of Theravada Buddhism in which the monks play an essential role in the organization of society, particularly in education, health and justice. In Vietnam, cults can be associated: Mahayana Buddhism is joined, particularly in the delta region, by the cult of ancestors.

⦿ REGIONS / COUNTRIES:  France  Vietnam  Cambodia

⦿ DURATION: **15 Days / 14 Nights**

⦿ TAGS: **City, Mainland port, Popular, Romantic, Nightlife, Town, Village**

⦿ URL: <https://embarq.travel/it/boats/marguerite/cruise-along-the-mekong-from-saigon-to-the-temples-of-angkor-1/>



# Day 1



## France / Paris

City, Mainland port, Popular, Romantic, Nightlife

### DAY 1: FRANCE - SAIGON (Vietnam)

Departure on scheduled flight with stopover(s)

# Day 2



## Vietnam / Saigon

City

### DAY 2: SAIGON

Arrival in Saigon in the morning. Departure for a panoramic tour through the main arteries of the city center to discover the colonial past of the former capital of the south: the Reunification Palace (exterior view), former presidential palace and symbol of the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975; the majestic Notre-Dame Cathedral of Saigon and the famous central post office built by Gustave Eiffel. Transfer to the Sofitel Plaza 4\* hotel (or similar) and lunch, then check into your rooms. Continue your visit of Saigon with the History Museum which brings together important collections from the prehistoric period to that of the Nguyen dynasty. In the evening, Christmas dinner on board a boat for a gourmet and festive evening. Night at the hotel.

# Day 3



## Vietnam / Saigon

 City

### DAY 3: SAIGON

Breakfast at the hotel, then drive to the Cu Chi tunnels to discover this vast network of underground fortifications built in the 1940s during Indochina. These tunnels were largely developed during the American-Vietnamese conflict in 1960. This surprising visit allows you to better understand the organization of the Vietnamese resistance that developed this command post to keep control of South Vietnam. After lunch, free time then return to Saigon to visit the Ben Thanh market, a major trading center, located in the heart of the city. Return to the hotel and dinner at a restaurant in town.



## Day 4



## Vietnam / My Tho

City

### DAY 4: SAIGON – MY THO

Breakfast at the hotel, then transfer to My Tho. On the way, discover a lacquer factory and stop at the market of Cholon, the old Chinese trading city integrated into the districts of Saigon in 1931. Upon arrival in My Tho, board the R/V La Marguerite. Lunch on board and installation in the cabins. In the afternoon, the R/V La Marguerite begins its navigation. Traditional music show, cocktail and welcome dinner on board.

# Day 5



## Vietnam / His Dec



Town

### DAY 5: CAI BE (TAN PHONG) – SADEC

After breakfast, departure by small local boats to reach the island of Tan Phong. Walk to discover the making of decorative objects from water hyacinths. The afternoon continues by taking small vehicles through the fruit fields. Stop in a garden for an introduction to exotic fruits. Before returning on board, boat trip in front of the Gothic cathedral of Cai Be and meeting with a family producing rice leaves and coconut candies.

Lunch on board. In the afternoon, arrival in Sa Dec, where the French writer Marguerite Duras spent part of her childhood. City tour to soak up the atmosphere marked by Mediterranean sweetness of this lively city in the delta where a few colonial houses remain. Visit the "house of the Chinese", described in *The Lover*, transformed into a small museum, then a Caodaist temple, a syncretic religion very present in the South of Vietnam. Discovery of the colorful local market. Dinner on board.

## Day 6



## Vietnam / Tan Chau

Village

### DAY 6: TAN CHAU - BORDER CROSSING

In the morning, arrival in Tan Chau, a small town on the Mekong. Boarding local boats to discover Tan Chau. With its agricultural village, its mat factory and its silk factory, this small town is very representative of this part of Asia, shared between rurality and a lively economic activity. Return on board for lunch. Navigation towards the Cambodian border. In the afternoon, the R/V La Marguerite stops at the border for the formalities of leaving Vietnam and entering Cambodia. Dinner on board.



# Day 7



## Cambodia / Phnom Penh

City

### DAY 7: PHNOM PENH (Cambodia)

Arrival in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. Once nicknamed "the Pearl of Asia", the city was renowned for its wide, shady boulevards and harmonious colonial architecture. Today, Phnom Penh is drawing on its past to develop a new ambition as a great Asian capital. In the morning, visit the Royal Palace, residence of the King of Cambodia. This complex of pavilions and pagodas makes up a vast architectural ensemble. Visit the Silver Pagoda which houses some national treasures. Then, continue to the National Museum, the main historical and archaeological museum of the country, which presents one of the most important collections of Khmer art. Lunch on board. In the afternoon, visit the Tuol Sleng Museum. This former detention center, sinisterly known as S-21 between 1975 and 1979, was set up in a former high school. Here, in a meditative atmosphere, the visitor can take the measure of the drama experienced by the Cambodian people under the Khmer Rouge regime. Then, free time for an individual discovery. Dinner on board.

## Day 8



## Cambodia / Phnom Penh

📍 City

### DAY 8: PHNOM PENH – SILK ISLAND

Early in the morning, the R/V La Marguerite sails to Silk Island. Stopover and walk in a small weavers' village. Stop at a school. Then, the boat resumes its navigation to dock again in Phnom Penh. Lunch on board. In the afternoon, walk to the Vat Phnom hill. At the top of its 27 meters, discovery of the picturesque sanctuary dedicated to Mrs. Penh who gave her name to the city. Then free time for an individual discovery. Dinner on board. On board in the evening, show of traditional Khmer dances.

# Day 9



## Cambodia / Angkor Ban

### DAY 9: ANGKOR BAN

Morning of navigation on the superb meanders of the Upper Mekong, still wild and preserved. Lunch on board. Early afternoon, arrival at Angkor Ban. Angkor Ban is one of the very few villages not to have been burned or destroyed during the Khmer Rouge period. It is a dive into intimate Cambodia, at the pace of its inhabitants. Visit of the village on stilts, discovery of traditional houses, some of which are more than a hundred years old. Return on board to continue the navigation. Dinner and night on board.



## Day 10



## Cambodia / Kampong Cham

Town

### DAY 10: WAT HANCHEY – KAMPONG CHAM

Stopover at Wat Hanchey in the morning and after breakfast, visit the pre-Angkorian temple located on top of a hill overlooking the Mekong. Dating from the 8th century, its ancient brick structures characterize the architecture of the Chenla Empire, which preceded the glory of Angkor. Return on board for lunch.

Continued navigation and arrival in Kampong Cham during lunch. In the afternoon, departure by bus to discover the temple of Wat Nokor. This 12th century Buddhist temple built on the ruins of an ancient temple, is unique in Cambodia. Dinner and overnight on board.



# Day 11



## Cambodia / Siem Reap

Town

### DAY 11: KAMPONG CHAM – SIEM REAP

Early morning, disembark and transfer to Siem Reap (5h). On the road, stop at the Kampong Kdei bridge dating from the Angkorian era, built during the reign of Jayavarman VII. Arrival in Siem Reap and lunch at the restaurant. Installation at the hotel and first discovery of Siem Reap with the visit of a village located on the banks of the Tonlé Sap lake. Dinner at the restaurant. Night at the Sokha Angkor Resort 5\* (or similar).

# Day 12



## Cambodia / Siem Reap

Town

### DAY 12: SIEM REAP – ANGKOR TEMPLES

In the morning, departure to discover Angkor and one of the ancient capitals of the Khmer Empire, Angkor Thom. At the center of this fortified complex with monumental gates, visit the remarkable Bayon, built by the great builder king Jayavarman VII. The temple, surrounded by towers sculpted with smiling faces, extends into the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper King dominating the central square of this ancient royal city. Angkor Thom also has two important pyramid temples, the Phimeanakas and the Baphuon, whose restoration, by the French School of the Far East, was completed in 2011.

In the afternoon, visit the spectacular Ta Prohm. This temple immersed in tropical vegetation has been deliberately left in a state close to that of its rediscovery at the beginning of the 20th century.



## Day 13



## Cambodia / Siem Reap

Town

### DAY 13: SIEM REAP – ANGKOR TEMPLES

Departure for a full day dedicated to Angkor. In the morning, visit the Banteay Srei temple. Nicknamed "the Citadel of Women", this flat temple surrounded by moats is a marvel, built in the 10th century, whose appearance has retained a remarkable freshness. Based on laterite, the pink sandstone has been sculpted with extreme finesse. Lunch in a restaurant in town. Continue to the Temple of Angkor Wat, the largest of the temples on the Angkor site, whose majesty and harmony constitute a culmination of Khmer art. The exterior galleries, decorated with sculptures and narrative bas-reliefs, support a central sanctuary, the kingdom of the gods. Return to the hotel. Dinner at the restaurant and overnight at the hotel .

# Day 14



## Cambodia / Siem Reap

Town

### DAY 14: SIEM REAP – PARIS

Departure for the visit of the Senteurs d'Angkor. This company, whose vocation is to develop sustainable and equitable crafts in the Angkor region, trains hundreds of young Cambodians from disadvantaged backgrounds each year in the trades of stone and wood sculpture, lacquer, gilding and silk. Lunch, then free time. In the afternoon, transfer to Siem Reap airport. Flight to Paris on a scheduled flight with one or two stopovers.



## Day 15



## France / Paris

City, Mainland port, Popular, Romantic, Nightlife

### DAY 15: PARIS

Arrival in Paris in the morning.

