

## CHARMS OF THE MEKONG



### 7-NIGHT CRUISE HO CHI MINH CITY TO SIEM REAP



#### CRUISE FROM: HO CHI MINH CITY TO SIEM REAP

Lively Ho Chi Minh City, once known as the “Pearl of the Orient,” offers a vibrant mix of old and new and provides the perfect start to your incredible journey through Vietnam and Cambodia. Cruise along the mighty Mekong, discovering a glimpse into another era; one where people still happily honor the timeless traditions passed down through the centuries from their ancestors. Throughout your trip, immerse yourself into the culture and heritage with visits to rural villages, historic pagodas and colorful markets. Be treated to a special blessing by monks in Buddhist monastery, and witness skilled artisans who create exquisite handicrafts and delicacies. Experience all this and more on this life-enriching cruise along the Mekong.

**COUNTRIES:** CAMBODIA, VIETNAM

**RIVERS:** MEKONG

## *Itinerary*

### **DAY 1**

#### **HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM – MY THO – EMBARKATION**

Transfer via motorcoach from Ho Chi Minh City to AmaDara at My Tho Port for your 7-night river cruise and then meet fellow travelers at a Welcome Dinner as the ship cruises to Cai Be. (L, D)

\* All cruise only guests should meet us at Sofitel Saigon Plaza at 11:30am in Ho Chi Minh City on Embarkation day to join the transfer to the ship in My Tho Port. We recommend that you fly into Ho Chi Minh at least one day prior to embarkation; please inquire about important arrival arrangements prior to your cruise.

### **DAY 2**

#### **CAI BE – SA DEC**

Take a local boat to Cai Be. You will have an opportunity to visit candy and rice paper making workshops, or you may also choose to add an active walking tour to the historic Kiet House followed by a visit to candy and rice paper workshops. Later in the day, journey to Sa Dec, a sprawling town on the Mekong Delta, where French writer Marguerite Duras spent part of her youth. You will visit the colorful market, Cao Dai Temple, home to the unique religion of Caodaism in Southern Vietnam. It is a fusion of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Confucianism. (B, L, D)

### **DAY 3**

#### **TAN CHAU – BORDER CROSSING**

Enjoy a visit to Tan Chau, a small Mekong River town unspoiled by tourism. Be treated to an authentic experience on a traditional “xe-loi” (trishaw) ride around the town, with stops at silk-making and rattan mat workshops. You may also choose the trishaw ride with visits to craftsmen’s workshops, followed by an active walking tour to “Evergreen Island.” As a third alternative, visit Tram Chim National Park, which protects the Plain of Reeds, a seasonal wetland area, in the Mekong Delta. Explore this area by tender boat, gliding along the inland waterway that forms this unique ecosystem. This biodiversity conservation site is home to several rare species of birds, including the highly vulnerable sarus crane. Later in the day, cruise from Vietnam to the Cambodian border en route to Phnom Penh. (B, L, D)

\*Please Note: Tram Chim National Park visit is capacity controlled.



**DAY 4**

**PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA**

This morning's excursion takes you to Cambodia's infamous Killing Fields and the Khmer Rouge's grim Tuol Sleng S21 detention center (Genocide Museum). After lunch on board, you will explore the highlights of the city, followed by a visit to the Royal Palace, the spectacular Silver Pagoda and the National Museum, which has an outstanding collection of Khmer crafts. Alternatively, you may wish to shop for unique treasures at the bustling, yellow-colored Central Market after your visit to Royal Place. After returning to the ship, enjoy Khmer folk dancing performed by local children in the Saigon Lounge. (B, L, D)

**DAY 5**

**LOUDONG – KAMPONG TRALACH – PHNOM PENH**

Visit Oudong, Cambodia's former royal capital from the early 17th century until 1866. Today, Oudong is a place of pilgrimage for Cambodians. While here, be treated to a memorable Buddhist Blessing Ceremony at a monastery. You may walk around Oudong's monastery or take an active walking tour to see panoramic views of the Oudong plain. In Kampong Tralach, you will have a truly authentic excursion – an oxcart ride through a local village. Later in the day, experience Phnom Penh via a tuk ride and be enchanted by the city's French Colonial architecture and tree-lined boulevards set amidst monumental Angkorian (B,L,D)

**DAY 6**

**OKNHATEY - ANGKOR BAN**

In the morning, set sail for Oknhatey Village. Oknhatey is the "Silk Island," located on the lush banks of the Mekong River and known for its rich tradition of silk weaving. While here, you will visit a local elementary school and observe the traditional silk weaving, an art that has been preserved for centuries. Your cruise continues to sail to Angkor Ban. (B, L, D)



**DAY 7**

**ANGKOR BAN – KAMPONG CHAM**

Go on a walking tour of Angkor Ban, one of the few villages in Cambodia that was not destroyed under the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s. Here people still live in their traditional wooden abodes and keep their old cultural traditions alive. Hundreds of wooden houses stand intact on stilts, shaded with banana trees, among the hustle and bustle of the daily agricultural on-going of the local villagers. After visiting here, the ship sets sail for Kampong Cham, where you will go on an afternoon excursion via motorcoach to the Twin Mountains, known as Phnom Pros and Phnom Srei (male and female mountains). In the annals of Khmer legend, the Twin Mountains were formed as the result of a competition between the men and women of an ancient Cambodian kingdom to resolve which gender would be responsible for wedding proposals. Cap the day off with a festive Farewell Dinner on board. (B, L, D)

*\*Based on seasonality, the port of Angkor Ban may be inaccessible from August - September. During this time, Wat Hanchey will replace Angkor Ban as the port of call*

**DAY 8**

**DISEMBARKATION – KAMPONG CHAM – SIEM REAP**

Your cruise concludes in Kampong Cham, where you disembark and motorcoach transfer to Siem Reap. (B)

\*Guests booking cruise only will be transferred from the ship to Sofitel Angkor hotel in Siem Reap. We recommend that you schedule your onward flight to depart Siem Reap after 5:30pm today to avoid potential missed connections

## **PRE & POST CRUISE OPTIONAL**

2 Nights Ho Chi Minh City Pre-Cruise

And 2 Nights Siem Reap, 2 Nights Hanoi, 1 Night Ha Long Bay, 1 Night Hanoi Post-Cruise

### **DAY 1**

#### **ARRIVE IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM**

Ho Chi Minh City, still affectionately referred to by locals as Saigon, is Vietnam's former capital. Once known as the "Paris of the Orient," it is now an industrial, cultural and educational hub.

### **DAY 2**

#### **HO CHI MINH CITY**

Always bustling, Ho Chi Minh City is a city of contrasts blending old and new, and east and west. In the morning, explore some of the city's most famous landmarks, including the former Presidential Palace, the Central Post Office, Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Remnants Museum. In the afternoon, visit Cu Chi, an immense underground network built during the Vietnam War. (B, L)

### **DAY 3**

#### **HO CHI MINH CITY – MY THO – EMBARKATION**

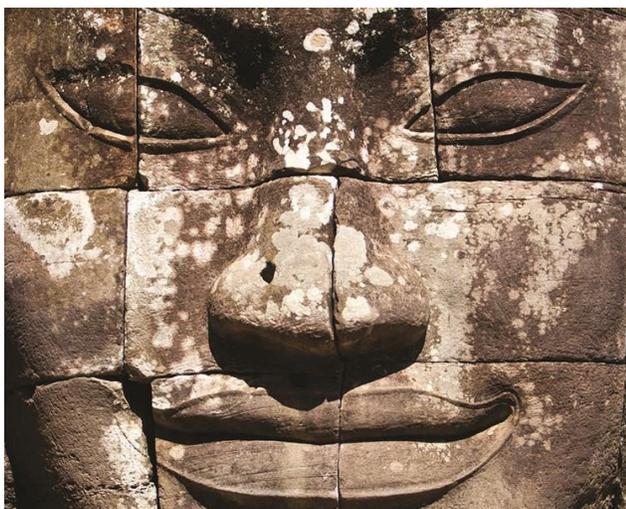
In the morning, visit Ben Thanh Market—one of the oldest and most iconic structures in Ho Chi Minh City. Transfer via motorcoach from Ho Chi Minh City to AmaDara at My Tho Port for your river cruise and meet your fellow travelers at a Welcome Dinner as the ship cruises to Cai Be. (B, L, D)

## **DAYS 3-10: CRUISE**

### **DAY 10**

#### **DISEMBARKATION – KAMPONG CHAM – SIEM REAP**

Disembark in Kampong Cham and transfer by motorcoach to Siem Reap, gateway to the Angkor Archaeological Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the former capital of the Khmer empire. You'll visit nearby Ta Prohm, known as the "Kingdom of the Trees," for the way in which the temple stones have become intertwined with thick forest vegetation. (B, D)



**DAY 11**

**SIEM REAP – ANGKOR**

Begin your morning exploration of the temple complex at Angkor Wat, the most iconic of all Angkorian temples, built by King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century to honor the Hindu god, Vishnu. An afternoon excursion takes you to see the fascinating jewel in the crown of Angkorian art, Banteay Srei, which means “Citadel of Women,” as it has been said that the carving is too fine to have been done by the hand of man. During the evening, be treated to a special “Apsara Dancing Show” at your hotel, featuring local Cambodian/Khmer folk dancers. (B, D)

**DAY 12**

**SIEM REAP – HANOI**

After breakfast, you will have a guided sightseeing tour of Angkor Thom meaning “the great city” and the last capital of the Khmer Empire. This is home to Bayon Temple, best known for its gigantic smiling stone faces, as well as the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper King. Later in the day, take a short flight to Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam. (B)

**DAY 13**

**HANOI**

From ancient temples to French Colonial architecture and modern-day skyscrapers, along with beautiful parks and lakes, Hanoi is an eclectic and lively city. A morning sightseeing tour will showcase some of Hanoi’s most famous historic and cultural sites, including Ba Dinh Square and The Temple of Literature. You will also visit the infamous prison that American POWs sarcastically dubbed the “Hanoi Hilton” during the Vietnam War. In the afternoon, experience an authentic rickshaw ride (known as a “cyclo”) in the Old Quarter, followed by a traditional Water Puppet Show. (B)

**DAY 14**

**HANOI – HA LONG BAY**

Take a scenic drive from Hanoi to one of Vietnam’s most renowned locations, Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Board an elegantly appointed ship designed with all the modern conveniences to ensure smooth sailing for an incredible once-in-a-lifetime experience. The backdrop of the bay’s magnificent scenery and dramatic limestone cliffs and rock formations provide you with the perfect setting for a memorable sojourn. (B, L, D)



**DAY 15**

**HA LONG BAY – HANOI**

Spend the morning sailing across the emerald waters of Ha Long Bay with more than 2,000 small islands rising from the water like a dragon's back. Later in the morning, disembark the ship and transfer back to Hanoi where you can enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. (B, L)

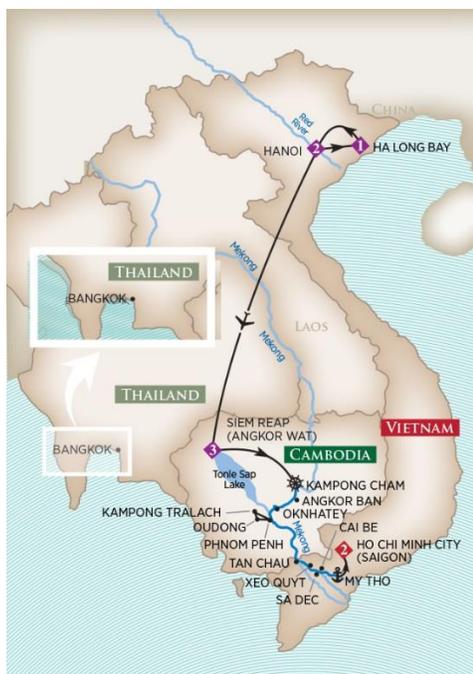
**DAY 16**

**DEPART HANOI**

Bid farewell to Vietnam and prepare for your homeward flight (B)



## OPTIONAL BANGKOK EXTENSION



The capital and most populous city in Thailand, Bangkok is a fascinating center of commerce and culture. During your unforgettable Bangkok land program, you'll discover architectural riches from the Grand Palace to the Temple of the Emerald Buddha, cruise along the city's famed canals and enjoy leisure time to explore incredible museums or shop for distinctive souvenirs in its colorful markets.

PRE HO CHI MINH CITY

POST HANOI

<b>DAY 1</b>	Bangkok	Hotel Check-in
<b>DAY 2</b>	Bangkok	Visit Grand Palace and Reclining Buddha
<b>DAY 3</b>	Bangkok	Khlong Tour and Temple of the Dawn
<b>DAY 4</b>	Bangkok	Depart Bangkok

#### DAY 1

##### BANGKOK, THAILAND

Arrive in Bangkok and check into your hotel.

#### DAY 2

##### BANGKOK

Discover the spectacular and centuries-old Grand Palace with its glittering Temple of the Emerald Buddha. The infamous Buddha was chiseled from one block of emerald and is believed to have supernatural powers. Stop at Wat Pho, known as the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. It houses a school of Thai medicine and is the birthplace of traditional Thai massage. Enjoy rest of day at your leisure to discover more of Bangkok's incredible sights. (B)

#### DAY 3

##### BANGKOK

This morning, cruise along the small canals ("khlongs") of Thonburi, gaining a better understanding of why Bangkok is known as "the Venice of the East." Conclude your morning sightseeing tour with a visit to the imposing Temple of the Dawn, which stands beside the Chao Phraya River and dazzles with a structure composed of millions of fragments of Chinese porcelain. Spend your afternoon at leisure exploring more Bangkok, from its fascinating three-dimensional art museum, Art in Paradise, to its world-famous shopping centers and colorful markets, such as the Night Train, an eye-catching local gathering of tents illuminated by electric lights as the sun sets (B)

#### DAY 4

##### DEPART BANGKOK

Check out of your hotel and bid farewell to Bangkok as you prepare for your flight that brings you to your next destination. (B)

## ***Included Features* CHARMS OF THE MEKONG**

### 7- Night Cruise

#### **SPACIOUS STATEROOMS**

- 7 nights luxury accommodation in a twin-balcony stateroom
- Flat-panel screen that features in-house movies
- Desk and sitting area
- Bottled water replenished daily

#### **AN ARRAY OF AMENITIES**

- Personalized service from a highly trained Cruise Manager during both cruise and land programs
- Sun deck with pool
- Fitness room and three spas
- Saigon Lounge with panoramic views and bar
- Daily entertainment including cultural performances

#### **AWARD-WINNING DINING**

- All onboard dining in a variety of venues
- Regionally inspired cuisine made with locally sourced ingredients
- The Chef's Table specialty restaurant
- Welcome Cocktail and Dinner
- Unlimited wine with lunch and dinner
- Complimentary local beer, house-brand spirits and soft drinks during cruise
- Snacks and refreshments served daily in the Main Lounge

#### **A WORLD OF EXPLORATION**

- Airport transfers with purchase of air from AmaWaterways
- Immersive tours in every destination
- Knowledgeable guides
- Personal headset for easy exploration
- Gentle, regular, active and late-riser tour options

## *AmaDara Overview*



This distinctive ship is in a class of her own! AmaWaterways' sole cruise ship on the Mekong River, the AmaDara features French Colonial décor and richly carved wood furniture inspired by the history of the region, as well as local artifacts made by native craftsmen. Air-conditioned interior corridors lead to spacious staterooms and suites, most featuring twin balconies that invite the ever-changing scenery of Southeast Asia inside. On board, the AmaDara caters to your every whim, with massage rooms, fitness room, gift shop, hair salon and sun-deck pool. Her stunning Saigon Lounge provides respite by day and unites guests over intriguing local entertainment by night. Savor authentic regional delicacies and Western cuisine in the Main Restaurant or dine at The Chef's Table specialty restaurant; and throughout your cruise, be treated to unlimited complimentary wine with lunch and dinner, as well as house brand spirits, local beer and soft drinks throughout your cruise