

10-DAY DOWNRIVER MEKONG CRUISE: GOLDEN TRIANGLE – VIENTIANE

Savour the fantastic scenery of the Mekong River on your spectacular cruise from Chiang Saen (Thailand) to the UNESCO World heritage Site Luang Prabang and further south to the Lao capital of Vientiane.



YOUR ROUTE: CHIANG SAEN – HUAY XAY – PAK THA – PAKBENG – PAK OU– LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI - THA DEUA – PAKLAY – VIENTIANE

CHIANG SAEN - EMBARKATION

(-/-/D)

DAY 1: In the afternoon, you will embark on the Mekong Sun/ Explorer, a comfortable new Laotian cruise ship. (Check-in is at 2:00 PM) Settle into your comfortable cabin and unpack for a ten-day cruise. Next is a sightseeing tour of this once-notorious region, including visits to the Golden Buddha of Sop Ruak and the new Hall of Opium. This fascinating museum, sponsored by the royal family of Thailand, gives a deep background on the history and politics of the opium trade and the health effects of opium abuse. In the evening enjoy the spacious decks, lounge on board and attend a dinnertime welcome reception. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

GOLDEN TRIANGLE – HUAY XAY

(B/L/D)

DAY 2: The morning is spent on an excursion to Mae Sai, where you can stroll through the local market and enjoy a scenic view across the border to Burma. Afterwards, visit the Doi Tung Royal Orchid Botanical Gardens, one of the most beautiful botanical gardens of Southeast Asia. Returning to Chiang Saen port, we will take care of border formalities at Thai immigration. Today your grand voyage on the mighty Mekong River really gets going, with your departure from the Golden Triangle region between Burma, Laos and Thailand. The destination for today is the nearby Laotian town of Huay Xay on the Laotian - Thai border, where you will officially enter the People's Democratic Republic of Laos. Your voyage then leads into northern Laos amid stunning scenery. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

HUAY XAY – PAK THA

(B/L/D)

DAY 3: The river traffic increases as you pass through a densely populated region accessible only by water. Relax on deck, in your cabin or in the lounge and soak up the remote, isolated surroundings. Continue to Pak Tha, a small village where you will take off on a long-tail boat excursion on the Namtha River to visit a Khmu village. Upon reboarding the Mekong Sun you will continue downstream and anchor at a sand bank. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

PAKBENG – PAK OU – LUANG PRABANG

(B/L/-)

DAY 4: Shortly after getting underway, you will arrive in Pakbeng and have a short coffee break at a lodge. Time permitting, a market visit will follow before continuing. The famous Pak Ou-caves, with thousands of small Buddha statues inside the caverns, are one highlight of the day; you will also take a short walk through the forest to a small village where you can see the traditional production of the local liquor Lao-Lao. You are also able to see working elephants in Nam Ou village. In the late afternoon you will reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. You will get to know some highlights of this beautiful city, incl. the famous Wat Xieng Thong temple and enjoy the unique atmosphere provided by

the abundance of well-preserved French colonial architecture mingling with traditional Buddhist temples. A short climb up Phou Si-hill you will be rewarded with a panoramic sunset view over the Mekong as well as the Khan River and the surrounding mountains. In the evening, enjoy strolling along the Mekong promenade or visiting the colorful night market of the local Hmong minority.
Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

LUANG PRABANG

(B/L/D)

DAY 5: Breakfast on board. Today the ship stays in Luang Prabang, while you have the full day to get to know the beauties of this UNESCO World Heritage town. During a morning guided tour you will visit National Museum, Wat Xiengthong, Wat Sene and many more. Apart from numerous temples, the atmosphere is enriched by neighboring French colonial architecture. After Lunch please explore City on your own. In the evening enjoy during Dinner a traditional Bazi Ceremony and watch some local Dances.
Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

LUANG PRABANG – KUANG SI

(B/L/D)

DAY 6: In the early morning you will be able to observe the traditional giving of alms in the streets of Luang Prabang. Breakfast on board. After a few hours of cruising downriver, you will continue by bus to the famous Kuang Si waterfall. Stop in a small village where you are able to watch production of Sa – paper. The ship then heads on southwards and pass through the Keng – Luang rapids.
Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

THA DEUA – PAK LAY - BAN DONKHAI

(B/L/D)

DAY 7: Today you will see the ferry crossing the Mekong at Tha Deua connecting Luang Prabang Province with Sayaboury province. In the afternoon you will drop in on the small riverside community of Pak Lay, famous for its colonial architecture. After a short walk in an untouched nature you are able to explore near Ban Donkhai village a cave no many travelers have seen before. You will spend the night close to the Thai-Laotian border. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

WILD NATURE ALONG THE MIGHTY MEKONG

(B/L/D)

DAY 8: Further south you will discover some of the most remarkable, most impressive landscapes of this still-untamed river. The landscape becomes more and more spectacular: hills covered with tropical vegetation, awe-inspiring rock formations along the river banks, and a fascinating array of fast currents and slower river parts on the river. The power of the mighty Mekong will give your cruise the feeling of a real expedition. Enjoy the beautiful views and watch nature's wonders along the shores before you stop at a remote sandbank for the night. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

VIENTIANE

(B/L/D)

DAY 9: You travel further downstream along the "mother of all waters", as the Lao call the Mekong River. Today's destination is the Laotian capital, Vientiane, where you will see the That Luang temple, the national symbol, as well as the picturesque Arc de Triomphe. This last evening on board will be celebrated with a farewell dinner. Overnight aboard the Mekong Sun/ Explorer.

DISEMBARK VIENTIANE

(B/-/-)

DAY 10: After breakfast you will say goodbye to your Laotian crew. Checkout and disembark. End of service.

***NOTE:** Every river cruise on the upper Mekong is a pioneer experience and is subject to constantly changing river conditions, including flood waters and shallows. Therefore please understand that we must reserve the right to alter the itinerary of this tour due to the logistical complexities involved. Small deviations in the tour program are sometimes necessary, depending on weather, local authorities and river and/or road conditions. For safety reasons and according to navigating conditions, these programs may be amended without previous notice.*