

Pandaw Laos Cruise Upstream

Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	VIENTIANE - EMBARKATION	L/D
Day 2	CRUISING THE MEKONG	B/L/D
Day 3	PAK LAI	B/L/D
Day 4	BAN PARK BOR VILLAGE	B/L/D
Day 5	BAN MOUANG – KHAI VILLAGE – LUANG PRABANG	B/L/D
Day 6	LUANG PRABANG	B/L/D
Day 7	PAK OU CAVES	B/L/D
Day 8	PAK BENG	B/L/D
Day 9	BAN HOUAYXAY	B/L/D
Day 10	CHIANG SAEN	B/L/D
Day 11	CHIANG SAEN - DISEMBARKATION	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Travel Map



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 VIENTIANE - EMBARKATION

PLEASE NOTE: The itinerary for this expedition is indicative only and subject to reconnaissance. As we travel to remote areas, changes to the itinerary will inevitably occur. A flexible approach is required if you book this cruise.

Embarkation 12.30, followed by lunch and afternoon exploration of the delightful French city including visits to the golden Pha That Luang Stupa, Sisaket Temple, the President's Hall, Wat Prakeo Temple and the Phatouxay monument. Set sail late afternoon, enjoy a welcome dinner on board and overnight near Vientiane.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 2 CRUISING THE MEKONG

Cruise upstream on the Mekong, passing lush jungle scenery and tiny riverside villages. Morning presentation on the Lao language. Afternoon cooking demonstration on the upper deck. Arrive in Ban Xanakham to moor overnight.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 3 PAK LAI

Afternoon visit to the French administrative town of Pak Lai with many colonial buildings and a bustling local market. This town boasts the largest elephant festival in South East Asia, usually in February.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 4 BAN PARK BOR VILLAGE

Morning visit and walking tour to Khamo tribal village, a typical village, set on the banks of the Mekong amidst lush jungle. In the afternoon pass through the Xanyaburi Hydro Electric Power Plant.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 5 BAN MOUANG – KHAI VILLAGE – LUANG PRABANG

In the morning visit a Hmong village and continue upstream to the village of Ban Mouang Khai. Afternoon sightseeing by minibus visiting the jungle pools and dramatic Khaung Si waterfall then on to a butterfly garden. Arrive in the heart of the temple city of [Luang Prabang](#) where there is a buzzing night market and many great cafes and some good local restaurants.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 6 LUANG PRABANG

In the morning explore by tuktuk this well-preserved and unique world heritage site with its many Buddhist temples, libraries and [royal palace](#). Visit the National Museum and have the afternoon free to explore the beauty and unique atmosphere of Luang Prabang on your own. Enjoy traditional Laos dancing on the upper deck late afternoon. Moor overnight in Luang Prabang.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 7 PAK OU CAVES

Early morning walking tour to see the alms offering by the local people to hundreds of monks who walk around the city every morning. Passengers are invited to join in with offerings we provide for the alms giving. Morning sightseeing by local boat exploring the unique Pak Ou Caves, a Buddhist sanctuary with spectacular limestone cliff faces. Evening cocktails on a sandbank. Sail upstream on the beautiful Mekong towards Ban Bo

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 8 PAK BENG

Morning visit to a local Khamo village. Sail upstream on the Mekong passing Pak Beng towards Pak Sit.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 9 BAN HOUAYXAY

Early morning walking tour in a Khamo village then cruise through stunning scenery to the border of Laos and Thailand. The night is spent on the Lao side in the Huay xay area where we take a late afternoon village walk.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 10 CHIANG SAEN

Cruise upriver to the Town of Chiang Saen for border crossing at the Golden Triangle. Farewell cocktails and Thai traditional dance on board for your last evening.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw Laos Cruise

Day 11 CHIANG SAEN

Disembark by 8.30 in Chiang Saen and group transfer to hotel/airport. En route, explore the Golden Triangle including a visit to the opium museum. Continue to airports or city hotels in Chiang Rai (2 hours) and Chiang Mai (6 hours).

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Important note*

- PROGRAMS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE DUE TO THE WATER LEVEL. WE WILL KEEP YOU UPDATED 2 WEEKS BEFORE DEPARTURE
- For overnight registration, we will need passport information (Full name, sex, Nationality, passport number, date of birth) of passengers at least four weeks prior to cruise date.

Inclusions & Exclusion

Inclusions:

Entrance fees, guide services (English language), main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes. Transfers Chiang Rai / Chiang Mai to ship v.v. and ship to Vientiane v.v.

Exclusions:

International flights, port dues (if levied), laundry, all visa costs, fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions), all beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes and tips to tour guides, local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers.

Important Information

River Conditions Warning

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop.

Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience – not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

For itineraries that include flights in the price of the ticket it should be noted that regional airlines can change departure times or cancel flights at very short notice. In such an event we endeavour to arrange alternative flights but note that this can result in delays often resulting in embarking or disembarking on a different day to that indicated in the itinerary. In such an event the company will cover the cost of hotel accommodation and main meals only, but will not be liable for any claims for compensation for missed days on board a ship, drinks or curtailment of the said itinerary.

Clothes

We recommend wearing loose and comfortable clothing made of cotton or modern material that can readily cool off sweat and body heat. The type of shoes will depend on the excursion types so best to have both light, open toed shoes as well as good walking/hiking shoes with you. A sun hat is always a good idea to bring along.

Southern Vietnam and Cambodia are warm all year-round, but our other cruise destinations can get chilly during the winter months (Laos, Myanmar or northern Vietnam). Therefore, it is always recommended to bring a pullover or a warm jacket with you during this period.

Many of our cruises include visits to local temples or pagodas. When visiting these holy sites, make sure to wear appropriate clothing which covers your shoulders and knees.

Sea sickness

Generally speaking, the rivers we are cruising on in Southeast Asia are very calm and there is hardly any motion on any of our ships. A bit of motion can occur during monsoon rains with stormy winds, but the amount of motion is much less than one would feel during bad weather on the open ocean.

Sea cruises as we offer in Halong Bay or Lan Ha Bay can sometimes encounter heavier waters and ship motion, although this happens very rarely and port authorities will most likely not allow sailing under any such circumstances anyway.

If you are new to cruising or prone to motion sickness, it does not hurt to bring along some motion sickness medication. Drinking a nice hot fresh ginger tea is a natural remedy and tasty alternative our staff is always happy to make for you.

Food and Beverage

All food and beverage on board is completely safe to eat and enjoy, including the ice cubes you enjoy in your chilled drinks. We do not recommend drinking water straight from the tap anywhere, including onboard. We provide you with complimentary clean drinking water throughout your cruise.

You may want to be bit careful with local dishes as they can be spicier than you are used to from home. Approach new dishes slowly and carefully. If you have a sensitive stomach, then you may like to double check with our chef or onboard managers about specific dishes or meals.

On excursions, it may be a good idea to avoid local foods and snacks unless offered by our tour guides. Besides the above, in general we recommend the following motto for your pre- and post-cruise travelling in the Southeast Asian tropics: boil it, peel it, cook it, wash it or forget it!

Health risks

The most effective protection from personal contamination is ensuring strict attention to personal hygiene and in particular, frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water and refraining from hand-to-mouth contact. Colds and other viruses can spread quickly in an enclosed area such as a ship. Continue to practice common-sense hygiene and respiratory courtesy. Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneeze. It is recommended that passengers carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, which does not require rinsing with water. Use sanitizer frequently and throughout the day, particularly after shore excursions and prior to meals. If you have any questions regarding your health or safety, please do not hesitate to ask your cruise director.

Motion sickness can be a problem for some people when cruising, flying or travelling on coaches and trains and it is a good idea to take precautionary measures. Over-the-counter drugs for treating motion sickness can be purchased at pharmacies in most countries, though a side effect can be drowsiness. Alternatives such as ginger tablets and acupuncture wristbands are also available and work well for some people.

Visa requirements for Cambodia

Cambodia visas are easily obtained for most travelers on arrival. Note that passports must have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Cambodia.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Cambodia embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Visa requirements for Vietnam

With the exception of visa exemptions, all travelers must arrange their visa prior to arrival in Vietnam. Passports must also have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Vietnam.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Vietnam embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Insurance

We recommend at least purchasing travel health insurance which covers both in- & outpatient visits and medical repatriation. Buying additional trip cancellation and interruption coverage may also be beneficial in case you have to cancel your travel plans due to unforeseen circumstances.

Electrical adapters

We always recommend bringing a travel adapter as a standard item in your travel kit. You can borrow an adapter on board, but these may be limited.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.