

## 12-days Vientiane - Golden Triangle



ROUTE: VIENTIANE – PAKLAY – THA DEUA – KUANG SI – LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU – PAKBENG – PAK THA – HUAY XAY – GOLDEN TRIANGLE

### **VIENTIANE – EMBARKATION (-/L/D)**

DAY 1: This morning you will be picked up from your hotel in town to visit the national symbol of Laos, the That Luang temple, and the picturesque Arc de Triomphe. After lunch in town, we will be transferring your group approx. 2 hrs. North of Vientiane to embark on your boutique river vessel, a comfortable new German-Laotian cruise ship. Settle into your accommodating cabin and unpack for a twelve-day cruise. Enjoy the spacious decks, lounge on board and attend your welcome reception and dinner this evening. A selection of Asian and European food will be provided throughout the cruise. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **WILD NATURE ALONG THE MIGHTY MEKONG (B/L/D)**

DAY 2: This morning you start your spectacular river cruise upstream into formerly inaccessible parts of the Mekong river. Enjoy the comfort and service onboard: exclusive, yet casual, you'll share the boat with only few fellow guests. During the next days of your river cruise you will go on exciting offshore excursions and enjoy a programme with profound travel information in form of presentations, speeches or documentaries on relevant topics. Among others, the French Mekong Expedition of the 1860s, the daily life of a Buddhist novice or the plants and fruits of

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the Mekong region might be possible subjects. A visit of a small riverside community this afternoon gets you acquainted with the life of the local Lao Lum minority. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **PAK LAY (B/L/D)**

DAY 3: Further north 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. The power of the mighty Mekong will give your cruise the feeling of a real expedition. Your boutique river vessel enables you to go on a comfortable journey, which seemed impossible for ages: about 800 km of travelling along fantastic river landscapes, passing by aboriginal villages and reaching World Heritage Sites. You will discover some of the last unknown regions of South-East Asia. Upstream you will stop at the small riverside community of Pak Lai, known for once possessing many colonial buildings. The local market with its many exotic offerings is quite a sight. Safe and comfortable travelling on board of your exclusive river vessel is guaranteed, while you watch the incredible landscapes of the river pass by. At night, enjoy once again the comforts on board. You will spend the night close to the Thai-Laotian border. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **THA DEUA (B/L/D)**

DAY 4: During and after breakfast on board, enjoy the beautiful view and possibly watch local fishermen along the shore. You travel further on the "mother of all waters", as the Lao call the Mekong River. Enjoy the beautiful views and watch nature's wonders along the riverbank. You meet the people of the small village of Hua Hip, which is regularly supported by guests of your Mekong cruise. Today you will also see the Mekong ferry crossing at Tha Deua, connecting Luang Prabang Province with the Sayaboury province. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **KUANG SI – LUANG PRABANG (B/L/D)**

DAY 5: A shore excursion will take you to the Kuang Si-falls, some of the most attractive waterfalls in Laos. This afternoon you will reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Apart from numerous temples, the atmosphere is enriched by neighbouring French colonial architecture. Begin with a walk up Phou Si-hill, which offers a spectacular sunset view over the Mekong as well as the Khan river and the surrounding mountains. In the evening,



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enjoy strolling along the Mekong promenade or visiting the colourful night market of the local Hmong minority. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE TOWN OF LUANG PRABANG (B/L/-)**

DAY 6: Breakfast on board. Today the ship stays in Luang Prabang, while we take you on a full day of sightseeing to get to know the beauties of this UNESCO World Heritage town. Apart from numerous temples, the atmosphere is enriched by neighbouring French colonial architecture. As Luang Prabang offers many opportunities for fine dining, tonight you are free to choose from the numerous offerings in town or along the Mekong River. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **LUANG PRABANG – PAK OU (B/L/D)**

DAY 7: In the early morning you will be able to visit the traditional giving of alms in the streets of Luang Prabang. Breakfast is on board. Today you will cruise north again and visit a Laotian village where you observe the traditional production of Lao-Lao, the local liqueur. After a short walk through the jungle (optionally) you will explore the famous Pak Ou Caves, with thousands of small Buddha statues inside the caverns. The night is spent on a beautiful sandbank, surrounded by nothing but pure nature. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **PAKBENG (B/L/D)**

DAY 8: The river traffic thins out as you proceed upstream, and you can enjoy the fantastic landscapes along the river. The scenery along the river is incredible... With a little luck you will be able to see working elephants in action today (unless they are busy with an off-site contract by the time of your visit). Later, that day you will have a short stop in the market town of Pakbeng. Here we go ashore to enjoy a coffee Lao in a beautiful lodge with Mekong panorama or visit the local market, small stalls and shops along the one main street. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

### **PAK THA (B/L/D)**

DAY 9: Today is a day to take it all in – relax on deck, in your comfortable cabin or in the lounge and soak up the untouched scenery. The diversity of the landscape is astonishing, now shifting to tropical hills in the background. Enjoy the tranquility of northern Laos, a real retreat from the hustle-and-bustle of daily life. As

you cruise along the green hills, you will start heading upstream towards Pak Tha. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

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## **PAK THA – HUAY XAY (B/L/D)**

DAY 10: At Pak Tha, a small village, you will take off on a long-tail boat excursion on the Namtha River to visit a local Khmu village. The small village school is often sponsored by guests of your Mekong cruise. Upon reboarding your boutique river vessel, you will proceed to the Thai-Laotian border at Chiang Khong (Thailand) and Ban Huay Xay (Laos). The purely natural landscape is only broken by the seldom sights of small villages and local herds of cattle. You then will spend a last relaxing dinner and evening in Laos. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

## **THE GOLDEN TRIANGLE (B/L/D)**

DAY 11: Today is spent on an excursion to the Golden Triangle area at Chiang Saen, where you will visit the Golden Buddha of Sop Ruak and the old temple remains of the town. Chiang Saen once served as the crowning location for the kings of Lanna or Chiang Mai, and history is well preserved here. This last evening on board will be celebrated with a farewell dinner. Overnight aboard your Mekong river vessel.

## **FAREWELL (B/-/-)**

DAY 12: After breakfast you will say goodbye to your Laotian crew. Check-out and disembark. \*

\* Depending on season and water level the check-out will either be at Chiang Saen or Chiang Khong. (Regularly from June until early November the check-out will be at Chiang Saen, afterwards it will be Chiang Khong.)

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.



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