

Impressions of the Mekong

6-day cruise through Northern Laos from Vientiane to Luang Prabang

Our route: Vientiane – Pak Lay – Xayabouri Dam – Kuang Si – Luang Prabang



Enjoy the breathtaking beauty of the Mekong River on this extraordinary cruise from the vibrant capital of Laos, Vientiane to the enchanting UNESCO World Heritage town of Luang Prabang. Glide through once-unreachable sections of Southeast Asia's most spectacular river, where every bend unveils new wonders. Let your senses come alive as you explore bustling markets and feel the pulse of Laotian culture as you connect with its warm-hearted people, who continue to preserve their rich traditions. Aboard your exclusive river vessel, unwind as you journey through a wild, untouched landscape. The mighty upper Mekong challenges with its fluctuating waters, narrow gorges, labyrinths of sandbanks, and roaring rapids, making this an adventure like no other.

Day 1: Vientiane – Embarkation

You will be picked up by our minivan between 12:00 and 1:00 PM in Vientiane and welcomed aboard our charming boutique river vessel, where your inviting cabin awaits, ready for you to settle in and unpack for an unforgettable 6-day journey. *During low water levels, you'll stay in a centrally located comfort hotel in Vientiane.* In the afternoon, embark on a guided tour through the vibrant streets of Vientiane, taking in the city's most iconic landmarks. Admire the golden beauty of Pha That Luang, a national treasure of Laotian architecture, and wander through the peaceful grounds of the historic

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Ho Phra Keo temple. Don't miss the grand Patuxai, Vientiane's own "Arc de Triomphe," towering proudly over the city.

As the sun begins to set, return to the ship and enjoy the spacious decks and the cosy lounge. Later you are invited to a warm welcome reception and a delicious dinner. Throughout the cruise, you'll be treated to a delightful selection of both Asian and European dishes, offering a culinary journey as rich and varied as the sights you'll encounter along the way.

Overnight on board.

Meals included: dinner

Day 2: Wild Nature along the Mighty Mekong

Today marks the start of your unforgettable Mekong River cruise. *During low water levels, you'll enjoy today's journey as a combination of a scenic overland transfer and a serene ride aboard a traditional Lao longboat.* As the day unfolds, you'll journey upriver, gliding through some of the region's most breathtaking landscapes. Take a moment to soak in the scenery from the open deck or indulge in a relaxing treatment at the onboard spa. In the afternoon, continue enjoying the stunning views as the riverbanks reveal their natural wonders. By evening, you'll moor at a peaceful location for the night. Throughout the day, your cruise director will share fascinating insights into the region's rich history, geography, and diverse cultures.

Overnight on board.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 3: Powerful rapids & the Town of Salakham

As we continue downstream, the landscape changes as the mountains give way to flatter terrain, and the Mekong River widens, revealing intriguing rock formations. This stretch offers a perfect chance to witness our expert captains expertly navigate the wild waters of the mighty Mekong. Mornings we reach the bustling market town of Salakham, renowned for its vibrant wood and spice trade. A stroll through the lively market immerses you in the sights, sounds, and aromas of local commerce, offering a glimpse into the region's trading traditions. A little farther along, we pass a golden Buddha statue on a hill, marking the start of Thailand along the river.

Overnight on board.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 4: The farming village Ban Don Saingam

Today, our journey brings us to the charming village of Ban Don Saingam, nestled between lush hills along the Mekong River. Upon arrival, we embark on a 30-minute walk—or, depending on the season, a local tractor ride—toward a nearly forgotten cave. Equipped with torches, we explore its hidden depths, uncovering its secrets before returning to the ship.

As the afternoon progresses, we continue our upstream journey, enjoying the stunning views. In the evening, we'll make an early stop to prepare for our renowned Mekong River Cruises barbecue, set in a picturesque riverside location.

Overnight on board.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 5: Xayabouri Dam

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As you enjoy breakfast on board, take in the stunning views of the river and watch local fishermen skillfully casting their nets along the shore. By mid-morning, we approach the impressive Xayabouri Dam, the largest hydroelectric power plant in Laos. The 45-minute crossing offers a fascinating, up-close look at this engineering marvel in action. In the afternoon, we visit a remote hill tribe village that has been a special part of our journey for many years, giving you a closer look at their unique and rich way of life. As the sun sets we'll gather by the riverbank for a memorable evening celebration, enjoying your last night aboard.

Overnight on board.

Meals included: breakfast, lunch and dinner

Day 6: Kuang Si Falls and Luang Prabang

In the morning, you'll embark on a guided tuk-tuk excursion to the famous Kuang Si Waterfalls. These stunning turquoise falls cascade over several tiers, creating natural pools perfect for a refreshing swim. Right next to the waterfalls is the heartwarming "Free the Bears" rescue center, dedicated to the protection and conservation of the endangered sun and moon bears (Malayan and Tibetan bears) throughout Southeast Asia. Here, we'll learn more about the incredible efforts to rehabilitate these gentle creatures.

In the afternoon, we arrive in Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It's time to say goodbye to the Laotian crew, cruise director, and captain, marking the close of an unforgettable journey. After checking out and disembarking, you'll leave with lasting memories of your adventure along the mighty Mekong. Our time together wraps up with a transfer to either the airport or a hotel in Luang Prabang, marking the close of this incredible experience.

Meals included: breakfast and lunch

IMPORTANT NOTE: *The water level of the Mekong is constantly shifting over the year. That's why every river cruise on the upper Mekong is a pioneering experience and subject to these changing river conditions, including floods, low water levels, and morning fog. Our vessels were built to cope with this erraticism, making it possible to safely negotiate even low water levels.*

However, there are times when operating as planned will not be viable. We ask for your understanding that the itinerary of this tour may be altered because of the logistical complexities mentioned. For safety reasons, modifications of the tour program will sometimes become necessary, depending on the weather, the river conditions, or orders by local authorities. In such cases, we provide transportation by slowboat and a hotel overnight if needed. Thanks to our high flexibility and our excellent local partners, we're able to organize exciting alternative programs whenever necessary—even on short notice.

Journey Highlights

- The wild upper Mekong aboard a boutique river vessel – one of the most spectacular river cruises in the world
- First-hand experience of Lao peoples' traditional lifestyles
- The waterfalls at Kuang Si, inviting you to swim in their lovely natural pools
- Atmospheric BBQ dinner under the stars on the picturesque banks of the Mekong river
- Unforgettable impressions of the mighty Mekong River, the “mother of waters”
- Professional onboard infotainment, including lectures and documentaries on the region

Tour price includes

- 5 overnights in selected cabin type aboard your boutique river cruise vessel
- Local English-speaking guides
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Tours and transfers as mentioned
- Gratuities for local guides, drivers, performers and porters
- Water in the vehicles and on the ship
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary (B= Breakfast, L=Lunch, and D=Dinner)
- Coffee, tea, and table water is complementary onboard your boutique river cruise vessel
- Presentations and lectures onboard by the cruise director
- Transfers from/to Vientiane and Luang Prabang airports or hotels within city limits (only guaranteed if information was correctly provided 4 weeks prior to embarkation, at the latest)

Not included

- Flights
- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Visas for Laos
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for boat crew
- Personal, non-itinerary services
- Alcoholic and soft drinks other than mentioned
- Personal Insurance

PLEASE NOTE: *This journey is generally not for guests with limited mobility or who depend on CPAP machines. Please contact us for more information about your specific requirements before booking.*