

Trip code: VEMR17

Trip name: Vietnam and Cambodia Discovery

Journey: Hanoi to Siem Reap

Summary: as per last season

Trip notes:

Days 1-4 are locally hosted. Prices are based on Cat. C Deluxe Twin Balcony, Cat. Sadec Twin Balcony and Cat. Owner's Suite aboard the RV AmaLotus. Prices include port charges, gratuities and sundries. Prices are based on a Deluxe Cabin aboard The Au Co on Ha Long Bay. Disruptions to itinerary may occur.

Included Experiences:

All-inclusive sightseeing in up to 12 destinations

APT's Freedom of Choice Inclusions in four locations

Seven-night Mekong River cruise aboard the RV AmaLotus

Everything as detailed, including gratuities and onboard entertainment

Complimentary beverages served on board your Mekong River cruise

Finest dining - a total of 42 meals

Day 1. Arrive Hanoi

On arrival in Hanoi, you'll be met and transferred to your hotel located in the heart of the city. Later this evening, you'll get to know your fellow travellers and your local guide during a Welcome Dinner.

Two Nights, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

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Day 2. Hanoi

A guided morning tour of Hanoi will take you to the city's most famous historical and cultural sites. Then, explore more of this vibrant city on your selected Freedom of Choice activity. This evening, the choice is yours again for dinner.

BD

Freedom of Choice Sightseeing

Perhaps tour the 500-year-old village of Bat Trang, world-famous for its pottery. Or, relax and enjoy a foot massage back at your hotel. Embark on a walking tour to observe Hanoi's French colonial architecture, and explore the interior of the Hanoi Opera House, or take in a water puppet show. Another option is a leisurely bicycle ride past Hanoi's lush rice paddy fields.

Freedom of Choice Dining

How your evening evolves is also up to you; choose from a selection of superb local restaurants for dinner.

Day 3. Hanoi, Ha Long Bay

Farewell Hanoi as you travel by coach to Ha Long. Feel the wind in your hair as you set sail among thousands of spectacular limestone islets this afternoon, gliding slowly over the azure waters. Enjoy lunch on board, as you traverse through the stunning scenery of Ha Long Bay and later, tour the World Heritage-listed Sung Sot Cave with its thousands of beautiful stalactites. Relax on board during dinner this evening.

Two Nights, Ha Long Bay, The Au Co

BLD

Signature Experience

Embark on your three-day cruise on the World Heritage-listed Ha Long Bay.

Day 4. Ha Long Bay

Perhaps enjoy tai chi on the sun deck during a morning spent cruising the bay. After breakfast, your ship will sail towards Bai Tu Long Bay, cruising past the floating villages of Cua Van and Vung Vieng before visiting Cong Dam fishing village by bamboo boat or kayak. Here, you can explore the floating village and see how the residents live. After a traditional lunch on board, you will arrive at Cat Ba island to visit the Cat Ba National Park and Viet Hai Village. Here, explore the sights of the island by bike. Upon retiring to The Au Co for the evening, relax and enjoy dinner. BLD

Day 5. Ha Long Bay, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

This morning, cruise beside the Surprise Grotto and Titov Island. The stunning islands, a slow creation of humid weather and tectonic activity, are a beautiful sight to be greeted with. After breakfast, transfer to Hanoi airport for your included flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) where you'll be met by your Tour Director. Take a moment to settle in to your hotel before enjoying a delicious dinner.

Two Nights, Ho Chi Minh City, Park Hyatt Saigon

BLD

Day 6. Ho Chi Minh City, Long Tan OR Cu Chi Tunnels

Today choose from two Signature Experiences before a delicious Signature Experience dinner at Luke Nguyen's exclusive restaurant, Vietnam House.

BLD

Signature Experience

You may journey to Ba Ria and learn about the Battle of Long Tan. Afterwards, attend a memorial service at Long Tan Cross - a memorial erected by the 6th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment which is set in a rubber plantation and marks the site of the Battle of Long Tan. On the second alternative, visit the impressive Cu Chi Tunnels, an incredible tunnel network constructed by Vietnamese resistance fighters during the war. These tunnels served as Viet Cong hiding spots, supply and communication routes, hospitals and weapon caches, and make for a fascinating visit.

Signature Experience

This evening, head to Vietnam House for a tantalising and exclusive dinner - a menu created personally by APT Ambassador Luke Nguyen.

Day 7. Ho Chi Minh City, My Tho, Embark Ship

After a Freedom of Choice sightseeing experience this morning, transfer to My Tho and embark your ship.

Seven Nights, Mekong River, APT's RV AmaLotus

BLD

Freedom of Choice Sightseeing

Perhaps enjoy a walking tour of Ho Chi Minh City, visiting the Reunification Palace and the Central Post Office. Or jump on the back of a motorbike for an exciting city tour.

Alternatively, tour the Ky Long Art Villa where you'll learn about Vietnamese lacquer art and see artist workshops. You may like to try out your culinary skills with a fun cooking class at GRAIN by Luke Nguyen cooking studio or delight in an exciting shopping tour.

Day 8. Cai Be, Sa Dec

A local boat will take you to the beautiful river-land town of Cai Be today. Once here, step ashore to visit the French Gothic cathedral as well as the colourful port area, which is filled with crumbling colonial buildings and delightful flowering gardens. The morning then takes you onwards to a rice paper manufacturer where you'll see how Vietnamese rice paper is made. Lunch will be served back on board later as your ship cruises past scenes of charming rural life towards the quaint town of Sa Dec. This delightfully sleepy locale is where iconic French writer Marguerite Duras met her Vietnamese-Chinese lover, Huynh Thuy Le. On arrival, tour Huynh Thuy Le's old house and learn the story behind Marguerite Duras' best-selling novel, *The Lover*. Later, pay a visit to a traditional Cao Dai temple.

BLD

Day 9. Tan Chau, Evergreen Island, Border Crossing, Phnom Penh

Transfer to a small boat for a journey along the tiny tributaries that snake around the riverside town of Tan Chau. Cruise right past a floating fish farm, then step ashore for a rickshaw tour of Tan Chau. Ride past shops, rice wine rooms and friendly locals eager to say hello.

Disembarking your rickshaw, you'll pay a visit to a local silk and rattan weaving workshop, and watch as the materials are carefully strung together. Later, step back in time during a visit to an evergreen island where you'll experience authentic rural Mekong life. The remainder of today is left free for you to relax on board as you cross the border into Cambodia and cruise towards Phnom Penh.

BLD

Day 10. Phnom Penh

Spend the day embarking on a Freedom of Choice Sightseeing excursion.

BLD

Freedom of Choice Sightseeing

After breakfast, perhaps enjoy a guided tour of the dazzling white and gold Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda, which houses many national treasures. Alternatively, you may wish to discover some of Cambodia's sobering history with a moving excursion to the infamous Killing Fields before visiting the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum which is located on the site of the Khmer Rouge's notorious Security Prison 21 (S-21). Here, you'll learn of the atrocities inflicted upon Cambodians during Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime in the mid-to-late 1970s. Your other options are a visit to the National Museum of Cambodia or a guided city tour in a tuk tuk taking in city sights, including the Independence Monument and Wat Phnom, a sacred Buddhist pagoda.

Day 11. Phnom Penh, Koh Chen

With a free morning in Phnom Penh, you may like to enjoy a restful start to the day and stay aboard your ship. Or, make use of your time in this beautiful city and head out on your own to discover the sights and attractions. Your APT Cruise Director can provide inspiration should you need it. Later in the day, your ship will cruise to remote Koh Chen, a small village specialising in copperware. Here you'll visit some of the delicate home-workshops that manufacture beautiful handmade copper souvenirs. Watch the clever artisans at work and perhaps purchase a memento to take home for family or friends. After an exploration, you will return to your river ship for a delicious dinner with your fellow travellers. Perhaps take a moment to relay the day's events over a drink.

BLD

Day 12. Oudong, Kampong Tralach

Today brings you an authentic glimpse into religious and lifestyle traditions of locals. Disembarking this morning, you'll take a coach to Oudong, the fascinating royal capital of

Cambodia from 1618 until 1866. Set in the foothills of Phnom Udong Mountain, the town is surrounded by beautiful nature. Calling in on a local monastery, you are met by Buddhist monks before receiving a special blessing from them – an unforgettable experience. Afterwards, continue to the village of Kampong Tralach for a visit to the Wat Kampong Tralach Pleu pagoda. Then, take an exciting ox cart ride through the countryside, passing lush rice fields and smiling locals on your way back to your luxury river ship. Once back on board, take a moment to unwind before joining fellow guests for a delicious dinner. BLD

Day 13. Kampong Chhnang

Board a small boat and head to the wetlands near Kampong Chhnang. Known as the ‘Clay Pot Port’, the local people craft pottery under their stilt homes on the river. Afterwards, return to your ship and cast off towards Prek K’dam. Enjoy a Farewell Dinner with your fellow travellers. BLD

Day 14. Prek K’dam, Disembark Ship, Siem Reap

Disembark at Prek K’dam and transfer to your hotel. Then, head to World Heritage-listed Angkor Archaeological Park to visit Angkor Thom and the 12th-century temple, Bayon. Three Nights, Siem Reap, Hotel Sofitel Angkor BD

Freedom of Choice Dining

Choose from a number of local restaurants this evening for dinner.

Day 15. Siem Reap

After soaking up the majesty of Angkor Wat in the early morning sun, enjoy a guided tour of this impressive temple, the best-preserved temple of Angkor and said to be the world’s largest single religious monument. Return to your hotel for breakfast and some time at leisure. This afternoon, you’ll explore the intriguing temple of Ta Prohm, a World Heritage-listed site famous for its bewildering intertwined trees. Later, visit ‘Opportunities of Development thru Art’ (ODA), a Siem Reap organisation that provides education opportunities for disadvantaged children. B

Signature Experience

Rise early this morning and travel back to Angkor Archaeological Park to enjoy a special sunrise experience at Angkor Wat with drink in hand. As the sun rises over the spectacular World Heritage-listed monument, raise a bubbling glass.

Day 16. Siem Reap

Embark on your selected sightseeing activity. With the afternoon at leisure, you might like to step out and explore the city independently. Tonight, enjoy a traditional Apsara dance performance before a memorable Farewell Dinner. BD

Freedom of Choice Sightseeing

Perhaps visit the temple of Wat Preah Prom Rath and participate in a Buddhist blessing; enjoy a tuk tuk ride to the Senteurs d’Angkor workshop, where you can shop for local handmade crafts; participate in a fun Apsara dance class; take off on a thrilling quad bike adventure; enjoy a leisurely bicycle tour across the Cambodian countryside; take a horse and cart ride; partake in a traditional Khmer cooking class; go on a shopping adventure; or perhaps indulge in a relaxing spa treatment.

Day 17. Depart Siem Reap.

Enjoy breakfast this morning in Siem Reap. You might like to take the time to converse with fellow travellers about all the special moments you have shared. Afterwards, say farewell to your Tour Director and other travellers, and transfer to the airport for your onward flight.

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