

# Vientiane to Chiang Rai

## Mekong Sun Cruise 11 days

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- **Itinerary Overview**
- **Includes & Excludes**
- **Detailed Itinerary**

### I. Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination
<b>Day 1</b>	Vientiane – Embarkation
<b>Day 2</b>	Natural Beauty along the mighty Mekong
<b>Day 3</b>	Natural Beauty along the mighty Mekong
<b>Day 4</b>	Pak Lay
<b>Day 5</b>	Tha Deua
<b>Day 6</b>	Kuang Si Falls – Luang Prabang
<b>Day 7</b>	The UNESCO-World Heritage town of Luang Prabang
<b>Day 8</b>	Luang Prabang – Pak Ou Caves
<b>Day 9</b>	Pakbeng
<b>Day 10</b>	Pak Tha
<b>Day 11</b>	Pak Tha – Chiang Rai – farewell

### II. Includes & Excludes

**Inclusion:**

- 10 overnights in selected cabin type aboard your boutique river cruise ship Mekong Sun
- Local English- and/or German speaking guides
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Tours and transfers as mentioned, by air-conditioned vehicles
- Water in the vehicles and on the ship
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Coffee, tea, and table water during meal times onboard your boutique river cruise ship
- Presentations and lectures onboard by the cruise director
- Transfers from/to Chiang Rai and Vientiane airports or hotels within city limits (only guaranteed if information was correctly provided 4 weeks prior to embarkation, at the latest).

**Exclusion:**

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

### III. Detailed Itinerary

#### Day 1 Vientiane – Embarkation

Vientiane we meet you at the airport or pick you up in your hotel in town around 2pm. After a short sightseeing program to highlights of the Lao capital such as the Pha That Luang temple and the Wat Sisaket Monastery, you board the Mekong Sun, a comfortable new cruise vessel, in the evening. This unique vessel is German-Laotian owned and outfitted with stylish cabins. Settle into your accommodations and unpack for a twelve-day cruise. Enjoy the spacious decks or onboard lounge, and join this evening's welcome reception and dinner. A selection of Asian and European food will be provided throughout the cruise.

All overnights are spent aboard your boutique cruise ship.

Meals: Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

#### Day 2 Natural Beauty along the mighty Mekong

This morning you start your spectacular river cruise upstream to formerly inaccessible parts of the Mekong. Enjoy the comfort onboard the boat, with its fine service and exclusive, yet casual setting,

which you share with a limited number of fellow guests. During the next days you will take exciting excursions, both on water and on land, and enjoy an onboard programme of presentations, talks, and film documentaries on relevant topics, such as the French Mekong Expedition of the 1860s, the daily life of a Buddhist novice monk, or the flora and fauna of the Mekong region. A visit to a small riverside community acquaints you with the life of the local Lao people. At night you anchor at a secluded sand or river bank.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

### **Day 3**      **Natural Beauty along the mighty Mekong**

This morning you start your spectacular river cruise upstream to formerly inaccessible parts of the Mekong. Enjoy the comfort onboard the boat, with its fine service and exclusive, yet casual setting, which you share with a limited number of fellow guests. During the next days you will take exciting excursions, both on water and on land, and enjoy an onboard programme of presentations, talks, and film documentaries on relevant topics, such as the French Mekong Expedition of the 1860s, the daily life of a Buddhist novice monk, or the flora and fauna of the Mekong region. A visit to a small riverside community acquaints you with the life of the local Lao people. At night you anchor at a secluded sand or river bank.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

### **Day 4**      **Pak Lay**

Your specially designed river vessel allows you to go on this remarkable voyage quite comfortably, something that previously was unthinkable. You travel some 800 km through delightful riverscapes, passing aboriginal villages and visiting World Heritage Sites. You discover some of Southeast Asia's last unknown regions. Upstream you stop at the small riverside community of Pak Lai, where the local market with its many exotic offerings is quite a sight. Back aboard, you take in the passing river scenery from the safety and comfort of your exclusive river vessel. You spend the night aboard the vessel close to the Thai-Laotian border.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

### **Day 5**      **Tha Deua**

During and after breakfast on board, you enjoy the view and will perhaps see local fishermen along the shore while continuing along the "mother of all waters", as the locals call the Mekong River. You meet

the residents of a small riverside village, which guests on Mekong cruises have often chosen to sponsor. Today you also pass the much-discussed Sayaboury hydropower dam project. An afternoon presentation about the Mekong River and its future by your cruise director supplies background information on this huge construction site and the differing opinions about it held by the countries along the river, the Mekong River Commission, and the local residents. You also see the Mekong ferry crossing at Tha Deua, connecting the provinces of Luang Prabang and Sayaboury.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## **Day 6**      **Kuang Si Falls – Luang Prabang**

Another shore excursion takes you to the Kuang Si Falls, one of the most scenic waterfalls in Laos. This afternoon you reach Luang Prabang, the former royal capital of Laos, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The town's unique atmosphere stems from its unusual mixture of numerous temples and French colonial architecture. Begin with a walk up Phou Si Hill, which offers a spectacular sunset view over the Mekong and Khan rivers and the surrounding mountains. In the evening, enjoy strolling along the Mekong promenade or visiting the colourful night market of the local Hmong minority. Watch a traditional Bazi Ceremony and local dances during and after dinner.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## **Day 7**      **The UNESCO-World Heritage town of Luang Prabang**

Breakfast is served on board. Today the ship remains in Luang Prabang, where we take you on a full day of sightseeing, so you can truly experience the beauty of this UNESCO World Heritage town with its wonderful mix of architectural styles. Luang Prabang offers many opportunities for fine dining, so tonight you are free to choose from the numerous offerings in town or along the Mekong River.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## **Day 8**      **Luang Prabang – Pak Ou Caves**

In the early morning, you are able to observe the traditional giving of alms in the streets of Luang Prabang. Breakfast is served on board. Today you cruise further north and visit a Laotian village, where you see the traditional production of Lao-Lao, the local liqueur. After a short walk through the jungle (optional) you explore the famous Pak Ou Caves, with thousands of small Buddha statues inside the caverns. The night is spent anchored at a beautiful sandbank, surrounded by nothing but pure nature.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## Day 9 Pakbeng

The river traffic thins out as you proceed upstream, looking out over the river and its scenic beauty. With a little luck you will be able to see working elephants in action today (unless they are employed elsewhere at the time of your visit). Later in the day, you pause briefly for a look at the market town of Pakbeng.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## Day 10 Pak Tha

Today is a day to just bask in this unique environment – relax on deck, in your comfortable cabin, or in the lounge as you absorb the grandeur of this mighty river and its unspoiled natural surroundings. The landscape now shifts to lush tropical hills. Enjoy the tranquillity of northern Laos, a real retreat from the hustle and bustle of daily life back home. Cruising upsteam past this verdant backdrop, your boat now turns north, heading towards Pak Tha. You spend a last relaxing dinner and evening aboard, celebrating with a farewell dinner.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Mekong Sun Cruise

## Day 11 Pak Tha – Chiang Rai – farewell

At the small village of Pak Tha you go on a long-tail boat excursion along the Namtha River to visit a local Khmu village. The small village school enjoys frequent sponsorship by Mekong cruise guests. After reboarding your cruise vessel, you continue towards the Thai-Laotian border at Chiang Khong (Thailand) and Ban Huay Xay (Laos). The unspoiled landscape is accented by the occasional sight of small villages and local herds of cattle. In the afternoon you say goodbye to your Laotian crew, check out, and transfer across the Thai-Lao Mekong friendship bridge, where you also pass immigration. You are then transferred to your Chiang Rai hotel (within city limits) or to the airport, where frequent flights to Bangkok are available (no flights departing before 8 p.m. can be reached).

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: N/A