



VENTURE INTO VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

8 November to 1 December 2021

Personally escorted by Jacquely Turner



Vietnam and Cambodia are located in Southeast Asia and have charm that combines the old and the new. They are known for beautiful scenery, diverse cultures and friendly and hospitable people.

We will witness many ancient wonders and explore lively cities while enjoying fabulous cuisine. A highlight will be our luxury cruise along the mighty Mekong on our way to Siem Reap, our base for exploring the temples of the world heritage Angkor Wat.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

Monday 8 November 2021 Melbourne – Saigon - Hanoi (In-Flight Meals)

We shall have an early morning private coach transfer from Warragul to Melbourne for our flight to Hanoi with a stopover in Saigon. Our Vietnam-based national guide for the Vietnam portion, Mr. Le Dinh Thanh (Thom), will join us for the flight from Saigon to Hanoi. Thom has been my chosen tour guide in Vietnam for over 20 years.

We arrive in the late evening and will be transferred to the *Apricot Hotel*, or similar, for a three-night stay.



Tuesday 9 November Hanoi (B,L,D)



After breakfast, we depart the hotel for a guided tour of the Museum of Ethnology, the One Pillar Pagoda and the historic Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum compound viewed from the outside.

Lunch will be at KOTO, an Australian-funded establishment aimed at helping Hanoi street kids. After lunch, we continue on to visit the Hanoi Hilton Prison and the Vietnamese Women Museum before returning to the hotel to freshen up.

In the afternoon we leave the hotel for a one-hour tour by cyclo, riding through the bustling Old Quarter of the 36 streets and 36 wares and other major landmarks of the capital city. The cyclo tour ends at the Red Bean Central Restaurant, located in the Hanoi Old Quarter, overlooking Hoan Kiem Lake, we shall enjoy a welcome dinner. After dinner, we shall take a leisurely guided walk back to the hotel.

Wednesday 10 November Full day Bai Dinh & Trang An (B,L)

We depart early for a 2-hour private guided coach drive to Ninh Binh Province. Upon arrival, we visit Bai Dinh, the largest pagoda complex, not only in Vietnam but also in Southeast of Asia. Located on the foot hill of Dinh Mountain surrounded by amazing views of the exquisite river valley below and the limestone karsts which will take your breath away.

This pagoda boasts an array of the most massive and magnificent architecture of Vietnamese tradition. The visit will include some highlights: 500 stone statues of “La Han” (Arhat); 2 huge bronze bells: one weighs 27 tons, other weighs 36 tons; Three bronze statues of Tam The (50 tons each). At the end of the visit, we walk-up the summit mountain to see the 100 tonnes statue of Sakyamuni Buddha made of bronze and enjoy the panoramic view.





Lunch will be at a local restaurant. After lunch, we continue to Trang An Landscape Complex, inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014, Trang An is famed for its spectacular landscape of limestone karst peaks, some of which are submerged, and surrounded by vertical cliffs.

We embark on a sampan cruise (rowed by local villagers) along the exquisite river and enjoy the views of the beautiful karst formations as we enter Hang Toi (Dark) cave, Hang Nau Ruou (Cooking wine) cave at the bottom of the mountain. Every passage brings new surprises hidden inside isolated valleys of tranquility that will transport you into another world and time. We return to Hanoi by private coach and arrive back at the hotel early in the evening.

Thursday 11 November Hanoi – Halong Bay – Lan Ha Bay (B,L,D)

We depart our hotel early and travel to Tuan Chau Marina in Halong via the new Expressway.

On arrival we will transfer by the cruise company's speedboat to *Stellar of the Seas*, our home for the next two nights. After being welcomed onboard we will enjoy a welcome drink and meet the captain and the crew, followed by a cruise briefing. We then set sail as lunch is served

As we check in to our cabins there will be time to refresh and unwind as we continue cruising through Con Vit islet, Thumb islet and Gia Luan Harbour. We will discover the natural area on the lagoon belonging to Lan Ha bay and drop anchor for swimming or you can just simply sunbathe on the cruise's sundeck.

In the early evening we shall gather on the sundeck to view sunset and enjoy a Sunset Party. It's an ideal time to make acquaintances with new friends, share your travel experience, watch the sunset or relax in the swimming pool.

Before dinner there will be time to enjoy a short cooking demonstration. The in-house chef will show you how to make famous traditional Vietnamese spring rolls. After our BBQ dinner, we can enjoy the evening activities on board which includes games, movies, and squid fishing. Spa services are also available upon request at own expense.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

Friday 12 November **Lan Ha Bay** **(B,L,D)**

For the early risers, there is a Tai Chi lesson available on the sun deck, or relax a little longer and enjoy a light breakfast. After breakfast, the boat continues cruising on the bay.

Lunch is served on board and after lunch we transfer to a speed boat to explore some unique areas such as Viet Hai Village. In the afternoon we shall take a bicycle ride to enjoy gorgeous scenery along village roads and through rain forests. We also visit a local family's house to see the daily life of local people.

We head back to the speed boat to continue cruising further in Lan Ha Bay. By mid-afternoon we arrive at Ba Trai Dao Beach area where we will have some free time for a swim. We will also have the opportunity to see a fish farm at a typical Lan Ha bay floating village.

In the early evening we re-board the *Stellar of the Seas* for some free time until a BBQ dinner is served.



Saturday 13 November **Lan Ha Bay - Halong Bay – Hanoi – Hue** **(B,L,D)**

After a Tai Chi lesson, a light local breakfast is served and we will enjoy the stunning views of the Bay and its dramatic limestone islets as we sail through the calm emerald waters heading to Dark & Bright Cave (Hang Sang & Toi). Here you have the option to either explore the cave yourselves on sea kayak or comfortably visit the cave on local bamboo boat rowed by local villagers.

Back on board by mid-morning, we will check out of our cabins before a Vietnamese cuisine lunch is served. By midday we say farewell to the crew before disembarkation. We shall transfer to Tuan Chau Marina in Halong by speedboat, when we meet our guide, Thom, and take a private guided coach transfer, via the new Expressway, to Hanoi.

On arrival in Hanoi, we visit the Bat Trang pottery village, a 14th century village near Hanoi housing local artisans who combine both traditional and modern techniques to create beautiful porcelain artworks. If time permits, we may enjoy a short & fun Bat Trang pottery class and bring home your self-made souvenir from an authentic Vietnamese potter!

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

We continue by road on to Hanoi Airport for our evening flight to Hue. On arrival, we transfer to our hotel, the *Indochine Palace Hotel*, or similar, for a two-night stay. Dinner will be at the hotel's main restaurant, La Brasserie.



Sunday 14 November

Hue

(B,D)

After breakfast, we start our cyclo trip by crossing the Perfume River on the Trang Tien Bridge, then ride along the famous Dong Ba Market and follow a branch of the Perfume River to an area surrounding the Citadel where local people have lived for generations in their old-style houses. While sitting on the cyclo, all of the activities on the street, in the shops and in the houses, just happen around you, and you can feel like you are a part of it. After the cyclo ride, we walk to the Imperial Citadel from the Noon Gate to appreciate the magnificent architecture and gardens while our guide explains about the events and the intrigue of the former royal court. Despite being bombed heavily, there are some incredibly well-preserved sections still intact and others which are being lovingly restored.

From there, we take a short private guided coach drive to the local boat pier and embark on a private boat trip along the romantically named Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda, Hue's best-preserved religious monument. Built in 1601, the seven-storied tower pagoda, perched on top of a hill overlooking the Perfume River, is one of Vietnam's most recognisable icons. We visit the pagoda then return to the hotel by private coach. Lunch will be at own arrangements.





In the afternoon, we leave the hotel for a short drive to Ben Xuan Garden House Theatre on the riverbank, which was built following royal architecture methods. The architecture of the area is striking, recalling ancient times with an intention of nostalgia. As we enter the garden, we will appreciate the fragrances of the various fruits, vegetables, and herbs maintained on the property. This is the first private theatre in Hue and the home of overseas Vietnamese singer Camille Huyen. Camille Huyen started singing at dance-hall restaurants and concerts in Paris in 1986. In 1996, she moved to Switzerland and has participated in music recitals organized by Vietnamese communities there and in France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland and other locations. Camille Huyen is not only a talented singer but also a famous artist. She was invited to exhibit her oil paintings several times around Europe.

We stroll around her stunning home and chat with her to get an insight of her effort in building a private theatre and her passion with visual and performed art. After a charming dinner a combination between Asian and European gastronomy, we then listen to some performances by Camille and her team.

Monday 15 November **Hue – Danang – Ba Na Hill - Hoi An** **(B,L,D)**

We leave Hue early this morning and drive to Ba Na Hill via the short-cut through the Hai Van Tunnel. In the old-growth forest, there are 543 species of flora and 256 species of fauna including many rare animals such as: Crested Argus, Asian Black Bear, northern buffed-cheeked gibbon. Located at an elevation of 1,487 meters, the temperature of this place is mostly cool year-round.





When we arrive at Ba Na Hills Station, we have a chance to ride on a modern system of cable cars to get a bird's-eye view of nature which is strikingly beautiful, while enjoying a feeling of flying in the blue sky among the clouds and wind. Next, we visit some old French villas as well as a suspension bridge, Nui Chua and the Mountain Peak. We will experience the feeling of walking in the clouds when we walk on the Golden Bridge which is supported by giant hands at a height of over 1,400m above sea level.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we continue on to Hoi An and check into our hotel, *Allegro Hoi An*, or similar for a three-night stay. After settling in, we shall enjoy dinner with Central Vietnamese cuisine at Ngon Villa Hoi An.

Tuesday 16 November **Hoi An** **(B,D)**

This morning after breakfast, we shall enjoy a guided walking tour of Hoi An's ancient town. This World Heritage ancient town is recognised for its well-preserved architecture, pedestrian-only streets and distinctive local cuisine, allowing visitors a glimpse of its illustrious past.

Between the 15th and 19th centuries, Hoi An known then as 'Faifo', was a prosperous trading port, attracting Chinese, Japanese, Dutch, Portuguese and Spanish ships amongst others. The narrow lanes transport us to the many atmospheric sights including: the old merchant houses with influences from Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese architecture; the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge, first built in the 1590s by the Japanese community to link them with the Chinese quarters across the stream; the Assembly Hall of the Chaozhou Chinese Congregation with its intricate woodcarvings; and the colourful market with stalls brimming with local specialties including silk which can be turned into fashionable garments within a day or two.

In the afternoon, we take a short drive to Hai Café, the Red Bridge Cooking School's meeting point, for a private cooking class. We shall enjoy a welcome drink at Hai Café, followed by a visit to Hoi An's colourful market to experience the amazing sights, sounds and aromas of this busy market. We will have the opportunity to interact with the local sellers and learn about all the ingredients that will be used in the cooking lessons. We board the Red Bridge boat for a 25-minute cruise along the Thu Bon River to the Red Bridge Cooking School past local villages along the banks of the river. On arrival at the school, we explore the school's herb garden before having our hands-on cooking experience. Dinner is at the school with the food you will have cooked!

Wednesday, 17 November Wet Rice Farm tour & Hoi An Memories Show (B,L,D)

Rice is the staple diet in many Asian countries, especially in Vietnam. Perhaps, you have seen rice growing in most of Asian rice paddy fields. However, you do not know the sequence of rice cultivation in Vietnam. It is still secret know-how for the western tourists. Through this tour, we will learn how to cultivate rice in the fields and experience the hardships of the Vietnamese farmers.



After breakfast, we travel to a nearby village and start walking or cycling to the countryside past rice paddies. We meet and interact with local farmers, learn about their daily farming life and have a cup of tea with them in the middle of the rice field farm. On arrival, we put on our farming clothes before getting into muddy rice field. Our guide will introduce and explain about the process of the wet rice growing. How the farming works and learn how to grow wet rice with water buffalo plough and to use agricultural water systems. Transplant baby wet rice at the rice field and enjoy riding on water buffalo at a small pond at the rice farm. We have a local meal with the local farmer at their house before being transferred back to our hotel early in the afternoon.

Tonight, we have an early authentic Vietnamese dinner at Home Hoi An Vietnamese Restaurant. After dinner, our coach will take us to Hoi An Impression Theme Park, a project re-imagining the thriving commercial port of Hoi An in the 16th and 17th centuries, the first destination on the road Silk at the Sea - the most famous trade route in the history of world trade, emerged.

Stroll around the park then see and feel Hoi An ancient town as it was more than 400 years ago through the amazing "Hoi An Memories" show. It is an open-air theatrical extravaganza involving a cast of up to 500 performers in an arena that can seat 3000 spectators

It is comfortably the largest and most ambitious anywhere in Vietnam.

"Hoi An Memories" showcases Vietnamese culture through a historical lens, a lens leaning heavily on Hoi An's rich past as a multi-national trading port – since the 1500s a meeting place for East and West. The setting is sprawling and magnificent, grandly depicting nearby mountains, the sodden river flood plains that typify Vietnam and the old port of Hoi An. The music is exquisite, the lighting hi-tech and the choreography superb.



Thursday 18 November Hoi An – Danang - Saigon - Cu Chi (B,L)

This morning we check out and transfer to Danang Airport for our flight to Saigon. On arrival in Saigon, we shall stop for a simple Vietnamese lunch at nearby Pho 24 restaurant, followed by a visit to Cu Chi to explore the amazing underground tunnel system built by Vietnamese guerilla fighters during the war. We return to Saigon and arrive at our hotel, the *Caravelle Hotel*, or similar for a two-night stay.

Friday 19 November Saigon & Food Night Tour by Vintage Car (B,D)

This morning we have guided exploration of bustling Saigon with visits to the Presidential Palace, the War Museum and the Ben Thanh Market.

Lunch and the afternoon are at your leisure before we get together again for a very original experience, on board the most authentic French car in history. Aboard a Citroën 2CV (or its cousin La Dalat), we drive into the mysterious heart of Saigon by night. In this legendary Citroën car, we will discover or rediscover the multi-faceted Saigon with its unsung neighborhoods, its colonial vestiges and its secret and busy streets.

This tour has a special touch which offers us a unique experience: the sound of the car engine, the convertible top which gives us a panoramic view of the city, the quaint comfort of the rear seats and the bouncing effect of the legendary suspensions of the 2 CV.

From the city's major landmarks to hidden lanes and unexpected places, we will definitely get out of the usual hackneyed neighborhoods. You will have the opportunity to taste some delicious "street food" along the way. The 2 hours and 30 minutes tour will offer us a striking overview of the city and lots of fun memories.

Saturday 20 November Saigon - My Tho – Cai Be (B,L,D)

After we check out this morning, we will transfer to the departure point for our cruise, where we can relax with a drink as the staff welcomes us and collects our details for boarding.

We bid farewell to the hustle and bustle of Saigon and travel 70 kilometers south overland to My Tho to embark on our luxury floating home for the upcoming journey along the Mighty Mekong.

After our crew warmly welcomes us, we check in to our well-prepared staterooms. The ship sets sail and a fascinating voyage along the Mekong begins. Lunch buffet is served in the restaurant while the vessel steadily glides upstream to reach the overnight spot.



VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

Make yourself familiar with all the ship facilities. Now it is time to become one with one of the largest streams in Asia. The afternoon allows you to leisurely pass time on your private balcony or join tea time at the open-air bar as the twilight bathes the Mekong Delta in a golden haze.

During the time we having dinner, the ship reaches Cai Be. It is a charming town, famous for its Catholic French church and the manufacturing of traditional crafts and food products. The floating market of Cai Be is getting smaller every year, since trading on the water is shifting more and more to the modern central markets.



We anchor mid-stream near Cai Be for dinner and moor there overnight. After dinner the lounge cinema features selected classic movies (every night). We will enjoy a wonderful seven nights on the *Jahan Cruise*

Sunday 21 November Cai Be - Sa Dec – Tan Chau (B,L,D)

Each morning, there is an invigorating Tai Chi class on the sun deck. Start your day, just as many local people do in Asia, as the sun begins its gentle glow. A sumptuous buffet breakfast is served for the perfect first exploration day in the Mekong Delta.

Our morning tour takes us to Cai Be. We can still see some boat to boat trading of local goods such as fruits and agricultural products. Our guide will explain the particularities of this long-lasting trading culture. Each boat has a special marker that lets buyers know what goods it is selling.

Cai Be is a rustic town crisscrossed by many water canals. We go on-shore to visit a workshop and learn how rice paste, rice paper, rice cookies and rice wine is manufactured. Cai Be and its surrounding areas are covered with palm trees and hence the region is also famous for the production of coconut candies. With our local boat we continue to explore the lush and green canal network and observe the farmers working in the fields.

Back on-board lunch is served. You can enjoy time for yourself then to either enjoy a true Vietnamese coffee at the bar or simply watch the life on the riverbanks floating by.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

In the afternoon, we reach the area of Sa Dec. We embark on a traditional local boat and head towards Binh Thanh Island. This island is one of the larger ones in the vast stream of the Mekong. Some communities have settled here and make their living by growing water hyacinths. We exclusively visit one of those untouched areas. By wandering through the village, we get a deep understanding of the native life. Moreover, we see the whole process of mat making. You can try weaving yourself, which is still done manually. We will meet with an elderly local couple who shares their story on this island. They are happy to engage in a conversation with you.



Back on board you may like to pamper yourself with a spa treatment or take a dip into the pool on the sun deck. Our expert guide offers a presentation on the “Life on the Mekong Delta” as the ship continues sailing to Tan Chau – near the border to Cambodia. We moor mid- stream.

Dinner is served and afterwards you can join our evening cinema session (offered every night) featuring selected classic movies.

Monday 22 November Tan Chau - Border Crossing – Phnom Penh (B,L,D)

Welcome to the fish sanctuary of Vietnam. Begin your day with a hearty breakfast at the dining hall or in the quiet privacy of your balcony. Brace yourself for a tour around Tan Chau, a pleasant, slow-paced town with a sizeable Chinese, Kinh and Khmer community.

Once on-shore we hop on “xelois” to explore Tan Chau. A “xelois” is a local vehicle which is still used as a taxi in this region. We slowly move around the streets to see all the workshops, houses and domiciles. Feel the laid-back vibes of this place. We stop at the colorful local market near one of the town’s temples. This is the best time to interact with the vendors of this friendly town to practice your bargaining skills.

We board our local boat and cruise past floating houses and finally reach a floating fish farm. This region is the source of a fish production that is sold all over the world. Here we get a deep insight on how fish farming works.

Back on board our “home” we sail towards the Vietnamese-Cambodian border. Get ready for a fascinating and leisurely cruise through the deep Cambodian countryside towards Phnom Penh.



VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

The whole afternoon is at your own arrangements. Now is the time when even the last passenger will switch into cruise mode and experience the therapeutic influence that this mighty river radiates. It is time for massages, for relaxation on the sun beds, for private balcony kick-backs - it's the time to merge with the river.

A culinary class is offered in the afternoon to sharpen your knowledge and skills on the local cuisine. Some may like to visit the bridge - the captain always has a little story to share about "his" river. Float into a state of mild bliss and join our afternoon High Tea for sweet treats before you totally drift away in relaxation.

Dinner is served before we arrive at the capital of Cambodia. In the evening, the boat docks at the pier of Phnom Penh. You are free to go for your first exploration by yourself. Stroll along the river promenade and watch the locals chit-chatting, selling odds and ends or have a drink in one of the numerous bars.



Tuesday 23 November

Phnom Penh

(B,L,D)

Welcome to Phnom Penh - once called the Paris of the East. Despite its rapid development, it has retained a lot of its rustic charm and elegance. It is an amazing town with centuries of incredible history and culture which can still be felt at many street corners.

We start with a full sight-seeing tour right after breakfast. By bus we visit the Killing Fields outside of the city and after, the centrally located prison "S21". Both historic sites display the sad and cruel chapter of Khmer history when the Khmer Rouge ruled the country with terror and suppression. Those places have not changed much since this horrific time back in the early seventies and it can be heartbreaking. Alternatively, explore the city in the morning on your own before re-joining the group.

We will have lunch at a fine restaurant in town. Our exploration of Phnom Penh continues on the fascinating cultural heritage of Phnom Penh. The golden edifice of the Royal Palace with its Silver Pagoda and the exceptional Khmer crafts at the National Museum are the afternoon highlights. The day trip ends with a "cyclo" ride back to the ship through the bustling streets of downtown Phnom Penh.



Take some rest in your spacious cabin or join other fellow passengers at the bar for some refreshing drinks before our captivating evening activities start.

We move to the lounge which is set up for a lecture about Cambodian modern history, held by a professor of the Royal University of Phnom Penh. Definitely among the highlights of this cruise receiving knowledge first hand as our lecturer has studied the subject extensively and personally.

After the lecture a barbecue dinner feast on the sun deck commences. The dinner is accompanied with an Apsara dance performance. You have to witness the brilliance and richness of this dance along with the soothing sounds of traditional music.

As the evening unwinds, enjoy your meal with a glass of wine and marvel at the skyline of Phnom Penh, and the calming flow of the Tonle River.

Wednesday 24 November Phnom Penh – Kampong Chhnang (B,L,D)

Before the sun peeks over the horizon, the cruise sets sail towards Kampong Tralach on the Tonle River, an amazingly narrow river. Gently gliding through leafy swaths of this jungle like landscape we reach Kampong Tralach. Breakfast is served before we anchor and get ready for our first Tongle discovery.

We reach the shore by local boat and cacophonous children wave enthusiastically while bringing their livestock for a bath in the meandering river. We will stop at the “Green School” which is partly supported by Heritage Lines. See all the river life, which is so different than ours – by a local ox cart ride. Lunch is served afterwards.

The ship cruises along the narrow Tonle River towards Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia’s “water world”, where everything is on sticks and balanced on water-rich soil. Perhaps it’s the most fascinating cruising spot in Cambodia.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

Back on land in Kampong Chhnang, we take mini buses to a rural village nearby for a walking tour. Our guides introduce you to the village specialties – Khmer style pottery and the making of palm sugar. Before returning to the boat we explore the floating villages and wetlands of the region. Relax back on board until dinner is served. The boat moors mid-river in the Tonle area.

Thursday 25 November Tonle River – Kampong Cham (B,L,D)

In the early morning during breakfast we sail from the lower Tonle River towards the Mekong passing their confluence at Phnom Penh. We arrive at the island of Koh Oknha Tey. This spot in the middle of the Mekong owns its fame for the manufacturing of high-class silk products. By tuk tuk we explore the island with its workshops and learn how silk is processed from its source, provided by the silk-worms, to a top-quality product made of original Cambodian silk.

Before lunch our expert guides offer a presentation about “Geography of the Mekong and Tonle Sap”. Afterwards a Monks’ blessing ceremony on board delivers spirits and wishes for our health and prosperity for all.

The ship sails towards the small Angkor Ban village up in the Mekong River. The Angkor Ban village is famous for its un-spoiled community and beautiful, traditional houses. It feels like being transported back a hundred years ago into an era unaffected by modernity. Villagers are characterized by their unbridled warmth.

Afterwards it’s time for some fun at a cocktail party on the riverbank. We continue cruising for a while until dinner is served. The boat finds its overnight spot at the riverbank of Kampong Cham.



Friday 26 November Kampong Cham (B,L,D)

After breakfast by bus we visit the enchanting pre-Angkorian temple of Wat Hanchey, built in the 7th century. The small complex sits on a hill top right on the shore with breath taking views over the Mekong.

We return to the ship for lunch and some relaxation. In the afternoon we head to the tiny, colorful monastery of Wat Nokor. Here we might get the chance to engage in light banter with some of the monks living in the area. As it is low water season, we are able to see a bamboo bridge which connects the mainland with the island. Local communities re-build the bridge every year when the water levels drop.

We continue our journey and visit a local school to understand more about the education of the young Cambodian generation (NGO project). The children here are always excited to show their skills in music and art and will bathe you in smiles upon your applause.

As the sun sets, our crew invites us for a farewell event. Enjoy some dancing and music together with the crew before dinner is served. The boat moors at the riverbank of Kampong Cham.

Saturday 27 November **Kampong Cham - Siem Reap** **(B,D)**

Enjoy your last breakfast on board our floating sanctuary. We disembark the ship and then travel by coach to Siem Reap, arriving in the early afternoon.

On arrival in Siem Reap, we shall check into our hotel, *Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa*, or similar, for a three night stay. The balance of the afternoon is at leisure.

In the late afternoon we will meet a local guide at the hotel lobby. This evening we will encounter a look back at Cambodia from 150 years of Photography! From the conception of the camera, and the lens through to the very first explorers who documented the Temples, the rise and fall of the King and the art & vibrancy of the swinging 1960s.

Tonight, we shall be a guest of the Bambu Theatre, a completely unique creation of two Expats, focused within the visual and creative modern arts of Cambodia's future generation. We will learn about the Apsara, the Royal connection and how the famous faces such as Jackie Kennedy were all caught on camera in Cambodia. Enjoy a welcome drink and a chance to encounter modern Khmer art set within a beautiful peaceful garden restaurant, exclusively the back drop for this evening's entertainment. After mixing and mingling with the other guests, and the speakers themselves, we will be led through into the aptly named Bamboo Stage for a visual and creative talk.

We shall then dine in a casual family style on some excellent BBQ & local dishes, with a flair of western flavours and engage with likeminded tourists and expats, interested in seeing and discussing the developing and rising start of Cambodia's creative industries! It all takes place in their open dining pavilion. It's a truly inspiring evening, set in a beautiful location and a chance to mix and mingle with those focused on the future that Cambodia is building.



Sunday 28 November **Siem Reap** **(B,D)**

Very early this morning we take a coach transfer to Angkor Wat. We enter the little-used eastern gate of Angkor Wat to watch the sun's first light shining down on the magnificent temple - an experience you will never forget.

Another short coach drive will take us to visit the South Gate of Angkor Thom and Bayon Temple and the Elephant and Leper King Terraces. We return to the hotel for breakfast and balance of the morning is at leisure.

In the afternoon, we visit mystical Ta Prohm, unique for the overgrown roots and the magnificent Angkor Wat Temple. We return to the hotel to freshen up before a short drive to dinner at the Damnak Lounge Fine Dining restaurant.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

After dinner, we visit the local Big Top to enjoy a uniquely Cambodian performances by Phare, The Cambodian Circus. The show is an incredible hour of traditional and modern theatre, music, dance, acrobatic, athleticism, juggling and contortion all beautifully choreographed and performed in stories about Cambodian lives and society. Not to mention the famous smiles and slapstick humour that the Cambodian people are known for.

Monday 29 November **Siem Reap** **(B,D)**

Depart from the hotel this morning for a one-hour private guided coach drive to Banteay Srei temple, the only major temple that was not built by a monarch. It was constructed in the 10th century and was dedicated to the Hindu god - Shiva. Banteay Srei translates to “Citadel of the Women” and is one of Angkor’s most significant structures as its walls are decorated with elaborate carvings which have been preserved remarkably well.



We head to the Banteay Srei Butterfly Centre, an interactive butterfly farm nestled in a luxurious tropical garden. Morning is the best time of the day to spot as many butterflies as possible. Thousands of free flying Southeast Asian species will surround you. We will also be able to learn more about their life cycle, feed them and support knowledgeable local farmers

On return to Siem Reap, we encounter Cambodia’s most exclusive Silk Farm & Weaving Company, made by invitation only. We journey to a very beautiful, exclusive working silk farm, located close to Banteay Srei. Specifically created to build skills for women in this region, the Silk farm is home to some of Asia’s most precious Silk Worms – the Golden Worms! The Farm itself is nestled in 12 hectares of mulberry tree and home to many workshops where you can learn about the process, watch the skilled craftsmanship of these women at work. You will even get to try your hand at weaving on a loom! It’s a very intricate process, from raising the increasingly rare golden silk worms through to hand-weaving the silk on traditional wooden looms; it all takes place within this fascinating environment.

The owner will talk about eir life after the war, their passion for empowering workers and the visions for Cambodia on this uniquely exclusive tour, and afterwards we will have the chance to purchase various one of a kind silk products and enjoy a cold drink.

We arrive back at the hotel early in the afternoon and balance of the afternoon is at leisure.

This evening, prepare for an exclusive sunset dining experience. We depart the hotel by coach, for an evening of farewell dining under the stars, in our own private rice field, a 15-minute drive from Siem Reap.

Upon arrival, our sala will be set apart with us as its only guests, dining under the stars as the sun sets over the fields. Drinks will be served on our arrival as we take in the most beautiful countryside location, in a rural countryside location just 15 minutes from town centre. As the light fades, our candles and lantern torch lights beam around us, as the countryside comes alive with the evening chorus of nature.

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

Drinks are served, as we enjoy our meal served at a pace suitable for us to enjoy this very unique and tailored experience. It's an unforgettable and most romantic dining experience, and the staff are on hand to photograph the moment for you, as their only guests! After dinner is served, we are invited to relax and enjoy the many different aspects of countryside living, before the coach transfers us back to our hotel.

Tuesday 30 November Siem Reap – Saigon - Melbourne (B, In-Flight Meals)

Our day is at leisure for relaxing or buying up those last-minute souvenirs. We will have use of our rooms until we check out later in the afternoon.

We shall then transfer to Siem Reap Airport for our flight home to Melbourne via Saigon

Wednesday 1 December Arrive Melbourne

On arrival in Melbourne, around 8.30am, we shall clear customs and then transfer back to Gippsland by private coach.

INCLUSIONS

- Melbourne/Saigon/Melbourne economy airfares and taxes
- Economy flights within Vietnam and Cambodia as per itinerary
- Gippsland/Melbourne/Gippsland transfers
- All airport, hotel, cruise port transfers and overland transportations between cities/towns, as per itinerary.
- Maximum group size will be 20 participants; minimum group size 15 participants
- Local English-speaking guides throughout tour
- First class hotel accommodation in twin/double bedded rooms with private facilities
- Luxury air-conditioned coach travel
- 7-night luxury Jahan Mekong River cruise including shore excursions with local guide and port taxes
- Sightseeing including entry fees and local boat trips as per itinerary
- Shore excursions during the Halong and Mekong cruises on a group basis
- All admission fees and Angkor Day Passes, when applicable, as per itinerary
- 2-night Halong Bay Stellar of the Seas cruise
- Halong port dues and Phnom Penh port dues, as per itinerary
- Cyclo ride in Hanoi
- Bat Trang pottery class at Bat Trang pottery village near Hanoi
- Cyclo tour in Hue
- Interaction, dinner and music performances at singer/artist Camille Huyen's private home and theatre in Hue
- Return cable car rides during the visit to Golden Bridge at Ba Na Hill
- Private cooking class at Red Bridge cooking school in Hoian
- Hoi An Memories show (VIP seating) at Hoi An Impression Theme Park in Hoi An
- Saigon evening food tour by vintage car (2-3 persons per car)
- Private local boat trips during the Hoa Lu & Bai Dinh day tour
- Private local boat trip on Perfume River in Hue
- "Cambodia through the lens" at Bam Bu Theatre in Siem Reap
- Private "farewell dinner under the stars" arrangements in Siem Reap
- Porterage/baggage handling fees (one suitcase per person)
- Visas to Cambodia and Vietnam
- Current VN tax, all road tolls, parking fees, local service charges & government taxes
- 56 Meals as per itinerary - 22 Breakfasts (B), 15 Lunches (L), 19 Dinners (D)
- ALL tipping/service charges of waiters/restaurant staff at included meals throughout the tour
- ALL tipping of local guides and drivers
- ALL tipping on board river cruise

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM & CAMBODIA 2021

TOTAL TOUR COST: based on cabin selection for 7-night Mekong cruise

Superior Cabin	\$12,688 per person twin share
Single supplement – additional	\$3,267 per person

Bookings received after 11 December 2020 are subject to availability.

Upgrade to cabin	Cost on application
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Upgrade to business class:	Cost on application
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**Should you wish to extend your travel arrangements after the tour, please contact me to discuss further options.

PAYMENTS:

- Non-refundable deposit of \$1000 per person to secure booking.
- Second instalment of \$3000 per person due by Monday, 3 May 2021
- Third instalment of \$2000 per person Thursday, 1 July 2021
- Balance due by Wednesday, 25 August 2021

EXCLUSIONS

- Comprehensive Travel insurance
- Optional activities
- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, telephone calls, alcoholic beverages, medical expenses.

SPECIAL NOTES

- Flight schedules are subject to change.
- The order of the sightseeing may vary depending on local conditions.

CANCELLATION FEES

- Once paid, deposit of \$1000 per person is non-refundable.
- Cancellations received 4 May 2021 onwards; cancellation fee of \$4000 per person
- Cancellations received 2 July 2021 onwards; cancellation fee of \$6000 per person
- Cancellations received 26 August 2021 onwards; 100% cancellation fee

YOUR TOUR ESCORT

Jacquey Turner has more than 36 years' experience as a highly successful travel agent and tour leader.

With this itinerary, Jacquey will guide you through this intriguing destination.

Along with the local guides she will ensure you have a most memorable journey.



GIPPSLAND TRAVEL ESCORTED TOURS - TERMS & CONDITIONS

LATE BOOKINGS

Higher deposit payments are required for late bookings. A guarantee of full payment is required at the time of booking for all bookings received within 4 weeks of departure.

BOOKINGS SOLD ON A SHARE BASIS

Bookings may be accepted on a share room basis on the proviso that the person requesting the share reservation agrees that while every effort will be made to match suitability of the passengers there is no guarantee that a share room can be provided. If a share room is not available at the time of final payment, either the single room alternative, at an additional cost, or the cancellation conditions detailed in your itinerary will apply.

HEALTH & FITNESS

A minimum level of fitness is required to be able to participate on a Gippsland Travel Tour, you are required to at least:

- Be able to walk at least 1 hour on uneven surfaces without the use of any walking aid (walking stick for stability is acceptable)
- Walk up multiple flights of stairs and short, steep hills
- Stand for 20 minutes without needing to sit down, often in hot/humid climates
- Carry your own hand luggage / handle your own suitcase when portage is not supplied eg. at airports.
- Get on and off various modes of transport without assistance, including small boats. Assistance will be offered where necessary.

Passengers must inform us of any medical conditions which may affect your ability to participate in the tour. At our discretion we can exclude you in a tour or in any activity if we consider that you are unable to safely participate in that tour or activity or if we consider your participation may place the safety of other guests at risk.

PASSPORT and VISA

A valid passport is required for all international travel.

If you do not hold an Australian passport, you may require a resident return visa.

Some countries require a visa to be issued before you depart Australia.

Gippsland Travel will advise you of all passport and visa requirements for this tour.

UNUSED PORTION OF THIS TOUR

We regret refunds will not be given for any unused activities of this tour, such as meals, entry fees, accommodation or transfers.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

Occasionally circumstances beyond the control of Gippsland Travel make it necessary to change airlines, hotels or amendments to daily activities. We will inform you of any changes as soon as they occur.

GENERAL CONDUCT

Gippsland Travel reserves the right to remove a traveller from a tour if they are acting in a way that interferes with the general operation of the tour or compromises the general enjoyment of the tour by other travellers in any way

VENTURE INTO VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA – NOVEMBER 2021

EXCLUSIONS

- Travel insurance (a surcharge may apply for passengers over 70 years or if there is a pre-existing medical condition)
- Optional activities
- Expenses of a personal nature like laundry, telephone/fax calls, alcoholic beverages, medical expenses.

SPECIAL NOTES

- Flight schedules are subject to change.
- The order of the sightseeing may vary depending on local conditions.
- Should you wish to extend your travel arrangements after the tour, please contact me to discuss further options.

ITINERARY VARIATIONS

Gippsland Travel reserves the right to amend the hotels, itinerary and excursions if deemed advisable or necessary due to adverse weather conditions, road conditions or other unforeseen circumstances. Any necessary alternative arrangements will be made to a similar standard.

FLIGHT SCHEDULES

Airlines schedules are subject to change without notice. Voluntary date changes will incur fees. Gippsland Travel is not liable for delays or disruption of air travel.

FORCE MAJEURE

Force Majeure means the occurrence of an event that is beyond Gippsland Travel's reasonable control and which could not have been reasonably prevented by Gippsland Travel, which includes but is not limited to; (a) war, armed conflict, criminal damage, riot, civil strife, industrial dispute, terrorist activity or the threat of any such acts, pandemic, epidemic; (b) natural disaster (including but not limited to flooding, fire, earthquake, landslide), adverse weather conditions, high or low water levels; (c) nuclear or other industrial accident causing environment pollution or contamination; or (d) change in law, meaning, enactment, amendment (including repeal) in the law or administration of any law in Australia or any jurisdiction or territory, relevant to the booking contract, which includes changes in statute, regulation, determination, by-law, declaration, license and the common law as applicable from time to time.

TERMINATION OF BOOKING CONTRACT OR CHANGE OF TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS DUE TO FORCE MAJEURE

If Gippsland Travel, in its reasonable opinion, considers that any Force Majeure event prevents Gippsland Travel (whether directly or through its employees, contractors, subcontractors and agents) from lawfully or safely providing any products or services subject of the booking contract with you, Gippsland Travel may immediately by written notice; (a) terminate the booking contract (in whole or part of); or (b) change your travel arrangements as reasonably practicable to ensure your safety and invoice for any additional costs.

LIMITATION OF LIABILITY IN THE EVENT OF FORCE MAJEURE

In the event of a Force Majeure event making it impossible or unsafe for Gippsland Travel to deliver all or part of the holiday package, Gippsland Travel will refund the customer for the unperformed part of the holiday package less any reasonable losses incurred before cancellation. Losses may amount to a substantial proportion of the booking price. Gippsland Travel will use reasonable endeavours to minimize losses incurred by customers.