



Mekong Prestige II

Military and Medical History Tour and Cruise
in Vietnam and Cambodia
17 January - 2 February 2019



Jon Baines
tours



Angkor Wat

This journey examines the long medical and military histories of the lands of the Mekong, Vietnam and Cambodia. It combines a tour through Vietnam with a seven-night cruise along the Mekong into Cambodia and a final two nights in Siem Reap, to explore the temples of Angkor Wat. There are a number of specialist visits and talks on this journey providing real insight into the medical and military histories of Vietnam and Cambodia. It is possible to join the group in Saigon on the 23rd January and take the cruise and the Cambodia portion only. The tour is limited to 20 participants and the cruise to 32.

The tour begins in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi with a walking tour through the vibrant Old Quarter. Walk through Hanoi's '36 Streets' where each street is named after the produce that was sold there – hence you may find yourself leaving Silver Street to enter Lacquer Street via Bamboo and Silk Streets. Continue to Hoan Kiem Lake and enjoy a welcome dinner that evening.

The following day embark on a sightseeing tour, including the One Pillar Pagoda, the ornate Hanoi Opera House and the Hoa Lo Prison (the infamous 'Hanoi Hilton'). In the afternoon meet with a veteran army doctor who was on the front line during the Vietnam/US conflict and hear

first-hand how traditional pain relief methods such as acupuncture were used in battle when morphine supplies ran out. Have dinner that night at KOTO, an Australian-Vietnamese charity, and learn about their inspiring initiatives with street children.

The following morning fly to Hue, Vietnam's former capital. In the afternoon visit the Duc Son orphanage, run by Buddhist nuns, which provides a home and schooling to over 200 underprivileged children. Explore the Royal Tomb of one of the last Emperor's, Khai Dinh, an advocate of cooperation with the colonial ruler, France.

Hue was close to the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) where much of the fighting of US/Vietnam conflict took place. The following morning take



Hanoi Opera House



Hue Citadel (top); Rooftop escape route, Reunification Palace (above)

a guided tour of Hue Citadel, accompanied by a veteran of the TET Offensive. The vast citadel was at the centre of the TET offensive and its huge outer walls still bear the scars of battle. That afternoon cruise along the Perfume River, with a stop at the elegant Thien Mu Pagoda to see a daily prayer recital.

Continue south to the hurly burly of Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as it is still often referred to by its inhabitants. Visit the French era Notre Dame Cathedral and the palatial Central Post Office. Finish the day with drinks on the rooftop bar of the Rex Hotel where the international press corps were briefed by the US military on the progress of the war. These briefings became known as Five O' Clock Follies.

The following day see the rooftop of the former CIA building, where in 1975 members of the former regime attempted to get on the final helicopter before Saigon fell. Visit the former Presidential Palace, a combination of luxurious reception rooms and reinforced bunkers and

continue onto the War Remnants Museum. In the afternoon visit a War Photographer's Private Gallery* and meet with the photographer. Have a drink at the historic Continental Hotel where Graham Greene wrote "The Quiet American".

Next morning drive out visit the Cu Chi Tunnels, an immense network of connecting underground tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the war. The tunnel complex included underground hospitals. Return to visit the Fito Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine.

Drive to the Mekong Delta and the charming town of My Tho and visit Cholon Market. That afternoon board the Mekong Prestige II and start the seven day cruise along the Mekong. The cruise includes shore excursions and onboard talks. The next day arrive at Cai Be and visit a floating market and French Gothic Cathedral. At Sa Dec see the house of the Chinese lover of the French author Marguerite Duras (now a small museum). Continue to the Cao daist Temple and stroll through the local market.

Arrive at the small town of Tan Chau the next morning and transfer onto small boats to visit the local workshops and take a rickshaw ride around the town. The following morning arrive in Phnom Penh. The capital city of Cambodia still retains its old French colonial architecture in riverside streets. Visit the Royal Palace, the Silver Pagoda and the National Museum with an outstanding display of Khmer crafts. In the afternoon, visit the former High School "S21", converted to a detention center under the Khmer Rouge and now known as the Museum of Genocide.



Cai Be floating market



Bayon Temple and the romantic ruins of Ta Prohm - still intertwined with enormous tree roots hundreds of years old – in time for sunrise. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then set out to visit Angkor Thom and the city of Angkor Wat, which represents one of humankind’s most astonishing architectural achievements. At its peak Angkor is thought to have contained upwards of a million people, making it the largest city in the world at that time. Spend the rest of the afternoon at leisure before the farewell dinner at the Foreign Correspondents Club. The next morning transfer to the airport for your return flight.



Cruise from Phnom Penh to Chong Koh located on Silk Island. Visit this silk weaving village, the local workshops and a primary school. Cruise past the Mekong’s timeless villages and see river life unfold. Return to Phnom Penh and with the afternoon at leisure. After a morning cruise, transfer to Oudong, the former capital city of Cambodia, between 1618 and 1866. Explore the town, the charming Vipassana Dhura Pagoda and the Wat Kampong Leu Pagoda to see the beautiful wall paintings.

Cruise along the Tonle Sap River, which connects the Mekong River to the Tonle Lake. Arrive at Kampong Chhnang, a busy rural port town with bustling markets. Then board local boats to visit a floating village. Cross the lake the next morning and disembark the Mekong Prestige II and drive to Siem Reap. In the afternoon visit the acclaimed Land Mine Museum (our supported project, see inside back) and learn of their work. Rise early the following morning to visit the

Along the Mekong (top); Royal Palace, Phnom Penh, Ta Prohm (above)

Itinerary 17 January - 2 February 2019

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

2 nights Hanoi – 2 Nights Hue – 3 nights Saigon – 7 nights River Cruise – 2 nights Siem Reap

Pre Cruise Halong Bay Extension – please contact us for details

17 Jan (Thurs) Hanoi **D**

Am Arrive and transfer to the Movenpick Hotel

Pm A walking tour of Hanoi's '36 Streets' and Hoan Kiem Lake

Eve Welcome dinner at Le Tonkin

18 Jan (Fri) Hanoi **B D**

Am Continue exploring Hanoi including the Hanoi Opera House, Hoa Lo Prison (Hanoi Hilton) and the One Pillar Pagoda

Pm Meet with Veteran army doctors and learn of their experiences

Talk: "Vietnam's Wars"

Eve Dinner at KOTO

19 Jan (Sat) Hanoi / Hue **B D**

Am Fly to Hue and transfer to the Hotel Saigon Morin

Pm Visit the Duc Son orphanage and visit the Imperial mausoleum of Emperor Khai Dinh

20 Jan (Sun) Hue **B D**

Am Guided tour of Hue Citadel accompanied by a veteran of the Tet Offensive

Pm Visit Thien Mu Pagoda to see a service. Cruise back to the hotel by dragon boat along the Perfume River

Eve Dinner at Y Thao

21 Jan (Mon) Hue – Saigon **B D**

Am Fly to Saigon and transfer to the Sofitel Plaza Hotel

Pm Visit Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office

22 Jan (Tue) Saigon **B D**

Am Visit the Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum and see the former CIA building

Pm Visit the War Photographer's Private Gallery* and meet with the photographer. Have a drink at the historic Continental Hotel

23 Jan (Wed) Saigon **B D**

Am Visit the Cu Cui Tunnels with a veteran

Pm Visit the Fito Museum of traditional Vietnamese Medicine

Those joining the Cruise & Cambodia portion join the group

24 Jan (Thurs) Saigon - My Tho **B D**

Am Drive to My Tho via the Cholon Market

Pm Embark on the Mekong Prestige II river cruise. Talk *"Pasteur's Legacy in Indochina"*

25 Jan (Fri) Cai Be - Sa Dec **B L D**

Am Take a morning junk trip around Cai Be to visit a floating market

Pm Arrive at Sa Dec. See the house of Marguerite's Chinese lover, now small museum. Visit a Cao daist Temple and stroll through the colourful local market

26 Jan (Sat) Tan Chau, border crossing **B L D**

Am Transfer on small boats to visit local workshops, walk in the village and take a rickshaw

Pm Cruising in Cambodia. Talk *"Ghosts in the Jungle, Psychological Warfare in Vietnam"*

27 Jan (Sun) Phnom Peng **B L D**

Am Visit the Royal Palace, the Silver Pagoda and National Museum

Pm Visit the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocide (OR at leisure)

28 Jan (Mon) Koh Chong – Phnom Penh **B L D**

Am Sail from Phnom Penh to Silk Island. Visit a silk weaving village, Pagoda and a primary school

Pm Cruise back to Phnom Penh. Visit the Pasteur Institute*

29 Jan (Tues) Oudong – Kampong Tralach **B L D**

Am Cruise along the Mekong Talk: *"Helicopters and Medical Evacuations"*

Pm Visit Oudong, the former capital city of Cambodia

30 Jan (Wed) Kampong Chhnang **B L D**

Am Sail along the Tonle Sap River, connecting the Mekong River to Tonle Lake

Pm On Tonle Lake board local boats to visit the floating village

31 Jan (Thurs) Tonle - Siem Reap **B D**

Am Disembark and transfer to the Foreign Correspondents Club hotel

Pm Visit the Cambodia Land Mine Museum

1 Feb (Fri) Siem Reap **B D**

Am Early start to visit the Bayon and Ta Prohm for sunrise

Pm Visit the Angkor Wat complex

Eve Drinks and Dinner at the FCC

2 Feb (Sat) Siem Reap **B**

Am Depart for the airport

* Visits to the Photography Gallery and the Pasteur Institute are subject to conditions on the day.

All itineraries are subject to change according to local conditions.



Sun Deck, Mekong Prestige II

Mekong Prestige II (Mekong Cruise Ship)

A stylish new ship, the Mekong Prestige II combines traditional comfort with the elegance of Indochina. The ship has 32 cabins on two decks, main and upper. Standard cabins (on both decks) are 20 m² (215 Sq. Ft) with en-suite bathrooms and French private balconies, (large windows and sliding glass doors). The two Junior Suites (Main Deck), have a larger private balcony. The two Deluxe Suites (Main Deck) are 47 m²(537 sq. ft.) with a private balcony and separate living area. The ship has a Sun Deck covering the whole top deck with deckchairs and a whirlpool.

Movenpick Hotel (Hanoi)

A comfortable and contemporary upmarket hotel with a good location and efficient service.

Saigon Morin (Hue)

This is a beautifully restored colonial era hotel situated on the Perfume River. The spacious rooms have high ceilings and there is a lovely pool.

Sofitel Plaza Hotel (Saigon)

A tranquil luxury 5-star hotel in a quiet enclave just steps from the city center. The hotel includes an award-winning French restaurant, L'Olivier, pool and spa.

Foreign Correspondents Club (Siem Reap)

FCC (Foreign Correspondents Club) was once used by journalists and is now an understated boutique hotel with an excellent restaurant. The old French colonial governor's mansion has been updated, but maintains its historic charm.



Saigon Morin (top); The Foreign Correspondents Club (above)

Tour leader and speaker

Dr Paul Luckin AM MB.BCh.(Rand.), D.A.(S.A.), F.F.A.(S.A.), M.MED.ANAESTHESIA (Natal), FANZCA is an anaesthetist in Brisbane. He started training in rescue as an ambulance paramedic in Tasmania before studying medicine in South Africa. Paul served on the Tasmanian Ambulance Service Medical Advisory Council, was Director of the Advanced Airway Management Training Program and was President of Royal Life Saving Society Tasmania Branch.

As a Captain in the Royal Australian Naval Reserve, Paul has served in Bougainville, East Timor, the Solomon Islands, in the Resuscitation and Retrieval Team for the victims of the Bali bombs, in the first medical team into Banda Aceh following the tsunami, and in Afghanistan. He is Medical Director, Medical Services Branch, St John Ambulance Queensland, and has been invested as a Commander of the Order of St John (CStJ).

For his work in SAR, in 2006 Paul received the Australian National Search & Rescue Award, and in 2015 he was made a Member of the Order of Australia, AM, for significant service to the community through emergency medicine, and as an authority on survivability in search and rescue operations.

“Paul Luckin was an absolutely amazing tour leader and I would highly recommend Jon Baines use him again.”

Mark S. Schulman, Medicine in Vietnam, 2016

Project

The Cambodia Landmine Museum seeks to educate on landmine removal. The Museum has a large collection of cleared landmines and tells the story of one Khmer man, Aki Ra, who disarmed the majority of these landmines alone. The Museum also educates and supports over two dozen at-risk Khmer children. The tour will be making a donation to the museum and relief center.

The ground only cost of the whole journey is US \$5320 per person sharing

The cost includes:

- Nine nights' accommodation in first class or boutique hotels
- Seven night's accommodation on the first-class Mekong Prestige II from Saigon to Siem Reap on a Main Deck Cabin with private facilities
Single supplement is US \$2066 per person
Supplement per person for an Upper Deck Cabin US \$268 per person
Supplement per person for a Junior Suite US \$607 per person
Supplement per person for a Terrace Suite US \$980 per person
- Tour leader (Dr Paul Luckin)
- Breakfast and lunch or dinner daily on the tour with water
- All meals on the cruise with Mineral Water, non-alcoholic beverages, local beers and local wine during meals
- All professional and cultural visits as per the itinerary, including entrance fees
- Internal flights
- All transport within Vietnam and Cambodia
- An experienced national English speaking guide in Vietnam (Lam) and Cambodia and local guides on all shore excursions
- Mineral water daily
- All tips throughout

The ground only cost of the cruise and Siem Reap only per person sharing is US \$3766 per person

Single supplement is US \$1593 per person

Costs include all above



Central Post Office, Saigon

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.

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Cycling to Market, Saigon (top); Imperial Mausoleum, Hue;
Floating Market on the Mekong; The Bayon, Siem Reap (above)



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