

Jayavarman Cruise

<http://www.jayavarmancruise.com>

Downstream: Siem Reap - Saigon (8 Days/7 Nights downstream)

Day 1: Siem Reap - Tonle Sap Lake

Tonle Sap Lake is the heart of Cambodia. It is filled with more fish than any other lake, and surrounded by vast numbers of rare birds. The water level varies a great deal according to the time of the year and the amount of rainfall recorded. Thus, changes may occur for the different seasons. We will start our journey in either high water or low water.

High water program (approx. between July and middle of December)

At 11:00 AM gather at the meeting point and transfer to The Jayavarman, where the crew is looking forward to embracing our guests. Welcome cocktail and lunch on the cruise liner. The Jayavarman sets sail towards the little known stilt village of Kampong Phluk. Climb aboard small rowing boats and let the local children take you on a tour of this flooded forest.

Welcome dinner on the Sun Deck. Mooring and overnight on the lake.

Low water program (approx. between middle of December and June)

At 8 AM, gather at the meeting point and transfer by coach to Prek K'Dam on the Tonle Sap River. Enjoy snacks and cold drinks on the way with a brief stop at Kampong Thom, one of the first settlements in the pre-Angkorian period.

Embarkation in Prek K'Dam and welcome cocktail early afternoon. The Jayavarman sets sail upstream towards Kampong Chhnang and the great Tonle Sap Lake. We wind our way through the jungle and as the river narrows, it makes you feel at peace with yourself and the community. Later that evening meet your fellow passengers on board for Welcome Dinner on the Sun Deck

The ship moors midstream overnight.

Day 2: Tonle Sap - Kampong Chhnang - Kampong Cham

High water program

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Before the sun rises, The Jayavarman sets sail to cross the Tonle Sap Lake. As the ship is about to exit the lake, the marshlands exhibit spectacular scenery along the river banks of Kampong Chhnang province. We take a truly wonderful motorboat excursion from Kampong Chhnang to see the wetlands, floating houses and fish farms in the region. Join in on a humanitarian project lead by World Bank Illiteracy projects when we make a stop at a Heritage Line sponsored floating school to interact with the children and teach them some English!

The afternoon cruise will follow the meandering Tonle Sap River, which narrows through leafy swaths of the South East Asian Jungle touching Phnom Penh. In the late afternoon we enter the upper Mekong River bound to Kampong Cham to stop for a walk through a rural village.

Low water program

Kampong Chhnang is a busy rural port town with bustling markets and lots of children to greet us on our way around. We will take a wonderful motor boat excursion into the wetlands that form the mouth of the river. Here a stunning variety of birdlife may be seen and of considerable interest are the great fish traps, some half a kilometer long, which net a huge tonnage of fish after each monsoon as the fish migrate from the falling lake into the Tonle Sap River. Make a stop at a Heritage Line sponsored floating school to interact with the children and teach them some English!

The afternoon cruise will follow the meandering Tonle Sap River, which narrows through leafy swaths of the South East Asian Jungle.

Day 3: Kampong Cham - Wat Hanchey

Wake up in the wee hours of the morning, truly energized to embark on a journey upriver to the pre-Angkorian temple of Wat Hanchey. Located at the top of a hill overlooking the river, it offers some of the best views in Cambodia. Dating from the 8th century, these ancient structures do justice to the architecture of the Chenla Empire which predated the glories of the mighty Angkor. Enjoy spectacular views of the surrounding well organized rice paddy plains, as well as a travelers blessing performed by the local monks.

After lunch and a short cruise downstream we drop anchor at the shores of Kampong Cham. Visit Wat Nokor, a wat built within the ruins of an ancient temple

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that holds a timeless story. Then, travel to the Cheung Kok Ecotourism Village, a small village developed with support from Assistance Mediation Internationale (AMICA). Travelers can visit the village and take part in activities to experience village life. Profits from tourism go towards re-investment into long-term projects. Back on board The Jayavarman sets sail towards the capital Phnom Penh.

Day 4: Phnom Penh

Get up early in the morning to witness a truly indescribable scene while approaching Phnom Penh's river promenade. After breakfast, embark on a city tour in this dynamic, historical capital of Cambodia which has retained its French colonial charm. Sightseeing in the morning will include the dazzling white and gold architecture of the Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda, outstanding displays of Khmer crafts at the National Museum and the temple of a hill - Wat Phnom.

After lunch in a local restaurant, examine the painful, heart wrenching reminders of Cambodia's ugly past under the Khmer Rouge regime with an excursion to the Genocide museum to learn more about the Cambodian civil war. Introduction and onsite lecture by a local history professor.

Thereafter, to ease the nerves a variety of cocktails will be at your disposal, followed by Cambodia's traditional and opulent Apsara dance performance. Experience the brilliance and richness of the culture, the soothing sounds of traditional music, the calming scent of incense stick and a delicious Khmer food buffet.

Day 5: Phnom Penh - border crossing

Wake up to the sun rising over the Mekong for Tai Chi on the Sun Deck. The Jayavarman then casts off for a day of cruising the main Mekong Channel. This is pretty much an international shipping route. Psyche yourself up for Pre-K Touch, a lively jungle village. After that, visit well laid out fruit orchards.

Late afternoon we set off to the Vietnamese border for the usual formalities, which in this part of the world takes a bit of time. During the afternoon cruise, take the time to relax on the Sun Deck, get a massage in the Spa, or take part in Heritage Line's Vietnamese cooking class.

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The ship moors midstream overnight.

Day 6: Chau Doc - Cai Be

Welcome to the circus of fish. Brace yourself for a boat excursion to the exciting floating villages and catfish farms witnessing masses of Bassa fish being fed, hand in hand with a shore excursion to the village of the local Muslim Cham community. Stroll through a silk weaving village and observe beautiful textiles being woven on old wooden looms; a tradition that has been passed from generation to generation.

Take a ride through this fascinating town of rich French colonial architecture and see its bustling market flooded with tropical fruits in full display by women in cone shaped palm leaf hats.

By late-afternoon, The Jayavarman casts off, heading towards Cai Be.

Day 7: Cai Be

Today's tour starts with the visit of Cai Be's colorful floating market on board a traditional sampan, the Cai Be Princess. Cruise among local sampans coming from all provinces of the delta full of fruits and vegetables. During a 40 minute cruise, discover beautiful landscapes along the river and observe the typical Mekong Delta rural life. Further stops will allow you to see traditional brick and tile factories and how locals use palm leaves for houses. Cruise 20 minutes further to Phu An hamlet passing by Cai Be's beautiful gothic cathedral. Visit some interesting home factories to see how rice paste, rice cookies and coco candies, are made, along with the longan fruit drying process.

Lunch will await you at Le Longanier, a superb Indochinese villa located in a lush tropical garden by the river, surrounded by fruit orchards. After lunch, hop on a bike or take a stroll along the winding canals of this peaceful village to experience it first hand. After touring the canals, head to the An Kiet ancient house to have tea with the descendants of the former imperial residents and listen to the family story. Board The Jayavarman for a relaxing evening cruise with a Farewell Dinner on the Sun Deck while heading towards My Tho.

Day 8: My Tho

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Your cruise with The Jayavarman comes to a close as the ship winds its way to My Tho which is located 70km South of Saigon on the upper Mekong river in Vietnam.

Disembark at around 9:00am and continue your journey in the buzzing city of Saigon.