



Kosher River Cruises – Mekong Cruise Information

Important Information

To assist you preparing for your journey, below we have listed some important information which you may find useful. We encourage you to read all of the following information carefully before your departure. Please note that this information is correct at the time of compilation however is subject to change and is provided as a guide only.

Information and Queries

Kosher River Cruises: For any queries or questions prior to your departure please contact KRC at +1 310-237-0122 or your travel agent.

Pre-Tour: Cambodia (airport transfers) and pre tour: Trails of Indochina – telephone and WhatsApp (+855) 77 878743

The Riverboat: Scenic Spirit contact

Phone: +855 775 559 93

Email: Reception.Spirit@scenic.com.au

VISA & DOCUMENTATION

It is the sole responsibility of each guest to have a valid passport and necessary visas, as well as to comply with entry, health or other requirements of the countries visited. The operator and/or their employees and their agents are not responsible for passport, visa requirements, entry, health or other requirements of the countries visited or for any loss sustained by you for failing to comply with laws, regulations, orders and/or requirements of countries visited. You must contact your Travel Agent or applicable government authorities to get the necessary documentation.

For those nationalities who require visas for Cambodia and Vietnam we have put together the following links to apply for visas and sample information for your review. Please check that your nationality requires a visa or may be exempt.

Please ensure all personal information is correctly input. It is the sole responsibility of passengers to make sure they have the correct documentation while traveling with Kosher River Cruises. Kosher River Cruises is not responsible for acquisition of visa, visa application, visa information, or purchasing of individual visas.

**Please note as with most countries; to enter Vietnam, your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your planned stay in the country.*

Below are instructions and samples taken from the government visa websites to assist you.

CAMBODIA VISA INFORMATION:

You must do the E-arrival card prior to the arrival date into Cambodia:

Link: <https://www.arrival.gov.kh/> used to apply for Cambodia E-visa. (*Notes: Cambodia E-visa cannot be used for land port border, only upon arrival by air into Cambodia*). We recommend guest acquire their visa prior to arrival in Cambodia. Visas can also be applied for at the airport upon arrival if absolutely necessary.

Ensure all personal information is correctly input. The address during visit in Cambodia is the “Scenic Spirit Riverboat”.

Personal Information

Attach Passport * (JPG, JPEG, PNG, 2MB)

Read Passport

Application Photo * (JPG, JPEG, PNG, 2MB)

Choose File

Gender *

--select--

Date Of Birth *

Choose date

Country Of Birth *

-- select --

Country Of Nationality *

-- select --

Residential Address

Residential Address

State / Province

State / Province

Address During Visit (Address In Cambodia) *

Address During Visit

Occupation *

--select--

Heard About Us From ?

--select--

Surname * None Surname

SURNAME

Given Name * None Given Name

GIVEN NAME

Telephone *

Telephone

Email *

example@mail.com

Retype Email *

example@mail.com

Please enter a correct email address. eVisa information and a certificate (.pdf) will be sent following this email. We are not liable if an email is not received due to a user error. But you can still download the eVisa certificate (.pdf) by manually clicking on "Check & Change."

Passport And Travel Detail

Passport Type *

Ordinary/Normal

Country Of Passport *

-- select --

Passport Number *

PASSPORT NUMBER

Passport Date Of Issue *

Choose date

Passport Expiry Date *

Choose date

Visa Type *

--select--

Intended Date Of Entry *

Choose date

Port Of Entry *

Phnom Penh International Airport

VIETNAM VISA INFORMATION:

You must do the E-Visa prior to arrival date into Vietnam: Vietnam e-visa application link: <https://evisa.gov.vn/>

The crossing border dates will be on 25 May 2025. However, we encourage you to input 01 or 02 days before, so the sample date begins 24 May 2025 and extends to a few days after your scheduled departure from Vietnam.

Upload your portrait photo & data passport page photo: Note instructions below: photo upload instructions of the person requiring on electronic Visa (newly taken, photo size 4x6 cm; jpg, jpeg format, size less than 2MB, a straight face, no hat, no glasses, formal clothes, white background), Only upload one/the passport data page. upload clear photos, no lost corners.

HOME E-VISA SEARCH INSTRUCTION FAQS CONTACT US Language Login

VIET NAM E-VISA APPLICATION FORM

For foreigners outside Viet Nam applying for an e-Visa personally

UTC+07:00 - 05/02/2025 10:16:50

1 Fill out the Application form 2 Review application form 3 Payment

FOREIGNER'S IMAGES

Photo of the person requesting an electronic visa (newly taken, photo size 4x6 cm, jpg, jpeg format, size <2MB, straight face, no hat, no glasses, formal clothes, white background). Only upload 1 passport data page, upload clear photos, no lost corners *

Portrait photography *



Choose file

Passport data page image *



Choose file

Ensure all personal information is correctly input:

HOME E-VISA SEARCH INSTRUCTION FAQS CONTACT US Language Login

1 Fill out the Application form 2 Review application form 3 Payment

1. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Enter name as on the ICAO line in the passport. If the passport contains only the Surname or Given names, just enter Given names.

Surname (Last name) Middle and given name (First name) Date of birth Full Only year's known Sex

Nationality Identity Card Email

Agree to create account by email

Religion Place of birth Re-enter Email

Have you ever used any other passports to enter into Viet Nam? No Yes

Do you have multiple nationalities? No Yes

Violation of the Vietnamese laws/regulations (if any) No Yes

HOME E-VISA SEARCH INSTRUCTION FAQs CONTACT US Language Login

1 Fill out the Application form 2 Review application form 3 Payment

2. REQUESTED INFORMATION

To issue e-Visa for Single-entry Multiple-entry

Grant e-Visa valid from* To*

3. PASSPORT INFORMATION

Passport* Issuing Authority/Place of issue* Type*

Date of issue* Expiry date*

Do you hold any other valid passports No Yes

4. CONTACT INFORMATION

Permanent residential address (declare in case the domestic contact address is different from the current residence)* Contact address* Telephone number*

Emergency contact

Full name* Current residential address* Telephone number* Relationship*

Please enter the correct trip / tour information we have highlighted below:

6. INFORMATION ABOUT THE TRIP

Information about the trip

Purpose of entry* Intended date of entry* Intended length of stay in Viet Nam* Phone number (in Viet Nam)

Residential address in Viet Nam* Province/city* District* Ward / commune*

Intended border gate of entry* Intended border gate of exit* Committed to declare temporary residence according to the provisions of Vietnamese laws

Note:

- According to the regulations of Vietnamese law, foreigners entering for investment must have documents proving their investment in Viet Nam as prescribed by the Investment Law; foreigners practicing as lawyers in Viet Nam must have a practice license as prescribed by the Law on Lawyers; foreigners entering for employment must have a work permit or a certificate confirming that they are not subject to work permit issuance as prescribed by the Labor Code; foreigners entering for study must have an acceptance document from the school or educational institution in Viet Nam; those entering for religious activities, journalism, healthcare, education must have permission from the competent authority.
- A person legally residing in Viet Nam is allowed to combine travel, visit relatives, and seek medical treatment without the need for permission.
- Foreigners operating in Viet Nam must comply with the purpose of entry.

Pre Tour-Overnight Phnom Penh: May 19

Himawari Hotel

313 Sisowath Quay Phnom Penh 120207 Cambodia

Tel: +855 16 931 555 | +855 16 871 767

Web: <https://www.himawarihotel.com>

Guests arriving on May 19 (or have scheduled additional nights and airport transfer through KRC) to Phnom Penh airport will be met by our representative upon exiting customs in the arrival hall. Please look out for your name and sign with Trail of Indochina (TOI). You will be transferred to your hotel where you will be met by a KRC / TOI representative and checked in. At approximately 18:00 we will meet in the hotel lobby and walk together to the Chabd House across the street for dinner and

davening. At dinner the group will be given information about the next day's schedule and timings. For those guests arriving on late flights there will be a box snack handed to you upon check-in with information about the next day's schedule.

May 20 Phnom Penh Tour and boat transfer (*tentative*): Davening & Breakfast and will take place at the Chabad house. Next, we will board our tour bus at the hotel for a morning tour program of Phnom Penh. Return to Chabad for lunch, then transfer to our riverboat (approximately 2.5hr by bus). Guest should have their suitcases downstairs before departing for breakfast. Luggage will be transferred earlier to our boat under separate transport. Please have your luggage clearly marked with your names.

Post Tour Saigon Vietnam: May 27-29

Sofitel Saigon Plaza

17 Le Duan, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tel: +84 28/38241555

Web: <https://sofitel.accor.com/en/hotels/2077.html>

SCENIC SPIRIT SHIP INFORMATION

Cabin Allocations: Please be aware that cabin allocations as per your Booking Summary are subject to change. Once on board your Cruise Director will be available should you have any queries.

Docking at Asian Ports: When docking at one of the two ports on your cruise there may be other cruise ships docking at the same place. During port stops, ships may dock side-by-side, obstructing views and requiring you to pass through other ships to embark and disembark. To embark and disembark in these circumstances, a walkway is established between neighbouring ships, and guests simply walk through to the shore.

Not all stops on your itinerary will be at berths that have existing wharf facilities. There will be multiple times when you are required to embark and/or disembark the ship via a gangway lowered from the ship directly to riverbank or into a sampan whilst at anchor. There may or may not be permanent stairs available at these locations.

You may also be required to board smaller vessels and dis-embark these smaller vessels from the ship's gangway or wharfs.

Changes in Programs: Scenic Tours Pty Ltd and Kosher River Cruises reserves the right to change vessels at any time for any reason including water level problems, excessive winds or Force Majeure event. The Mekong River is subject to extreme variations in water levels throughout the year. Every effort is made to adhere to the brochure itinerary. In rare circumstances there may be a need to deviate from the original itinerary as a result of high or low water and it may be necessary to operate part of the itinerary by motorcoach and be accommodated in hotels. Please note embarkation and disembarkation at certain ports may be over rough, uneven ground and involve a number of unsealed stairs.

Cruise Director: Whether you're looking for a local landmark or advice on a local highlight our Cruise Director or the team at Reception look forward to taking care of you and also offer helpful suggestions.

On board Language: The official language on board is English. All staff, crew and local guides speak fluent English. All announcements and lectures will be presented in English.

Currency/Exchange of Money: We offer an on-board currency exchange service. Contact Reception for more information when on board.

On board Account: All purchases are charged to your on-board account. The final bill can be settled in cash or by credit card at the end of the cruise. The currency on board the ship is the US Dollar.

Important Note: Please note **Scenic Cruise Ships are unable to accept Cash Passports, Travelex Cards or similar as they do not have a function to refund on these cards.**

Tiping: All gratuities and tipping on land tours and river cruises whilst with Kosher River Cruises are included. However, if you wish to show your gratitude for exceptional service you are welcome to do so by leaving in an envelope at Reception at the end of the cruise.

Passports: It is a requirement of the local authorities that passports be available for inspection at any time. Therefore, we will keep your passport secure in our safe at Reception.

Reception: The reception desk is staffed 24 hours a day.

Butler Service: All guests in all suites will have the benefit of our exclusive Butler service, with varying levels of service provided depending on the suite category booked. Due to the intimate nature of our Southeast Asia river cruises, our Butler service will be facilitated by our specially trained Room Attendants. Please refer to the in-cabin information for further details.

Cabin Service: The mini bar will be restocked daily. Please advise if you require any additional drinks in your cabin. Our housekeeping staff are available to serve you at any time.

Tea/Coffee: The making of tea and coffee in cabins is prohibited by law for safety reasons.

Dining: It is our pleasure to provide a Maitre d' seating service for your convenience and comfort at the Crystal Dining Restaurant for all meals. We operate an open seating service. Having a free choice of seating allows you to join friends for dinner as you wish.

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner are a full buffet service offering a wonderful selection of hot and cold dishes. Wine is included during the lunch and dinner service.

Dietary Requests: If you have special dietary requests, please advise your travel agent or Kosher River Cruises at least two months prior to departure and also advise your Cruise Director on board. Please note that facilities to accommodate special dietary requests on board are limited and, while the chefs will try to accommodate requests, no guarantees can be made.

Beverages: Scenic provide an additional specialised tea and coffee service for your enjoyment at no additional charge. This self-service, state-of-the-art facility is located in the lounge and available at your convenience.

Complimentary Beverages: Enjoy complimentary drinks^ at any time of the day on board your Scenic Cruise Ship. From kosher wines, boutique beers, barista coffee and soft drinks, you can enjoy the complimentary drinks at any time whilst on board your Ship. ^Excludes, selected wines and spirits, please refer to your service staff on board for complete details. Scenic does adhere to a responsible service of alcohol and does reserve the right to refuse service. Please note complimentary beverages are not available during any land excursions.

Air Conditioning and Heating: All cabins have individually controlled air conditioning, allowing you to regulate the temperature to your own needs.

Electricity: On board electricity is 220 volts. Your cabin is equipped with International and European style power points in both your cabin and bathroom.

Safe: There is a safe in every guest cabin. Please contact reception or housekeeping staff for assistance. Please remember to remove all items from the safe before disembarking the vessel at the end of your cruise.

Telephone: With your cabin telephone you may call cabin to cabin (outside calls are not permitted).

Television: For your enjoyment we feature state-of-the-art satellite televisions and in house movies. For technical reasons reception may be interrupted during parts of the journey.

Internet: The internet on the ships is intermittent. Connectivity is variable and is impacted by bridges, locks and mountains etc. The internet is not broadband speed and cannot be used to download large amounts of data (including videos, music, Skype, Viber etc).

Dress Code: Keeping in mind the weather conditions in Asia, a casual atmosphere prevails during the day either on excursion or on board the ship. There will be times when you will need to cover your knees and shoulders for certain shore and temple visits. For the evening meal we have a recommendation of a collared shirt and trousers for the gentlemen and smart casual evening attire for the ladies. However, on more formal occasions you may wish to dress accordingly. Please note shorts are not appropriate for evening meals in the Crystal Dining Restaurant.

Bathrobes: You will be provided with a Scenic bathrobe in your cabin for the duration of the cruise.

Laundry Service: We provide an on-board laundry service for a fee. A self-service laundry is available on Gem Deck. There are no dry-cleaning facilities on board.

Royal Panorama Suite - Guests in our Royal Panorama suites will receive a complimentary washing and pressing laundry service whilst on board your Scenic Cruise Ship.

Diamond Deck guests - Guests booked on the Diamond deck will receive a complimentary service of two pressed pieces of clothing per day whilst on board your Scenic Cruise Ship. Additional laundry can be taken to the self-service laundry on Gem deck.

Travel Irons: Use of travel irons in cabins is prohibited by law for safety reasons. There is a pressing service available on board at a charge.

Hairdryers: There is a hairdryer in every guest cabin.

Smoking: Smoking is not permitted inside any of the motorcoaches or on board the Scenic River Cruise Ships. Inclusive of the public areas, smoking is not permitted in the cabins or on the private balconies. A small, designated area on the Sun Deck is available for those who require this facility.

Entertainment: The daily cruise entertainment schedule will be provided once on board.

Library: You may borrow books from the ship's library, free of charge. Please return any books that you have borrowed before the end of the cruise.

Hairdresser: On Scenic Spirit, our hairdresser is available while in Phnom Penh in the salon located on the Gem deck. You can make an appointment for a selection of hair services with Reception.

Massage: The massage facilities are located in our wellness room on the Gem Deck. You can make an appointment with Reception.

Gift Shop: Daily essentials from toothpaste to shaving items may be purchased from our on-board shop located on Jewel Deck. Logo and gift items are also available in the shop.

General Information and Shore Touring

Travel Insurance****

We strongly advise guest to take out travel insurance to cover any unforeseen circumstances which may arise including, but not limited to; sickness, medical expenses and repatriation, cancellation fees, loss of luggage, travel disruptions, emergency evacuation, early return following death of a relative as defined in the respective proposal forms. It is recommended to take your travel insurance documents with you.

Travel Documents

We suggest that you carry photocopies of all your important travel documents (information and any visa pages of your passport, airline tickets, credit card numbers, travel insurance policy, emergency contact information, etc) in a packet separate from the originals. It is also advised you leave a copy of all your important travel documents with a friend or family member. Bringing along a few passport sized photos is also recommended. A photocopy of the front page of your passport and any visa pages of your passport is to be given to your Tour Director at the start of the trip.

Health and Fitness

All Scenic' guest should be in good physical health in order to participate fully in the group travel experience. Your preparations during the lead up to your trip are helpful and may affect how much you enjoy your travel experience. The more prepared you are with regards to your fitness, the more relaxed you will be and the easier you will be able to fully participate in the program.

Vaccinations

Your health and safety is very important to us at Scenic. As health warnings and requirements can change, we recommend that you consult your doctor, medical professional or local government inoculation centre for up-to-date medical travel information before departure.

Zika Virus:

There may have been media reports regarding the Zika Virus in Vietnam. Currently the risk to travellers is believed to be low. The Virus is transmitted by the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*. It is the same vector that transmits Dengue and Yellow Fever, two diseases that have been endemic in Southeast Asia for many years. The symptoms of the virus are not as severe as Dengue and Yellow Fever, however there is no vaccine or cure for it, and it is dangerous to unborn children, should pregnant women be infected. The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites. This can be done by using insect repellent and wearing clothes (preferably light-coloured) that cover as much of the body as possible. For further information, please visit: <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/zika/en/>

Health & Fitness

The pace of touring in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos can be tiring due to factors such as change of environment, temperature and humidity, distances travelled, touring and diet. Guests must be able to climb ramps and stairs for embarkation and disembarkation whilst cruising on the Halong Bay and Mekong River portions of the tour. The land touring program requires guests to be able to walk for up to 1 - 2 km over steps and uneven ground. For your safety and enjoyment, you should be in good physical condition to participate in all tours.

Medication and Prescriptions

Pack an ample supply of any medicine you are taking, copies of prescriptions and the telephone/fax numbers of your doctor. Because of strict drug laws, medical drugs you take on doctor's orders should be carried in their original container showing the prescription label. Always keep your medication in your hand luggage.

First Aid

Medication and other items are available in larger cities such as Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and Luang Prabang; however, the quality may not be as high as products from home. It may therefore be useful to bring a supply of basic items with you. A first aid kit may include band-aids, bandages, antiseptic, Panadol or aspirin, cough medicine,

throat lozenges, cold and flu medication, diarrhoea medication, mild laxative, rehydration tablets, insect repellent with a strong DET concentration, eye ointments/drops for minor infections and a general antibiotic.

Although your Tour Director does carry a medical kit, for legal reasons any leaders, guides and Tour Directors are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets and antibiotics. Please ensure you are adequately prepared.

SAFETY AND SECURITY

The safety of our travellers, Tour Directors and our local operators is a major priority. Scenic constantly monitors the situation on the ground and makes operational decisions based on various sources. Many governments provide a regular updated advice service on safety (and health) issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. Please take some time to visit your own government web site. Your Tour Director will accompany you on all included activities and they have the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety or security concerns. You will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore further. While your Tour Director will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and Scenic or our local operators make no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment.

Leave your expensive jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Most of our hotels have in room safes and safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. DO NOT leave them in your hotel room unsecured. Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are generally safe destinations but please be aware that there is the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy areas and markets. If carrying valuables, we suggest that you carry them underneath your clothes out of sight and to carry a smaller amount of money for general use in a separate bag or wallet, enough for one day's use. We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safekeeping of your valuables rather than carrying around a handbag or wallet which are susceptible to pick pockets and drive-by snatches. We also recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport, including keeping an eye on any luggage that is put underneath the seats or on overhead racks. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing. Depending on where you come from please note that drivers in this part of the world may drive on the opposite side of the road from what you are used to. Look both ways before crossing any road. Traffic can be a little more chaotic than you might be used to at home and don't expect drivers to stick to the lines marked on the roads. Be aware on the roads, small streets and alleyways and even footpaths as they can also be used by bikes for driving and parking. Vehicles find their ways into impossibly small passages leaving no room for both you and the traffic. Traffic can be very noisy and horns are used to signal turning, overtaking and to announce going through intersections. On most vehicles seat belts are not provided and if they are provided are generally not compulsory to wear.

Scenic will ensure lifejackets are available for all private boat journeys, but cannot guarantee that all public ferries or vessels will have enough life jackets or life rings for all guest.

Drug Policy

Under no circumstances are any illegal drugs allowed on any part of the trip. Anyone discovered in possession of any such drugs, will be asked to leave the tour immediately without question or refund.

Itinerary Changes and Amendments

While every effort will be made to follow the itinerary provided, in the event of political problems, natural disasters like earthquakes or even disruption due to weather, festivals or things beyond our control like changes due to internal flight timing, Scenic reserve the right to make changes to the itinerary or an activity to maximize the passenger's experience.

Changes in travel arrangements

Once the trip has commenced, should you decide to alter any of your travel arrangements, any extra arrangements and costs need to be made and paid by yourself. They are not the responsibility of Scenic.

Baggage Allowance and Portage

The luggage allowance whilst on tour is one suitcase with a maximum size of 76 x 53 x 28cms (30" x 21" x 11") and weight of 23 kilograms. You may also carry a small backpack or similar on board the coach for the duration of the tour. Additional bags beyond the Baggage Allowance may incur additional charges and are to be settled directly to the Hotel or as required. Luggage handling and portage of your luggage (as per the luggage allowance above) is included in your Scenic program. Passengers please note, the Scenic baggage label included in your documentation should be attached once you have reached your destination and retrieved your luggage from Baggage Reclaim. This will ensure airline companies will not tear off this tag, as it is required to easily identify your baggage for transfer services and hotels.

Airport Screening

All Airports in Vietnam have tightened medical quarantine to detect MERS-CoV, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome. Vietnam has yet to detect any people infected with MERS-CoV. International Medical Quarantine Centre is coordinating with the airport authority to closely examine all visitors, especially those coming from countries or territories being affected by MERS-CoV, to detect infections.

Flights within Vietnam and between Cambodia and Laos

Standard international restrictions apply for the carrying of liquids and prohibited items on board aircraft in your carry-on hand luggage on domestic flights. Please pack all alcohol in your checked-in luggage for all domestic flights. You are required to show your passport to board your domestic flights. Do not pack your passport in your checked luggage. Tickets for domestic flights within Vietnam are issued in Vietnam. Your Scenic Tour Director will distribute the tickets at each destination.

Coach Travel

Coaches will be large and comfortable and generally only have one door for entry and exit. Luggage will be stowed underneath the bus in a separate luggage compartment or in a separate luggage vehicle. As we will be flying and cruising portions of the tour there will be a different coach in each city.

Customs and Behaviour

People in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have a great sense of humour. They also ask a lot of personal questions - this type of questioning is not considered rude - just gathering of the facts. Don't be surprised if people are intrigued by your size, particularly if you are tall or well rounded. Bear in mind that people have different attitudes to time, public cleanliness, privacy and service. If you are able to travel with patience and a sense of humour then you will love it. Buddhism is the main religion with influences from Taoism and Confucianism.

Local Dress

Dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate. In many rural areas in Asia women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong and have their shoulders covered.

Apsara Dress Code at Angkor Temples

For both sexes, revealing clothes such as shorts and skirts above the knees and shirts showing bare shoulders and your back are prohibited in sacred places and temples. Respectful dress is strongly encouraged in Angkor. High heels are discouraged from being worn inside of the temples. Women should also not touch or stand or sit too close to monks.

Electrical Items

Vietnam's electricity current is 220 volts at 50 cycles per seconds. You will find a range of sockets throughout the country however most will take two-prong round pins. Cambodia uses 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. Lao uses 220V. Power outlets usually feature two-prong round or flat sockets however, there is no set standard.

Appropriate / universal adaptor plugs should be purchased before leaving home to use for items such as razors and mobile phone chargers (check with your mobile supplier as you may require a transformer for your charger). Electricity supply is generally reliable, even in more remote areas.

Note that power in these countries may go off intermittently, particularly in Siem Reap. Therefore please advise if you require access to power, particularly overnight, e.g. sleep apnea machines etc.

Hygiene

To avoid any illness whilst on tour and to maintain hygiene we recommend the use of anti-bacterial wipes or lotion. Due to the varying hygiene and food standards it is not uncommon for guests to experience some minor stomach upsets and cold and flu symptoms. It is important that you stay well hydrated and drink plenty of bottled water. If you are not feeling well at any time please speak to your Scenic Tour Director who may be able to assist with advice. Observing simple precautions such as peeling fruit, avoiding reheated food and using bottled water or boiled water to drink and wash your teeth will minimise stomach upsets. Also avoid drinking water in the shower.

Hours of Business

In Vietnam offices are usually open from Monday to Friday from 07:30 or 08:00 until 17:00 or 18:00 and often close for lunch between 11:30 and 13:30. Some offices also open Saturday morning. Shops open early and close any time between 18:00 and 22:00. Most shops are open 7 days a week.

In Cambodia offices are usually open from Monday to Friday from 07:30 or 08:00 until 17:00 and often close for lunch between 12:00 and 14:00. Shops open early and close any time between 18:00 and 22:00. Most shops are open 7 days a week.

In Laos offices are usually open from Monday to Friday from 08:00 until 11:30 and 13:00 - 17:00. Shops open from Monday to Saturday between 09:00 and 17:00 and some also open on Sunday. In Luang Prabang shops often open later until 19:00 or 20:00 (During Public Holidays as well as celebrations such as Chinese New Year, most businesses are closed.)

Internet

Free Wi-Fi is widely available throughout Asia in most public places and in your hotels enabling you to stay connected to the internet easily and for free. Major hotels such as the ones used on your tour have Business Centres with PCs connected to the Internet.

Language

Vietnamese is the official language of Vietnam and is spoken throughout the country, though there are marked dialectical differences in the southern, central and northern regions. Vietnamese uses a modified Roman script and is tonal. Khmer is the official language of Cambodia. Khmer has its own script and unlike neighbouring countries is not tonal. The national language of Laos is Lao, which is closely related to Thai and is spoken in many different dialects. Lao, like Thai, is a tonal language. In Luang Prabang and Vientiane, English is widely spoken and French is still spoken by many government officials and educated members of the older generation.

English is well-understood and widely spoken by our guides and hotel staff. English is also spoken in most restaurants, shops and, to a lesser extent, by taxi and cyclo drivers. Even though Vietnamese, Khmer and Lao are difficult languages to master, it is easy - and much appreciated by the locals - to pick up a few basic words while you are travelling like hello, goodbye and thank you.

Laundry Facilities

Laundry facilities are available in all the hotels during the tour however it is best to put laundry out when you are staying a minimum of two nights in the hotel. You will be able to refresh your wardrobe once you are on board your ship by using the on board self-service laundry.

Money and Bank information

Currency: Vietnam - Vietnamese Dong (VND), Cambodia - USD and Cambodian Riel (KHR), Cambodian Riel is used for 'cents', Laos - Laos Kip (LAK). USD is not legally used as a trading currency in Vietnam and Laos.

Foreign Cash: ATMs are common at the airport and throughout the region. There is no need to change your currency into Vietnamese Dong, USD or Lao Kip before departure unless you want to have cash on hand immediately.

Currency Exchange: You can exchange AUS/NZD cash for local currency at hotels, banks and exchange bureaus. Please note that these establishments will charge a fee to exchange travellers cheques; some establishments may also charge a fee to exchange cash. It is not recommended to bring travellers cheques. Most establishments will not accept foreign currency notes for exchange that are old, torn or faded. Ensure that you have new, clean notes. Cash in USD, EURO, GBP and AUD are the easiest to change at the hotels but the exchange rates are not as good as an ATM withdrawal. It is advisable to have smaller denominations of USD to use rather than carry USD100 or 50 bills as they are harder to exchange or break into smaller denominations due to counterfeit money problems

Once you exchange your money into local currency, it can be a time consuming process to exchange it back into your home currency before you depart. To do so, you will need all your receipts and the currency declaration form you completed when you arrived in. To avoid this, it is suggested that you plan your currency exchanges during your trip in order to have as little currency as possible at the end of your trip unless of course you plan on returning to the region.

Credit Cards: Most international credit cards (such as American Express, MasterCard and Visa) are accepted in most locations including all hotels, on board the Scenic Spirit (not American Express), in major stores and restaurants. However, for incidentals, small vendors and local stores you will need local currency. Before travelling, check that your credit cards are valid for at least 30 days after the completion of the tour. Please note some banks and institutions require you to advise them that you will be using your credit card overseas - please contact your bank before leaving Australia. The use of credit cards is still not widespread in Laos. Most hotels and many shops and restaurants in Luang Prabang and Vientiane accept VISA and MasterCard but in rural parts of the country often only cash is accepted.

ATMs: International and local bank's ATMs are common at the airports and throughout the region. The easiest way to access the local currency is to withdraw money from an ATM. Ensure that the ATM has the Cirrus and Maestro signs if using your regular debit/cash card. All ATMs will dispense the local currency only. Be sure to check with your bank before departing to activate your card and don't forget to memorise your PIN number. Vietnam - ATM dispenses Dong only. Cambodia - ATM dispenses USD as this is the main currency used in Cambodia with the local Riel only used for amounts less than 1USD. Laos - ATM dispenses KIP only.

Shopping

Bargaining is expected when shopping for souvenirs unless there is a price already marked on the item.

Good buys in Vietnam include unique handicrafts such as conical hats, lacquerware, silk, wood carvings, hill tribe fabrics and handicrafts, marble, ceramics, coffee, silver jewellery and paintings. Cambodian handicrafts include silks, woodcarvings, rattan weavings, handmade papers and the krama, the traditional Cambodian scarf. The best buys in Laos are ethnic minority handicrafts and textiles. The Lao sarong or pha sin made from silk or cotton is popular souvenir. Other souvenirs to look out for include silverware, in particular from Luang Prabang, and wood carvings.

Please keep in mind that if the price seems too good to be true than it is probably is. A lot of tourist shopping in Indochina, especially in markets, is made up of copied brand items and reproduced antiques. Therefore the authenticity and value of goods is always questionable.

We encourage all passengers to enjoy and participate in the local shopping experience but to take care and buy wisely as it is your responsibility for ensuring the value of your purchase is true.

Check with your local customs officials to ensure that you are able to import some items back into your home country. Australia and New Zealand for example have strict quarantine laws.

Vietnam - VAT refund for foreigners

A pilot scheme for a Value Added Tax (VAT) refund has been introduced from July 1st 2012. Under the scheme, foreigners who

purchase goods and take them out of Vietnam will receive a VAT refund at Noi Bai International Airport, Hanoi and Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City. VAT refund will be paid in Vietnam Dong to foreigners showing their necessary documents to clear the customs.

Smoking

For the comfort and safety of fellow travellers we have a NO smoking policy in vehicles and accommodation.

Telephones

The international telephone services have improved and are generally reliable throughout the countries and mobile phone coverage is quite good. Check to see if your mobile phone provider has a global roaming agreement with Vietnam and Cambodia and what the charges are for global roaming. It is important to remember, however, that telephone calls from hotels and on board the cruise are surcharged. Ship-to-shore telephone calls can be extremely expensive. If you decide to make a direct call - always remember to dial the international access code followed by the country, the area code (without the 0) and the phone number.

Phone Cards and SIM Cards: Phone cards are an efficient and economical way to call home. Mobile SIM cards are generally easy to buy and an alternative convenient way of keeping in touch. Your Tour Director can assist with this if you require.

Time Zones

Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are GMT +7 hours (no daylight-savings system) = 15 ahead of NYC time. Refer to the website www.worldtimeserver.com for further details.

Tipping

The attitude towards tipping in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is changing rapidly, tips are now frequently offered for services in the tourism industry and in many cases supplement wages for people who work in various customer service areas such as local guides, porters in hotels and coach drivers. However, tipping is still not expected in most restaurants. If you are uncertain ask your Scenic Tour Director or your local guide whether a tip is necessary and how much. Sometimes, small gifts are a good idea when meeting and interacting with the locals.

Whilst on tour KRC has included the following tipping:

- Local guides in each city
- Coach drivers in each city
- Meals included on tour
- Porterage in each hotel

On the Cruise:

- Crew on board the vessel
- Cruise Director
- River Guides

Toilets

Please bear in mind that Vietnam and Cambodia are still very much developing countries - toilets in public places in rural areas are mostly of a basic style. However, as the region is changing dramatically, western style toilets in public places and major tourist regions are becoming common. You should carry toilet tissue and antiseptic hand wash with you in your day pack at all times.

Water

Tap water in Vietnam and Cambodia is not suitable for drinking. You should also not use it to brush your teeth or shave if you use a razor. Bottles of mineral water will be provided on a number of excursions, aboard the coach and on the Mekong River cruise. Bottles of mineral water are very cheap and on sale everywhere but always remember to make sure that the cap seal is not broken before drinking from it.

Weather and Climate

The climate of Vietnam varies considerably from region to region. Although the entire country lies in the tropics and subtropics, local conditions vary from frosty winters in the far northern hills to year-round, subequatorial warmth in the Mekong Delta. As such the length of the country is split into three distinct regions. The north has a distinct summer or wet season (May to Oct) and winter (Nov to April) when temperatures can get quite cool in the evening with foggy conditions in the morning, particularly in Sapa and Halong Bay around December and January. Central Vietnam is monsoonal and has a long dry season and a very compact and intense wet season (Oct and Nov) with flooding common in Hue and Hoi An during this time. South Vietnam is also monsoonal, but the dry season is shorter and compared to the wet, less humid (Nov to April/May) and a longer wet season (late May to October).

There are two main seasons in Cambodia. From November to March temperatures are slightly cooler with little rain. From May to October is the rainy season where average temperatures in the day range from 24 to 35 degrees Celsius. During this period it rains for short periods of time in the morning or afternoon. At this time temple moats are full, the scenery is greener and there are fewer people at the temples.

Wearing sunscreen and a hat are the best ways to avoid heatstroke and sunburn. Rain rarely affects travel across all countries and many people prefer to visit at this time of the year due to the smaller crowds and fresh look of the countryside.

Carry-On Luggage Restrictions

Please be aware of the enhanced security measures restricting the amount of liquids, aerosols and gels that can be taken on board as hand luggage through the screening points for people flying to and from Australia. Please check with your airline for the most current and up to date information prior to travel.

Exceptions will be made for passengers with medical conditions. However, these items may be subject to additional security checks. Passengers can still take on board items purchased after the screening point, including duty free.

More information can be found on the Department of Transport & Regional Services website.

<http://travelsecure.infrastructure.gov.au/international/onboard/index.aspx>

Customs Allowances

Entering Vietnam: You are allowed to import 200 cigarettes or 50 cigars, 1.5 litres of alcoholic spirits/wine or 3 litres of beer and a reasonable amount of perfume. Cash exceeding AUD5000 should be declared. Don't take any cold meats or fresh fruit with you, Vietnamese law forbids their import. There are limits to items, such as herbal medicine, that you can take out of the country. Rare animals and plants also cannot be exported. Cultural relics, handicrafts, gold and silver ornaments and jewellery purchased in Vietnam have to be shown to customs on leaving. If these items are deemed to be cultural treasures, they will be confiscated. All bags are x-rayed.

Entering Cambodia: You are allowed to import 200 cigarettes, 1.5 litres of alcoholic spirits or wine and a reasonable amount of perfume. Cash exceeding AUD5000 should be declared. Don't take any cold meats or fresh fruit with you, Cambodian law forbids their import. There are limits to items, such as herbal medicine, that you can take out of the country. Rare animals and plants also cannot be exported. Cultural relics, handicrafts, gold and silver ornaments and jewellery purchased in Cambodia have to be shown to customs on leaving. If these items are deemed to be cultural treasures, they will be confiscated. All bags are x-rayed.

About Packing

When travelling as a couple, pack each suitcase with day and evening clothing for each person, so that in the unlikely event of one of your cases being mislaid on your flight, you'll still be able to manage. Ensure that your personal and tour details are written on a label INSIDE each suitcase (including name, address, telephone number, departure and return flight details). Write only your name and destination address on outside labels. Make sure that your luggage is in good secure condition, and don't forget the keys!

Check-in ONLY your own suitcases. Do not carry items packed by other people. NEVER ACCEPT PACKAGES OR ARTICLES FROM ANYONE UNKNOWN TO YOU TO CARRY ON BOARD THE AIRCRAFT.

Packing Checklist

The following list may be useful when packing for your trip:

- Airline tickets
- Passport
- Photocopy of passport and extra passport photos
- Scenic travel documentation
- Cash/debit or credit card
- Emergency contact numbers for loss of debit/credit card
- Travel insurance documentation
- Local currency for day one
- Money belt
- Spare memory card for your digital camera
- Photocopy of hotel list and itinerary to be left with family or friends
- Only those keys needed on return
- Personal medication and prescriptions. Medication for motion sickness, diarrhoea, vomiting and antibiotics
- Sunscreen and lip balm
- Mosquito repellent
- Binoculars
- Extra glasses/contacts and prescription
- Clothes that can be mixed/matched/layered
- Jumper for cooler evenings
- Women - one dress, skirt or pant (minimum)
- Swim wear
- Toiletries including anti-itch cream for insects bites and a first aid kit.
- Raincoat or umbrella
- Comfortable walking shoes with rubber soles for good grip
- Sunglasses and sun hat
- Spare plastic bags for dirty laundry
- Earplugs and sleep mask
- Tissues and anti-bacterial hand wipes
- Adaptor plugs, mobile phone charger, battery charger
- Small anti-bacterial hand sanitiser gel
- Multiple copies of your passport to assist with Hotel check in

Clothing on the Cruise: The dress code on board and ashore is informal and relaxed. In the daytime, feel free to wear comfortable casual attire. In the evenings, smart casual would be appropriate.

Religious Items

Davening

Davening times will be posted on the daily schedule.

Suggested Reference List

The history of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is complex and the culture and way of life of the local people is extremely interesting and it is well worthwhile doing some preliminary reading prior to your arrival. Your guides are extremely knowledgeable but you will gain a far greater insight into the country and its peoples if you have at least a basic understanding.

Hanoi Stories and Hanoi Life - Pam Scott

Vietnam: Rising Dragon - Bill Hayton

Catfish and Mandala: A Vietnamese Odyssey - Andrew Pham

When Heaven and Earth Changed Places - Le Ly Hayslip

Two Cities, Hanoi & Saigon - Neil Sheehan

Turtle Beach - Blanche d'Alpuget

The Sorrow of War - Bao Ninh

The Sacred Willow - Four Generations in the Life of a Vietnamese Family - Elliott, Duong Van Mai

A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain - Robert Olen Butler

Fortunate Son - Lewis Puller, Jr.

A Guide to Angkor - Asia Books by Dawn Rooney

The Great Little Guide by TM Roland Neveu

Brother Enemy by Nayan Chanda

Another Quiet American: Stories of Life in Laos - Brett Dakin - An expatriate memoir of two years spent in Laos

A Short History of Laos, The Land in Between - Grant Evans & Milton Osborne - A comprehensive history of Laos from the pre-modern dynastic era to the present day

On Foot in Laos - Dervla Murphy - The Irish writer's bicycle journey through Laos

Bamboo Palace: Discovering the Lost Dynasty of Laos - Christopher Kremmer - The author's travels in Laos became a quest to solve one of Indochina's enduring mysteries - the fate of a 600-year old royal dynasty

Travel with an Open Mind

Southeast Asia is a fascinating destination, rich with culture and history. During your travels you will encounter new customs and different ways of life. Appreciate and enjoy these differences as this is one of the highlights of traveling. Even though you may not speak the language a smile and a thank you is universally understood. Friendliness and tolerance towards others especially fellow tour guests is essential for everyone's enjoyment of the holiday.