



RIVER CRUISE

## BEST OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

2024 – 2025

VEM21



21 days / 20 nights River Cruise



Ho Chi Minh City to Ho Chi Minh City

### ITINERARY

To view the itinerary in greater depth, simply click on your preferred day from the interactive list to unveil its details. Discover daily activities, immersive experiences and insider local tips that make your travel unforgettable.



## HO CHI MINH CITY TO HO CHI MINH CITY

21 days / 21 nights River Cruise

DAY 1

### Arrive Ho Chi Minh City

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City, once the bustling French colonial city known as Saigon. Be met on arrival with Fast Track Service and transferred to your luxury hotel. This evening, enjoy a welcome dinner.



## Signature Experience – VIP Fast Track Service

Start your holiday as soon as possible when you receive Fast Track Service for a seamless arrival in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Be whisked through immigration and customs, before meeting your APT representative, who will transfer you to your accommodation.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Stay:** Two Nights, Ho Chi Minh City, Park Hyatt Saigon

**Daily:** • Dinner

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### DAY 2

## Ho Chi Minh City

Leave the city behind and enjoy your Signature Experiences today. Learn about the remarkable tunnel network that concealed the Viet Cong and served as supply and communication routes, as well as hospitals and weapon caches. Tonight, relish a delectable dinner during another Signature Experience.

### Signature Experience – Cu Chi Tunnels Visit

Set off on a thrilling speedboat journey along the Saigon River to the Cu Chi tunnels, built by Vietnamese resistance fighters during the war.

### Signature Experience – Private Gin Tasting

Meet a Master Distiller at Lady Triệu Distillery and enjoy a guided tour and private tasting of the multi-award-winning gin. Follow up your tour with a light lunch, accompanied by a refreshing Lady Trieu gin and tonic.

### Signature Experience – Dinner at Vietnam House

Savour dinner at the highly acclaimed restaurant Vietnam House, and delight in a special cocktail designed specifically for APT guests.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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### DAY 3



Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hoi An

A range of Freedom of Choice options await today. This afternoon, board your included flight to Da Nang. On arrival, enjoy a scenic transfer to Hoi An, the charming ancient town with a rich history, lantern lit streets, exquisite architecture, and delightful blend of culture.

### **Freedom of Choice – City Walking Tour**

Discover the city's iconic landmarks and French colonial architecture on an informative guided walk. Stroll by the Saigon Opera House, Central Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral.

### **Freedom of Choice – Motorbike Ride**

Jump on the back of a motorbike like a local for a thrilling sightseeing adventure. Weave through the streets past the Central Post Office and Independence Palace. Visit Chinatown and Thien Hau pagoda.

### **Freedom of Choice – Cooking Class**

Meet your chef, visit the market and discover Vietnamese ingredients. Continue to a villa and relax in the outdoor garden before you create your dishes. Learn the intricacies of making bánh mì xiu mại.

### **Freedom of Choice – Ho Chi Minh City Shopping Adventure**

Seek out the city's boutiques and discover high-quality handmade goods on a visit to Mekong Quilts. Saigon Kitsch sells quirky souvenirs, while L'Usine is a trend-setting lifestyle store.

Freedom of Choice:

Give your holiday a personal touch with a choice of included sightseeing or dining options to suit your interests.

**Stay:** Two Nights, Hotel Royal Hoi An – M Gallery

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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## **DAY 4**

### **Hoi An**

Set out on a guided discovery of Hoi An this morning, taking in sights such as the Japanese Covered Bridge and the 19th-century Chinese Temple. Visit a handicraft workshop to see local artisans making silk lanterns and other traditional crafts. You will also stop off at a local cafe to try a Vietnamese specialty, coconut coffee. This afternoon, travel by boat along the Thu Bon River, where a special Signature Experience awaits.

### **Signature Experience – Red Bridge Cooking School**



Discover Hoi An's colourful market and find local ingredients to use during an exclusive cooking class with the Red Bridge Cooking School.

**Signature Experience:**

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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**DAY 5**

## Hoi An, Hue

Today, set out on your Signature Experience. Depart Hoi An bound for Hue, the former Imperial Capital. Travel via Da Nang and up and over the stunning Hai Van Pass, with views across Lang Co Beach. This scenic mountain stretch has been voted by some travellers as one of the world's most picturesque drives. This evening, dine on authentic Hue cuisine at Nam Phuong Restaurant inside the hotel. The restaurant is named after Vietnam's last queen.

### Signature Experience – Hoi An Eco Tour

Catch a glimpse of rural Vietnamese life as you set out on an agricultural eco-tour. Visit a local garden and meet the farmers who work there while taking part in several different farming activities. You'll then set out on an exploration of the water coconut palm jungle by basket boat.

**Signature Experience:**

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Stay:** Two Nights, Silk Path Grand Hue Hotel & Spa

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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**DAY 6**

## Hue

Venture to the Imperial City, which served as the nation's political capital and religious hub. Stroll among the citadel's monuments and hear stories of its construction under the Nguyen Dynasty, which ruled Vietnam from 1802 to 1945. Next, visit the historical Thien Mu Pagoda, which is the tallest pagoda in Vietnam, standing at 21 metres. The pagoda is part of an active Buddhist monastery that dates to 1601. Marvel at the seven successive tiers, each of which is dedicated to a human form taken by the Buddha, before exploring the gardens, flowers and ornamental plants surrounding the pagoda. Soak up the beautiful landscapes and pass some of Hue's most important monuments during your Signature Experience.



### Signature Experience – Private Perfume River Cruise

Glide along Hue's Perfume River while savouring a delicious afternoon tea, featuring an assortment of sweet and savoury treats, along with a range of teas and coffees.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Daily:** • Breakfast

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DAY 7

### Hue, Hanoi

Time permitting, stroll through bustling and vibrant Dong Ba market to peruse a variety of local goods and delicacies before transferring to Hue's Phu Bai International Airport for your included flight to Hanoi. Settle into your new surrounds over dinner at Spice Garden, your hotel's highly awarded Vietnamese restaurant.

**Stay:** Two Nights, Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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DAY 8

### Hanoi

A guided tour of Hanoi takes you to the city's most famous historical and cultural sites. Highlights include Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Ba Dinh Square, One Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature, a beautiful example of Vietnamese architecture and the first university in Vietnam. You'll also enjoy a cyclo ride through the Old Quarter. Explore the maze-like streets of this charming area, where each street conveys the name of the type of business that once operated there, such as Bamboo Street, Sugar Street and Silver Street. Then, explore more of this vibrant city on your selected Freedom of Choice experience. Tonight, choose your dining experience.

### Freedom of Choice – Bat Trang Pottery Village

Journey to Bat Trang, a village where porcelain and pottery of the highest quality have been made for over 700 years. Step out with your guide on an insightful walk and hear stories about the rich clay.

### Freedom of Choice – Head, Hand or Foot Massage

Indulge in a relaxing massage and soak up the atmosphere of Le Spa du Metropole overlooking the charming garden courtyard and pool of the iconic Sofitel Legend Metropole.



### **Freedom of Choice Touring – Walking Tour of Hanoi**

Explore Hanoi on foot. Step inside the neo-gothic St. Joseph's Cathedral, admire the Hanoi Opera House and view exhibits at Hoa Lo Prison. Learn about Vietnam's struggle for independence from France.

### **Freedom of Choice Touring – Water Puppet Performance**

Set off by foot to one of Hanoi's most renowned water puppet theatres. Learn about the art of water puppetry and its place in Vietnamese culture, including its beginnings in the villages.

### **Freedom of Choice Touring – Vietnam's Coffee Culture**

Discover the importance of coffee in Vietnam, one of the country's largest exports. Learn about the history and cultivation of coffee and try your hand at making some unique drinks.

### **Freedom of Choice Dining – La Terrasse**

Savour the atmosphere of a Parisian cafe at La Terrasse at the Sofitel Legend Metropole. With its classic Parisian-inspired furniture, this is the perfect place to relax.

### **Freedom of Choice Dining – La Table Hanoia**

Located in the heart of the French Quarter, and previously known as the Press Club, La Table Hanoia takes you on a journey of discovery. Enjoy a fine selection of gourmet food accompanied by seamless service.

### **Freedom of Choice Dining – KOTO Van Mieu**

Dine on soulful Vietnamese cuisine at KOTO Van Mieu, a training restaurant for disadvantaged and at-risk youth in Vietnam. This not-for-profit social enterprise empowers youth through hospitality training.

### **Freedom of Choice – Lý Club Hanoi**

Inspired by the legacy of the great Lý dynasty, Lý Club Hanoi offers a sensory feast of innovative Vietnamese cuisine. Located in a beautifully restored 19th-century colonial villa, the decor features antiques and ornaments from the Lý dynasty.

Freedom of Choice:

Give your holiday a personal touch with a choice of included sightseeing or dining options to suit your interests.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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DAY 9

## **Hanoi, Tuan Chau, Embark Ship, Ha Long Bay**



This morning, take a private tour of your hotel's bomb shelter during an insightful Signature Experience. Afterwards, travel to Tuan Chau for another incredible Signature Experience. Here, you will board the Au Co for your spectacular two-night cruise through Ha Long Bay. Savour an assortment of Vietnamese dishes during lunch as your luxury ship slowly glides towards the southeast of Ha Long Bay, passing Trong Mai Islet, Ngon Tay Islet and Con Coc Islet. Next, embark on an excursion to Cat Ba Island and ride a bicycle or electric cart through the peaceful Viet Hai village. Learn about local life and two of Bhaya Cruises' social responsibility projects. Absorb the verdant surrounding scenery at Bhaya Café while joining a culinary class, where you'll learn how to prepare steamed rice rolls known as bánh cuốn. Then, return to the ship and enjoy a delectable dinner on board. Afterwards, perhaps join a Vietnamese rice wine tasting session in the restaurant or try your hand at squid fishing on the main deck.

### **Signature Experience – Exclusive Access to a Bomb Shelter**

Join a local historian for a private tour of the hotel's bomb shelter. Hear stories of its chance discovery and learn about the famous guests who sought shelter during air raids.

### **Signature Experience – Ha Long Bay Cruise**

See Ha Long Bay on a two-night cruise aboard the traditionally styled Au Co. World Heritage-listed Ha Long Bay is one of nature's most inspiring displays, made up of over 1,600 lush limestone pillars.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Stay:** Two Nights, Ha Long Bay, Au Co

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 10

## **Ha Long Bay**

As the sun rises over the acclaimed UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ha Long Bay, rejuvenate the body and mind with a refreshing Tai Chi lesson. Delight in a hearty breakfast before exploring the Trinh Nu area by kayak. Experience the awe-inspiring natural surroundings as you navigate through rugged mountains rising from emerald waters. Return to the boat for a leisurely cruise toward Cua Van Floating Village and savour a special lunch. In the afternoon, explore this mesmerising location in the heart of Ha Long Bay by kayak or traditional rowing boat. Return to the vessel and cruise to the anchor point. Soak up the spectacular seascape as the sun sets over the horizon while enjoying a drink on the deck. Finally, savour a delicious dinner in the onboard restaurant.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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## DAY 11

### Ha Long Bay, Tuan Chau, Disembark Ship, Hanoi, Siem Reap

Begin the day with a delicious breakfast before choosing between two exciting options. Perhaps discover Sung Sot Cave, the largest cave in Ha Long Bay, with its expansive 10,000 square-metre interior filled with thousands of stalactites and stalagmites, connected by a 500-metre paved passageway. Alternatively, embark on an excursion to Titov Island. Here, choose to relax and sunbathe on a pristine beach or hike to the top of the mountain to take in breathtaking panoramic view of Ha Long Bay. Return to the boat to prepare for disembarkation. Disembark and transfer to Hanoi airport for your included flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Upon arrival, be transferred to your hotel and enjoy dinner here with your fellow travellers.

**Stay:** Three Nights, Siem Reap, Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf & Spa Resort

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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## DAY 12

### Siem Reap

Begin your exploration of the World Heritage-listed Angkor Archaeological Park with a visit to Angkor Thom, the last and most enduring capital of the Khmer Empire. Built during the heyday of the Empire in the 12th century, this is an extraordinary complex of Hindu and Buddhist monuments. Head to the intriguing Bayon temple, with its carved stone smiling faces of gods, goddesses, and other mythological beings. Visit the Terrace of Elephants, which used to be the base for the king's grand audience hall and the Terrace of the Leper King, which housed the royal crematory.

Journey to Ta Prohm, known for the thick jungle of fig trees and vines that have enveloped the structure, giving it a lost-world feel. Ta Prohm is commonly referred to as the 'Tomb Raider Temple' due to it being used as a location in the film 'Lara Croft: Tomb Raider', which starred Angelina Jolie. The temple offers a captivating glimpse into the past and is a testament to a bygone era. En route to the hotel, enjoy your Signature Experience. Later this evening, delight in another captivating Signature Experience.

#### Signature Experience – Local Charity Visit

Visit Opportunities of Development thru Art (ODA), a OneTomorrow partner. ODA provides free English education and an introduction to computer skills to children living in Siem Reap's remote villages, with the aim to improve future employment opportunities.

#### Signature Experience – VIP Circus Show and Backstage Visit

Be welcomed backstage at Phare Circus to meet some of the performers and witness a mesmerising performance from your VIP seats. This unforgettable spectacle showcases the country's rich culture and talent by combining captivating acrobatics, theatre, and storytelling.





#### Signature Experience:

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**Daily:** • Breakfast

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DAY 13

## Siem Reap

Wake early this morning and travel back to Angkor Archaeological Park for a special Signature Experience. Afterwards, join a guided exploration of this well-preserved temple, then return to your hotel for breakfast. This afternoon, set out on your Freedom of Choice activity. Tonight, your Signature Experience awaits. Set amid a stunning garden, this promises to be an enchanting and memorable evening.

### Signature Experience – Sunrise at Angkor Wat

Visit Angkor Archaeological Park to witness a spectacular sunrise at the magnificent Angkor Wat. Observe the iconic temple complex shimmer in the reflective ponds in front of this World Heritage-listed monument, while brilliant shades of orange and pink light up the sky.

### Signature Experience – Gallery Visit with Khmer Dinner and Apsara Performance

Treat yourself to a private visit to Theam's Gallery and discover this talented Cambodian artist, known for his unique sculptures, paintings, and intricate crafts. Indulge in a tantalising five-course Khmer dinner while enjoying a traditional Apsara dance performance accompanied by live musicians.

### Freedom of Choice – Tuk Tuk Ride to Senteurs d'Angkor

Enjoy an exciting tuk tuk ride to the Senteurs d'Angkor workshop, a handicraft centre where you can observe the artisans in their workshops and gain an appreciation for their ancient crafts. Discover how they integrate contemporary designs inspired by Khmer know-how.

### Freedom of Choice – Quad Bike Adventure

Embark on an exhilarating quad biking experience in the Cambodian countryside outside Siem Reap. Venture along quiet off-road tracks and see rice fields, forgotten temples and local communities.

### Freedom of Choice – Bicycle Tour

Journey to the countryside villages next to Siem Reap. Surrounded by rice paddies and ancient ponds, you'll cycle along quiet back trails to experience local rural life at its most picturesque. Observe daily farming activities.



### **Freedom of Choice – Horse and Cart Ride**

Climb aboard a hand-made horse cart and set off on an authentic journey into the heart of rural Cambodia. Travel off the beaten path, navigating a variety of terrain through the beautiful countryside.

### **Freedom of Choice – Khmer Cooking Class**

Travel to a market and meet your Khmer chef. Then, continue to Lum Orng, Cambodia's first farm-to-table restaurant, which is famed for its New Mekong cuisine. Here, prepare a selection of dishes to taste.

### **Freedom of Choice – Siem Reap Shopping Adventure**

Explore Siem Reap's vibrant arts and crafts scene, starting at the Angkor Handicraft Association. This Fair-Trade Village is home to a wide variety of artisans who produce handmade goods using traditional techniques.

### **Freedom of Choice – Khmer Massage**

Let your cares melt away and be rejuvenated by the healing powers of traditional Khmer massage. This oil-free 60-minute massage uses firm acupressure and muscular stretching to rebalance your energy.

Signature Experience:

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Freedom of Choice:

Give your holiday a personal touch with a choice of included sightseeing or dining options to suit your interests.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Dinner

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DAY 14

## **Siem Reap, Kampong Cham, Embark Ship, Koh Pen, Angkor Ban**

Travel through remote Cambodian villages to Kampong Cham, where you'll board the Mekong Serenity, your home for the next seven nights. Following lunch on board, discover the island of Koh Pen with its wooden stilt houses and local farming culture during your Signature Experience. Tonight, a welcome dinner awaits, showcasing the diverse flavours from the region.

### **Signature Experience – Tuk Tuk Tour of Koh Pen**

Journey by local tuk tuk around a riverside village and gain an insight into village life. Travel along the shaded lanes past stilted houses and see a varying range of crops growing.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.



**Stay:** Seven Nights, Mekong River, Mekong Serenity

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 15

## Angkor Ban, Oknha Tey, Phnom Penh

Join a walking discovery of Angkor Ban, one of the few villages in Cambodia not destroyed under the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970s. Later, your ship glides between the lush banks of the Mekong to Oknha Tey, which is renowned for its silk weaving traditions. Stroll among the stilt houses and gain an insight into the traditional silk weaving process. Watch as the village women create beautiful Khmer fabrics from their wooden looms.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 16

## Phnom Penh

Today presents a wealth of included sightseeing choices. After lunch back on board, you may wish to explore Phnom Penh independently or simply relax.

### Freedom of Choice – Killing Fields and Genocide Museum

Learn about a confronting part of Cambodian history during a sobering visit to the Killing Fields and Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum.

### Freedom of Choice – Cyclo Ride

Explore Phnom Penh by what was the most popular form of transportation throughout Southeast Asia in the 1960s, the cyclo. Weave past some of the city's most iconic sites.

### Freedom of Choice – Visit the National Museum

Accompanied by your private museum guide, discover the most important pieces within the National Museum of Cambodia. The collection includes the world's finest display of Khmer sculptures, art and relics.

### Freedom of Choice – Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda

Discover Cambodia's Royal Palace, the official residence of the King. Completed in 1870, the palace is an extraordinary example of Khmer architecture with elements of French influence. The palace also houses the Silver Pagoda.



Freedom of Choice:

Give your holiday a personal touch with a choice of included sightseeing or dining options to suit your interests.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 17

## Phnom Penh, Oudong, Koh Chen, Phnom Penh

Disembark in Phnom Penh and discover Oudong, a place of pilgrimage for Cambodians. While here, enjoy a Signature Experience. On the way back to your ship, take a leisurely stroll through the village of Koh Chen and visit some home workshops that make copperware. The afternoon is yours to explore Phnom Penh as you wish.

### Signature Experience – Buddhist Blessing Ceremony

Take part in a traditional Buddhist blessing ceremony for good luck, health and safe journey, with resident monks at a monastery in Oudong.

Signature Experience:

These all-inclusive, once-in-a-lifetime moments allow you to experience an unforgettable world of exclusive moments, incredible cultures and charming surprises.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 18

## Phnom Penh, Border Crossing, Tan Chau

Spend the day cruising towards the Vietnamese border. While border formalities are carried out, enjoy the onboard activities, which could include a lively presentation from your local guides, a fruit-carving demonstration, or even a cooking workshop where you will learn the art of creating Vietnamese spring rolls. Alternatively, relax your body with a rejuvenating treatment from the Spa and Wellness Centre. Cross into Vietnam and cruise to the riverside town of Tan Chau, the first stop after the border.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 19

## Tan Chau, Evergreen Island, Sa Dec

Transfer to a small boat for a journey along the tiny tributaries that snake around the riverside town of Tan Chau. Cruise past a floating fish farm, then step ashore for a rickshaw tour of Tan Chau. On board your rickshaw, you'll glide past small shops and meet locals who are always eager to say hello. Stop to pay a visit to a local silk and rattan weaving workshop. Later, step back in time during a visit to Evergreen Island, where you'll experience



authentic rural Mekong life. The remainder of today is left free for you to relax and take a moment to watch local life gently glide by as you cruise towards Sa Dec.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 20

## Sa Dec, Cai Be, My Tho

Journey by small tender boat past floating fish farms to Sa Dec, where French writer Marguerite Duras met her Vietnamese-Chinese lover, Huynh Thuy Le. Tour his former home and learn the story behind Duras' best-selling novel, 'The Lover'. Afterwards, visit a traditional Cao Dai temple. Return to the ship and sit down to a delicious lunch while you cruise towards Cai Be. Board your tender boat, where you'll visit French gothic Cai Be Church and the port area. Then, visit a rice paper manufacturer to learn how this Vietnamese staple is made.

**Daily:** • Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

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DAY 21

## My Tho, Disembark Ship, Depart Ho Chi Minh City

Bid farewell to the crew and disembark your ship at My Tho. Transfer to Ho Chi Minh City, then to Tan Son Nhat International Airport for your onward flight.

**Daily:** • Breakfast

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