

Indochine II, CroisiEurope

Cruise Line: CroisiEurope

Passengers: 60

Year Built: 2016

Decks: 3

Web: <http://www.croisieurope.com>

STAR Review



The RV *Indochine II* is the fifth of CroisiEurope's fleet on the Mekong River, which grew quickly following the company's purchase of Compagnie Fluviale du Mekong. Along with the four colonial-style ships that came with the sale, the company added *Indochine II*, its newest and largest vessel in the region, which blends colonial furnishings with modern style.

Indochine II sails between Siem Reap and Saigon on itineraries that range between eight and 11 days. In Siem Reap, travelers take a small boat across Tonle Sap Lake for about 20 minutes to reach the ship, where they are greeted with welcome drinks and chilled towels.

The 29-person Cambodian crew brings traditional hospitality to all parts of the ship. The company has long been popular with European travelers, and it is now seeing growing business from American, Japanese, Korean and Scandinavian travelers, among others. The primary languages aboard are French and English, but other languages are also spoken.

Land extensions on either end of the sailing are available, and partner hotels are of excellent, value-focused standards. Unlike other river cruises, the destinations frequented by the *Indochine II* are popular with many ages, and the cruise welcomes both families as well as couples of all ages.

The 990-ton vessel features three floors with teakwood floors and furnishings, a contemporary living room and bar area, a modern restaurant, and regionally themed artwork. Floor-to-ceiling windows on each floor permit plentiful light and great views of the passing scenery. A wraparound balcony on the first floor has small tables for dining or relaxing.

The ship measures 213 ft long and 43 ft wide, and it has a 3.2-ft reduced draft, which permits it to dock in downtown Saigon rather than farther away, where most river cruises must dock.

On the third floor is an air-conditioned lounge and bar with small conversational sitting areas and a small library of mostly French language books and board games. Each evening, briefings on the next day's activities are shared by the staff as guests sip cocktails, wine and beer. The bar serves all kinds of libations, and house wine, beer and soft drinks are included in the price at meal times. Drinks at other times of day and cocktails during meals can be charged to the room.

Near the pool, a coffee and tea station provides cookies, fresh fruit and a fridge stocked with bottled water. On occasion, musical groups entertain, and many afternoons, there are lectures about the history and culture of the destination. Free wireless internet access is available in the third-floor lounge and near reception, but the signal is notoriously slow.

All meals are served in the restaurant on the main deck, with buffets handling breakfast and lunch and a la carte menus at dinner. The menus center around regional dishes, but the chefs have toned down the spice level for foreign palates. Meals are served during specific windows of time, but dinner guests are requested to arrive at a specified starting time. The waitstaff does a remarkable job of serving guests, and those with specific dining requirements are accommodated with advance notice.

Breakfast has a made-to-order egg station, and lunch options include a variety of salads, regional fare, soup and fresh fruit. Dinner menus vary daily, and the dining room, like all public indoor areas, is sufficiently air-conditioned. Tables vary in size between small tables for two to some that can be combined for groups.

Shore excursions are included in the price of the sailing, and a schedule of the next day's tours is provided the night before. Tours typically last only a few hours, and guests are provided with bottled water and personal audio headsets. Typical tours include visits to local markets, floating villages, the Cambodian Royal Palace, the Killing Fields, Phnom Penh and other destinations.

There are three passenger decks with a larger-than-usual plunge pool on the top deck. Plentiful tables and chairs ring the wraparound deck, and the lounge chairs and suspended egg chairs at the aft of the top deck are particularly stylish.

On the bottom floor, a spa room is available for well-priced massage services. Passengers should reserve early. There is no fitness center aboard, but guests can walk laps on the top deck's artificial grass.

The strongly air-conditioned cabins, which take up the first and second floors, measure 194 sq feet, with balconies measuring 43 sq feet. Two rooms on either end of the second floor add additional terrace space.

Reached by a spiral staircase, cabins are lined in teakwood. Bed frames have clever nooks for storing items, as well as power outlets on either side, and all rooms feature two twins that can be arranged as a king. Beds face the windows and feature oversized pillows and thick comforters. Writing desks have phones and small storage areas. Facing the beds at an angle are the flat-screen TVs, and Hollywood movies are often shown on some of the channels. Closets have space for hangars and storing clothes, and mirrors hang above the headboard and in the bath. All rooms have refrigerators, as well as furnished balconies with sliding doors. The wireless internet signal does not reach guest rooms.

Water closets have small sinks, but the main bath is on the other side of the bed. Textured stone walls and excellent lighting add a sleek look. Robes and thick towels hang on one side. Glass shower stalls with excellent water pressure are in all rooms. Baths also come with scented toiletries and complimentary bottled water, as the tap water is not potable.

All rooms are similar in size save for a few at the front of the ship, where the space might feel slightly more pinched because of the curvature. The preferred rooms are on the second floor, but all rooms are comfortable. There are no connecting or wheelchair-accessible rooms.

Eco-friendly efforts are a growing part of the company's operations; initiatives include water and energy conservation systems, new equipment that can use land-based air-conditioning power, and onboard technology that uses less diesel.

Indochine II is a shining example of the evolution of this family-owned company to provide a value-focused product with French flair. Its growth in new parts of the world signals exciting times for the company, known for its attention to detail and genuine hospitality. The *Indochine II* does not disappoint when it comes to style, itinerary, quality of food and wine, or service.

Profile	Statistics	Recreation
Cruise Line: CroisiEurope Ship Type: River Cruiser/Canal Boat Line Class: River Cruise Year Built: 2016 Deck Quantity: 3 Passenger Capacity: 60	Length: 213 ft Beam: 42 ft Speed: 12 knots Outside Cabins: 30	Indoor Pools: No Outdoor Pools: Yes Is there a Spa? No Is there a Casino? No
Dining	Entertainment	
Restaurant	Salon	