THE CUU LONG (MEKONG DELTA) RIVER AT A GLANCE

cuu Long is the Vietnamese name for the Mekong River Delta which means "Nine Dragons" and representing the the nine exit points of the Mekong River as it flows into the sea. As one of the world's largest delta, the Mekong Delta Region is formed by the various tributaries of the mighty Mekong River which begins its journey to the sea in Tibet and winds its way for 4,500km through China, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Southern Vietnam. The land of the Mekong Delta is renowned for its richness. Known as Vietnam's breadbasket, it produces enough rice to feed the entire country with a sizeable surplus leftover. Take a sampan ride that meanders through small villages and experience the simple lives of the Mekong people. From Ho Chi Minh City a visit to the Cuu Long delta with vast paddy fields and peaceful villages on both sides of channels overshadowed by coconut canopies is recommended. These channels may lead to floating markets or to their remote mangrove forests in the southernmost part of the country.

LONG AN
Long An is located among the nine provinces of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam and faces Ho Chi Minh City in the east. Most of the population is from the Kinh group and a small percentage, the Hoa ethnic group. The monsoon tropical weather is divided into two seasons: the dry season, from December to April, and the rainy season, from May to November. The main attractions in Long An are the archaeological remains of the Oc Eo culture. Other vestiges include Nguyen Huynh Duc Temple and Tomb in Tan An and Rach Cat military base.

DONG THAP
Dong Thap is located along the southern border of the country, bordering Long An, Tien Giang, Vinh Long, An Giang, and Can Tho, and sharing a 52-km long border with Cambodia where travelers can get Vietnam tourist visa easily. Some of the ethnic groups in Dong Thap include the Kinh, Hoa, Khmer, Cham, and Thai. Dong Thap is well known as the rice generating province for the whole country. The tropical climate is divided in two seasons. The rainy season lasts from May to November. The annual average rainfall varies between 1,250 and 1,450 mm. The dry season lasts from December to April. Tourists visiting Dong Thap can admire the vast lotus and nenuphar blooms at dawn and sunset. The province is home to various kinds of animals such as cranes, herons, and pelicans. In the last few years, many scientists have investigated Dong Thap’s ecosystem and zoology, especially the crane because it has been classified as an endangered species.

AN GIANG
An Giang is located west of the Mekong Delta between the Tien Giang and Hau Giang Rivers and shares a 95-km border with Cambodia. It is next to the Cuu Long River and consists of a few midland areas and low mountains. The main ethnic groups found in the province are the Kinh, Khmer, Cham, and Hoa. The region is located in a monsoon tropical climate where the annual average temperature varies between 26 and 28°C. The two distinct seasons are the dry season, from December to April, and the rainy season, from May to November. Floods often occur from the middle of August to the middle of November. Famous sites and attractions include
An Giang Museum in Long Xuyen, Ba Sam Temple Festival at Sam Mountain in Chau Doc, and Cam Mountain in Binh Tien.

TIEN GIANG
Tien Giang is located north of the Mekong Delta, alongside the north of Tien River. The Kinh ethnic group accounts for more than 99% of the total population. The climate is divided in two distinct (dry and rainy) seasons. The rainfall in this province is considered lower than in the other provinces located in the Mekong Delta. Famous sites include Thoi Son Islet, Dong Tam Snake Farm, and Dong Thap Muoi Area.

VINH LONG
Vinh Long is located in the center of the Mekong River Plains, between Tien Giang and Hau Giang Rivers. More than 97% of the population is Khmer and Hoa. The tropical monsoon climate is divided in two seasons (rainy and dry) and has an annual average temperature of 27°C. Visitors can take part into several types of expeditions on rivers or through small village paths surrounded by uncountable fruit trees.

BEN TRE
Ben Tre is located near the mouth of the Mekong River and is surrounded by Tien Giang, Vinh Long, and Tra Vinh. The four main rivers are Tien Giang, Ba Lai, Ham Luong, and Co Chien. The main ethnic group populating this area is the Kinh. The tropical climate of Ben Tre is influenced by monsoons; the rainy season lasts from May to October and the dry season from November to April. The average annual temperature is 26°C and the humidity level is quite high due to the presence of many rivers. Ben Tre is well known as the motherland of poet Nguyen Dinh Chieu. Tan Vinh Islet is also a famous tourist site.

CUU LONG - KIEN GIANG
Kien Giang is located at the south extremity of the country. It shares a 54km border with Cambodia, has 200km of coastline, and comprises 105 islands. The main ethnic groups in the area include the Kinh, Hoa, and Khmer. The tropical monsoon climate is hot and humid all year round. The annual average temperature is 27°C and the annual average rainfall varies between 1,600 mm and 2,000 mm. The rainy season lasts from April to November and the dry season from December to March. Phu Quoc Island is a large island where tourists enjoy spending time throughout the year. Other famous sites include the Temple and Tomb of national hero Nguyen Trung Truc in Rach Gia, Tam Bao Pagoda, the Bird Sanctuary, Tan Hoi Pagoda, and Mac Cuu Tomb. Phu Quoc, the largest island in Vietnam, in the province of Kien Giang lies in the Gulf of Thailand, 45km from Ha Tien and 15km south of the coast of Cambodia. It is also part of an archipelago consisting of 22 islands of all sizes. The island covers an area of 585km² and is 50km long. Phu Quoc is also called the Emerald Island because of its natural treasures and infinite tourism potential. The island is well known for its high-quality fish sauce. Phu Quoc Island has many harbors such as An Thoi and Hon Thom where international and domestic ships anchor. Also, there are several historical sites on the island: National Hero Nguyen Trung Truc's military base, Gia Long King relics from the time he spent on the island, and Phu Quoc prison. Off the coast of the island emerges a group of 105 islands of all sizes. Some of them are densely inhabited such as Hon Tre and Kien Hai, 25km from Rach Gia. Visitors can spend
time on the beach at luxury resorts in Phu Quoc or hike while observing the wild animals. People visit Ha Tien in Kien Giang province hoping to capture the magic of the land in South Vietnam, where many heroic historical places such as imperial tombs and ancient pagodas can be visited. Ha Tien is such a delightful location that a French film company chose it to produce the movie "L'amant" (The Lover) in 1995. It is an ideal location to spend holidays. There are several attractions in the area: Thach Dong stone grotto, a piece of green stone emerging from the ground; Chong stone; Hon Phu Tu, Father and Son rocks which lie approximately 100 m offshore; and Hang Pagoda, 40 m underground, somber and foggy, echoes the sounds of the pagoda’s bell on the stone drops. By boat, one can reach Hai Tac islets, 16 islets around which the water is 4 m deep. On the coast of Hon Doc, the largest islet, is a magnificent white sand beach running towards the sea. Near Hon Chong Beach is Tien Cave that has 2 openings; the east door on the sea and the west door, opening on Duoc Beach. In the cave are many oddly shaped stone drops, some suggesting Nguyen King’s gold throne. Hon Trem Beach, 1,000 m from Hon Chong Beach offers the nicest white sand in Ha Tien. Hang Pagoda is also very interesting.

CAN THO
Can Tho is located in the center of the 11 provinces of the Mekong Delta, 170km from Ho Chi Minh City, south of the Hau River. The Hau River is considered a benefactor of this region, since yearly floods deposit large quantities of alluvia to the rice fields. The climatic features of this area are similar to the other provinces of the Mekong Delta. The temperature rarely falls under 15°C and the rainy season lasts from May to November. It is wonderful to take a boat trip along the riverbanks on fine weather days. On the east bank of Hau River is Ninh Kieu Wharf, which is well known for its beautiful location. Not too far from the wharf is a floating restaurant connected to the bank by a bridge. Visitors travel along the waterway to the floating restaurant to taste eel dishes, a specialty of the region. Can Tho University accommodates approximately 2,000 students in the fields of agriculture, medicine, and teaching.

TRA VINH
Tra Vinh is located in the Mekong River Plains, 202km southeast of Ho Chi Minh City. The main ethnic groups to populate the area include the Kinh, Khmer, and Hoa. The monsoon climate is divided in two distinct seasons (rainy and dry) with an annual average temperature of 26°C. Famous sites include Uncle Ho Temple in Long Duc village, Ba Om Pond with its mysterious legends, Ba Dong and My Long Beaches, Khmer Pagodas, etc.

SOC TRANG
Soc Trang is located in the Mekong River Plains and is surrounded by Bac Lieu, Can Tho, and Tra Vinh provinces. The main ethnic communities living in Soc Trang are Kinh, Khmer (28%), and Hoa (8%). The annual average temperature is 27°C with an average rainfall of 1,850 mm. Famous sites include Doi and Dat Set Pagodas as well as a museum on Khmer culture in Soc Trang. Natural resources include My Phuoc Orchard and Thanh Tri Bird Sanctuary.

BAC LIEU
Bac Lieu is located at the south extremity of the country. It is surrounded by Can Tho to the north, Soc Trang to the east, the East Sea to the south, and Ca Mau to the west. The main ethnic groups are the Kinh and Khmer. There are two distinct seasons: the rainy season and the dry season. The average temperature is 24°C. An interesting site to see in Bac Lieu is the Bac Lieu Bird Ground.

CA MAU
Ca Mau is located at the southern most extremity of the country. It is surrounded by Kien Giang in the north, Bac Lieu in the east, the Gulf of Thailand in the west, and the East Sea in the southeast. The Kinh and Khmer are the main ethnic groups living in this area. The climate is divided into two distinct seasons: the rainy season (from May to October) and the dry season (from November to April). The main attractions in this area are the U Minh Forest, Dau Roi Bird Ground, Hon Khoai, Hon Chuoi Island, and Ngoc Hien Bird Yard.

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