

## Indochina Explorer

**Country(ies):** Vietnam & Cambodia

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** A/C minibus, junk boat, overnight train & flights

**Group size:** Min: 1 | Max: 0

**Days:** 16 Days

**Start location:** Hanoi, Vietnam

**End location:** Phnom Penh, Cambodia

**Departs On:** Any day

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 14, Lunches - 1, Dinners - 1

**Highlights:**

Explore Vietnam's capital city Hanoi, cruise the beautiful Halong Bay, relax on China Beach, visit Hoi An town, tour the bustling Ho Chi Minh city, marvel at the World Heritage site of Angkor Wat, experience Choeung Ek memorial

**Places Visited:** Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Peng & Siem Reap



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive Hanoi and afternoon city tour

Arrive Hanoi Airport. After customs and immigration formalities you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel accommodation.

This afternoon you will visit the Historical museum, one of the finest museums in the whole countries; the Tran Quoc Pagoda, the Hoan Kiem Lake and the Ngoc Son temple then take 1-hour city tour by pedicab (one person per one pedicab) and shopping in the Old streets of Hanoi.

In the evening you will attend the performance of the famous Vietnamese traditional art of water puppetry at Thang Long Theatre.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hanoi hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour || Single room supplement (VETMIE)

## Day 2: Full day sightseeing in Hanoi

Today we see Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, the One Pillar Pagoda, the Ho Chi Minh Museum, the Fine Arts Museum, the Temple of Literature, the Quan Thanh Temple and the Sword Lake.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hanoi hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Drive to Halong Bay, junk boat cruise

Morning transfer to Halong bay 180km northeast of Hanoi.

Enjoy an overnight boat cruise on Halong bay which is listed as a World Heritage Area of outstanding natural beauty. The boat will stop at Thien Cung cave and Dau Go caves for sightseeing.

**Note:** The itinerary may be changed depending on weather without prior notice and the cruise we choose

**OVERNIGHT:** Junk boat

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Back to Hanoi for overnight train to Hue

Return to Hanoi for a free afternoon of downtown shopping before we transfer you to the railway station for your train to Hue at 7:00pm.

**OVERNIGHT:** On board sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Arrive in Hue and afternoon tour

After disembarking the overnight train (approx 8am) we will take a boat trip on the Perfume river, which divides the city and for centuries has been the inspiration for artists and poets alike, to Thien Mu Pagoda and Minh Mang Tomb before a tour of the Citadel, Vietnam's former imperial capital and recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hue hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Drive to Danang via Hai Van Pass

After breakfast we drive to Danang via Hai Van Pass. This afternoon we will visit the Cham Museum, Marble Mountain and the famous China Beach.

**OVERNIGHT:** Danang hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Drive to Hoi An and orientation tour

After breakfast we drive to seaport of Hoi An. Known as Faifo to early Western traders, Hoi An was one of South East Asia's major international ports and today it still retains that special old-world feel. Enjoy a walking tour through the Old Quarters to see the town's landmarks of Japanese Covered Bridge, ancient Assembly Hall, Phuc Kien Temple and then we will take a river trip and enjoy the scenery along the Thu Bon River & the view of Hoi An's Ancient Town. Visit Thanh Ha Pottery Village and carpentry village of Kim Bong. Hoi An is also famous for its large number of tailor shops, so if you want to have a new wardrobe made up, this is the time to do it. Free afternoon to relax at Cua Dai beach.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hoi An hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Back to Danang for flight to Ho Chi Minh City

Free morning before transfer to Danang airport for flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Meet and greet at Ho Chi Minh City airport and transfer to hotel for check in.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ho Chi Minh City hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Ho Chi Minh, morning city tour

Morning tour of the Reunification Hall, the War Crimes Exhibition or the History Museum, a lacquer or rattan ware factory, Notre Dame Cathedral, Centre Post Office, China Town and Thien Hau Pagoda (built by the Cantos congregation in the early 19th). Stop at Binh Tay or Ben Thanh Market for shopping.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ho Chi Minh City hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 10: Flight to Phnom Penh and afternoon city tour

Transfer to the airport for morning flight to Phnom Penh. Upon arrival transfer to hotel accommodation. You will then proceed to the Independence Monument which was constructed in 1954 after the Cambodian's took their country back from the French. Then continue to visit the Royal Palace compound build in 1866 by the Predecessors of King Norodom. This palace is one of impressive, colourful, Khmer-style. Close to the Royal Palace is Silver Pagoda (The Emerald Buddha temple), where you will see many Buddha Statues displayed that are decorated and made of diamond, emerald, gold and silver. After that, National Museum, a distinctive red building with beautiful Khmer architecture was built in 1917 and contains more than 5000 art objects made of sandstone, bronze, silver, copper and wood. We pass through the River Front park and continue to the sacred sites of Wat Phnom before walking along the Mekong River bank to see the lovely Phnom Penh city at night.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phnom Penh hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Flight to Siem Reap

Transfer to the airport for morning flight to Siem Reap. Upon arrival transfer to hotel accommodation. Afterward we visit the Angkor National Museum where you will use state of art multimedia technology to take you back in time to the ancient Khmer civilization. The museum exhibitS artefacts that are set into 8 galleries in the chorological order with the exclusive gallery of 1000 Buddha statues showing how the Buddhist religion is spiritually linked to the ancient Khmer civilization.

We continue to visit the fabulous Ta Prohm, embraced by the roots of enormous fig trees and gigantic creepers, as well as Prasat Kravan - With its unique brick sculptures, Srah Srang - The Royal Baths" was once used for ritual bathing, Banteay Kdei - Surrounded by four concentric walls Thommanon and Chaosay Tevorda temple.

**OVERNIGHT:** Siem Reap hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 12: Cycling tour of Angkor

Today we will cycle (approx 45mins) to the cities world heritage area. On the way we will cycle through the jungle and pass local villages & shops.

You will visit the ancient capital of Angkor Thom (12th century), see the South Gate, Bayon Temple - unique for its 54 towers decorated with over 200 smiling faces of Avolokitesvara, Baphuon temple lying just to the north of Bayon a pyramidal representation of mythical Mont Meru, the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Elephant Terrace and the Terraceof the Leper King.

The afternoon tour starts with a visit to the famous temple: Angkor Wat. Angkor Wat is a World Heritage Site since 1992, famous for its beauty and splendour. Angkor Wat features the longest continuous bas-relief in the world, which runs along the outer gallery walls and narrates stories from Hindu mythology. Visit Bakheng Temple and enjoy a romantic sun set view form Bakheng hill.

**OVERNIGHT:** Siem Reap hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Morning Angkor tour

After breakfast we continue our Siem Reap sightseeing with a visit to Banteay Srei: nearly everyone's favourite site. The special charm of this temple lies in its compact size, remarkable state of preservation, and the excellence of it

decorative carving; Banteay Samre: Its rose-colored sandstone walls are decorated with carvings and bas-reliefs, which are among the most accomplished Angkor has to offer; visit Eastern Mebon used to be in the middle the waters of the large Oriental Baray that is presently filled with rice-fields; Neak Poan was supposed to be a symbol of the Universe; Preah Khan built in 1191 according to the tradition on a spot where the king fought a crucial battle against the Cham.

**OVERNIGHT:** Siem Reap hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 14: Afternoon flight to Phnom Penh

Free morning until afternoon transfer to Siem Reap airport for flight to Phnom Penh.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phnom Penh hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 15: Morning boat trip & visit to Choeung Ek

In the morning, we take a boat along the Mekong River to visit Koh Dach, also known as 'Silk Island'. We can see the weaving techniques first-hand and experience the realities of village life. The silk they weave is sold to buyers from Phnom Penh and beyond, so buying direct from the weavers here is much cheaper. As you walk or take the local cycle around the island you will find many of the wooden stilt houses have removed at least one loom weaving down with family members. Koh Dach is an example of traditional Cambodian village life and is a lovely "oasis" away from the hustle and bustle of Phnom Penh. Much of the silk can be spun to see you here will end up on the stands of the Russian market. Once finishing tours around the island you will board the boat. We continue to visit Choeung Ek museum, where between 1975 and 1978 about 17,000 men, women, children and infants were detained and tortured at S-21 prison before being transported to the extermination camp of Choeung Ek. Next we visit Tuol Sleng prison (Genocide Museum) the Khmer Rouge regime's biggest secret also known as S-21 which stands for "Security Office 21" and was Cambodia's premier security institution, specifically designed for the interrogation and extermination of anti Angkor elements. Then, we will go shopping at Toul Tompong Market (called Russian Market), so-named because of the prevalence of items from the Eastern Bloc in past times, the Russian Market today is a treasure trove for tourists.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phnom Penh hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 16: Transfer to airport for departure

Free morning in Phnom Penh until transfer to airport for departure.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Phnom Penh - post-tour

## Included

- All Accommodation
- All meals indicated in your itinerary
- Airport transfers at the start and end of your trip
- Site entrance fees for all tours detailed in your itinerary
- Qualified tour guide to accompany you on all sightseeing

- Private vehicles for all road journeys indicated
- Sleeper train based on shared cabins
- Comprehensive pre-departure material

## **Excluded**

- International flights (can be arranged on request)
- Domestic flights as per itinerary
- Vietnam and Cambodian Tourist Visas
- Departure taxes
- Tips
- Meals, drinks & snacks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Any other items not mentioned in the itinerary

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

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## 1. Accommodation

On this tour we use a mix of good quality hotels rated at the 3 and 4-star level along with some more interesting accommodations such as a traditional Junk Boat on Halong Bay and an overnight sleeper train from Hanoi to Hue. Accommodation is based on twin, triple or double en-suite rooms. Please visit the accommodation tab of this tour for examples of the properties normally used on this tour. If you have any specific accommodation requests please let us know and we'll be happy to provide you with a customised quotation.

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## 2. Transfers

The tour includes a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service and all other transfers. Arrival transfers will be provided from Hanoi Airport (Vietnam) and departures to Phnom Penh Airport (Cambodia).

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## 3. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

Our Vietnam tours start and finish in either Hanoi airport (HAN) or Ho Chi Minh airport (SGN).

If you are booking a tour that combines Vietnam and Cambodia we may not include the connecting flight between the two countries in the tour price (see the inclusions/exclusions or extension option sections for details). This flight can often be built into your main international flight ticket, or we may be able to book this flight for you separately if you prefer - please contact us and we will advise you on available airlines, times and prices.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## 4. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides



As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Indochina we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. At Encounters Travel we only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most famous guides.

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## 5. Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

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## 6. Tipping

Tipping is not part of culture in South East Asia in the same way that it is standard practice in other parts of the world. However it has become more customary but not compulsory in the tourist and service industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. USD 5-10 per person per day would be appropriate for your guide(s).

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## 7. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

**Thailand:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Vietnam:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

**Cambodia:** Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

**Laos:** Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are

visiting.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

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## 8. Passports and Visas - Vietnam

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

British citizens (plus Japan, South Korea, Denmark, Russian, Sweden, Norway, Finland, , France, Germany, Italy, Spain) are currently subject to a visa exemption scheme, so no visa is required for stays in Vietnam of up to 15 days. Other nationalities and those staying longer in Vietnam will need to obtain a visa in advance. As this isn't always convenient we offer the option of obtaining a visa on arrival approval letter which means that you can then purchase your visa on arrival in Vietnam. However if you try to board the flight without this letter or a visa you'll be refused board. Visa approval letter fees are normally USD 10 p/p for single entry, or USD 15 p/p for multiple entry visas. The visa stamp fee on arrival at the immigration desk is then USD 25 p/p for single entry, or USD 50 p/p for multiple entry. These fees are given as a guide and may vary over time and subject to nationality. Please contact us if you have any queries.

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## 9. Passports and Visas - Cambodia

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

Many nationalities (including British, EU, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand amongst many others) can obtain a 30-day tourist visa on arrival in Phnom Penh or Siem Reap Airport (and some land borders). At the time of publishing the visa fee is \$30.00. You'll need to make sure you have a passport sized photograph for the visa. If you are arriving via Phnom Penh or Siem Reap Airports then you can obtain an e-visa prior to arrival at - [www.evisa.gov.kh/](http://www.evisa.gov.kh/) (these are not accepted at land borders).

As visa regulations often change we recommend that you check this information with your nearest consulate. Obtaining the correct visa is the responsibility of the traveller.

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## 10. Time

The time in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is GMT plus 7 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not observed.

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## 11. Voltage

Sockets are two round or flat pronged and 220 volts (Type A, B, C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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## 12. Money - Vietnam

The Vietnamese currency is the 'Dong' (VND). Most people prefer to be paid in Dong rather than US dollars. It can sometimes be difficult to change large notes at smaller villages so try to keep a stash of smaller notes with you.

You can also change all major currencies with any private moneychangers, at the local markets, shops or hotels, or at a bank. Banks usually open from 8.00am to 3.00pm, except Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Although all major currencies are usually accepted, the US\$ is by far the most widely accepted and preferred currency, with large notes (\$50 and \$100 bills) getting a better exchange rate. Travellers' cheques in major currencies are accepted at all banks, though a commission will be charged.

At banks throughout Vietnam you can draw cash, in both dong and dollars on all major credit cards. Approx. 3% commission will be charged for this service. Many souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels will accept payment with credit cards. There is, however, a 3-4% surcharge.

There are ATMs in Major cities like Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hué, which accept major credit cards. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards, some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars), and some travellers' cheques.

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## 13. Money - Cambodia

The Cambodia currency is the 'Riel' (KHR). US\$ are widely accepted in the country and more or less work as a second currency. Because of its location so close to Thailand, you will find that Thai baht is also accepted in most places. Bear in mind that if paying in US\$ or Thai baht, your change will be given back in riels.

It's also possible to change Thai baht or US\$ with local private moneychangers, at some shops and markets or as usual, any banks that you may come across. These banks will also change most other currencies such as Sterling, Euros etc. The banks tend to open from 7.30am to 2.30pm.

If you have travellers cheques in major currencies then the banks will accept these although it is likely that a commission will be charged.

In Phnom Penh and Siem Reap, banks and even some travel agents will allow you to draw cash against most major credit cards but you can expect a surcharge of around 3-4%. These days, more and more shops, restaurants and hotels in the major tourist destinations will accept payment with credit cards. Until recently, Cambodia had no ATM's whatsoever but this is changing fast and it's now possible to withdraw money from ATM's located in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. Most credit cards and some debit cards are accepted but its best not to rely on this as a way of accessing your funds while in the country.

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## 14. What to take

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Vietnam and Cambodia, though if your itinerary has many stops and different travel included within it, we recommend packing light and not bring any large cases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Climate and Clothing:** There are three reasonably well-defined seasons in this region, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Indochina is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights. Some light raingear would be useful in the wet season.

**Other items:** We recommend you also bring:

- Cool footwear (sandals are ideal). If you are interested in exploring the reefs, a pair of reef shoes is recommended to avoid injuries. If you are trekking, then bring comfortable and sturdy walking shoes or light walking boots.
- Swimming costumes - rash-guards/t-shirts are recommended for snorkelling to avoid sunburn.
- Sunscreens, after sun lotions and personal hygiene products - Please adhere to 100ml restrictions for anything you wish to carry on hand-luggage on flights.
- Prescription medications (if required) - please bring supporting documents.
- Power adapter for phones, laptops etc
- Sunglasses and hats
- Basic first aid kit and toiletries
- Money belt
- Small torch
- Dive certification card and log book if you intend to participate in SCUBA diving.
- Sleeping bag if your tour includes any hill-tribe or village trekking

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## 15. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

For many people planning a trip to this region, the weather will be a determining factor in choosing when to travel. In general there isn't really a 'bad' time to visit Vietnam and Cambodia as you'll normally experience a mix of sunshine and rainy days at most times of the year. Generally the summer months of May through to September/October are rainy in much of these two countries. The months between mid-November and April are generally considered the best months to visit these countries where you'll normally expect hot days with little rainfall (although you should still expect occasional rainfall at this time).

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## 16. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 17. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

*IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.*

## **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

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## **18. Financial Security**

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## **19. Responsible Tourism**

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However,

it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudice: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## **20. Follow Us Online**

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](https://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravel](https://www.twitter.com/encounterstravel) (yes, without the 'e')

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## **21. Before you travel**

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign which provides further useful and invaluable information.

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## 22. Transfers

Our South East Asia tours all include a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service, and all other transfers throughout the tour. If you are already in the country then we will provide you with your first hotel details, contact numbers for our local representatives, and details of your first meeting time.

gov.uk/travelaware

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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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