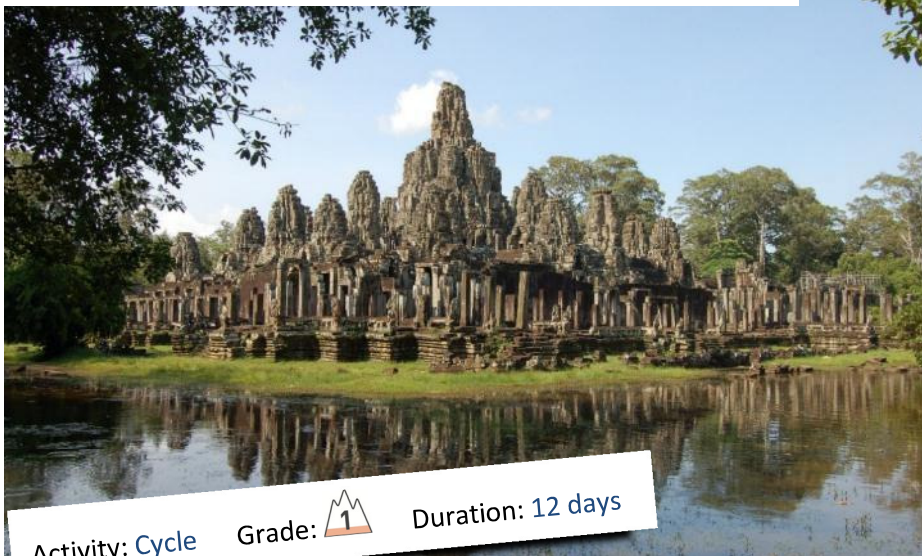


Vietnam & Cambodia

Ho Chi Minh to Angkor Wat Cycle



Activity: **Cycle** Grade: Duration: **12 days**

Cycle through beautiful rural landscapes dotted with ruins of ancient civilisations and small towns where Buddhist temples nestle amongst graceful French colonial buildings and ramshackle houses.

Our challenge takes us from Vietnamese Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, through the rice-paddies and waterways of the beautiful Mekong Delta into Cambodia. We pedal on through this friendly country towards one of the most impressive sights in Southeast Asia, the Royal Temples of Angkor Wat. We encounter a few rolling hills, but the main challenge lies in the long, hot humid days in the saddle with the occasional tropical downpour. The fascinating insight into the region's cultures, ancient and modern, are a real highlight of the trip.



Dates & Prices

2015

7 – 18 Feb 3 – 14 Oct 28 Oct – 8 Nov

Fundraising Option

Registration Fee £399
PLUS Fundraising Target £3300

Self Payment Option

Registration Fee £399
PLUS Trip Cost £1450
PLUS Fuel Supplement capped at £200

2016

6 – 17 Feb 1 – 12 Oct

Fundraising Option

Registration Fee £399
PLUS Fundraising Target £3450

Self Payment Option

Registration Fee £399
PLUS Trip Cost £1500
PLUS Fuel Supplement capped at £225

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1: Depart London

Day 2: Arrive Ho Chi Minh City

On arrival we transfer to our hotel and have a trip briefing before getting a good night's sleep, ready for the start of our challenge! Night hotel.

Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City – Tra Vinh

After an early breakfast we drive (approx. 1.5 hours) out of the bustling city of Ho Chi Minh to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels. A sanctuary for the Vietcong at the height of the Vietnam War, they give us a good insight into the country's relatively recent history. We then drive south towards the Mekong Delta (approx. 2.5 hours). We stop near Ben Tre, the gateway to the Mekong Delta, and after lunch and ensuring our bikes are comfortable, we set off! It's a wonderful place to start our ride. We cycle on narrow lanes and tracks through the heart of this rural area, passing banana plantations, sugar cane fields and the lush rural landscape of the Delta. We have a short ferry crossing before reaching Tra Vinh. Night hotel.

Drive approx. 1.5 & 2.5 hours; cycle approx. 42km



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Detailed Itinerary (cont)

Day 4: Tra Vinh – Cau Ke – Can Tho

Our first full day's cycle takes us along quiet backroads to Can Tho, the largest city in the Mekong Delta, known for its picturesque canals full of scenes of everyday life. En route we pass numerous Khmer temples and pagodas, and cross several waterways – some by footbridges, some on ferry crossings. We will start to get a great feel for the friendly Vietnamese culture, and the traditional rural scenes we see are fascinating. We ride today on a mix of roads and tracks; most of it is very quiet, but the last section gets busier as we approach Can Tho. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 90km

Day 5: Can Tho – Long Xuyen

After an early breakfast we set off by boat through the Can Tho floating market, seeing a multitude of boats trading livestock, fruits, rice and fish. We then get back on our bikes and cycle along the banks of the busy river continuing towards Sa Dec. After lunch we cycle upstream alongside the river towards Long Xuyen. This is a beautiful day, with some wonderful photo opportunities. We end our ride at a bird sanctuary, home to thousands of storks – we can have a quick visit to see them before loading up into the vehicles for a short transfer (approx. 45 mins) into Long Xuyen. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 75km

Day 6: Long Xuyen – Tri Tron – Chau Doc

This is our last day of cycling in Vietnam! We have a short transfer (30 mins) out of town to avoid the traffic, and then set off. Our route starts to undulate a little as we near the hills near Chau Doc; although these climbs are fairly gentle, our leg muscles have become used to flat terrain so they often feel harder than they really are! The heat, moreover, makes them feel tougher. We cycle via the Killing Fields at Ba Chuc, where Pol Pot's regime massacred over 3000 Vietnamese people in 1978; harrowing history. We continue our ride to the busy town of Chau Doc. Night hotel (near border).

Cycle approx. 90km

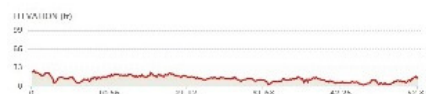
Cycling Information

Our trips are graded from 1 (Moderate) to 5 (Extreme). This ride is Grade 1. Distances vary from 30 - 90km per day. Our route is mainly on tarmac roads of varying quality with some that are more like dirt tracks; terrain is generally flat with a few gentle hills. There are several waterways we cross by small boat. Traffic is usually light and we will cycle at our own pace most of the time.

We will be using 21-speed mountain bikes fitted with semi slick tyres. There will be a range of spares in the vehicle along with a full tool kit; however, it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality.

It is imperative that you supply your own helmet and wear it at all times while cycling, with straps done up.

Sample Day's Profile



Weather

It can be very hot and humid, and only cools slightly at night. Cooler weather can come in without warning. Conditions can change quickly, so be prepared for everything! Average temperatures in Phnom Penh range from 21-34°C.

FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

This ride is designed to be challenging for those of good health and fitness, and is achievable for most people provided they train well in advance. We will supply you with a thorough training guide when you have registered. Training for the challenge is all part of the preparation and requires commitment! Without it, you will find the ride less enjoyable – and we want you to have the time of your life!



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What's Included

The tour cost includes flights and transport, all accommodation, a bike, and food other than 2 meals as detailed in the itinerary; entry to the temples of Angkor is also included.

It also includes full trip support of experienced Discover Adventure leaders / mechanics, as well as local guides, drivers and cooks.

It does not include personal travel insurance, airline fuel supplement charged by the airline (capped by Discover Adventure), entry visas, tip for local support crew, any extra meals and entry to any other tourist sites you may wish to visit. Transport to the temples during free time is also at your own cost.

We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.

Visas & Vaccinations.

A ten-year passport is essential and must be valid for at least 6 months after entry. Visas are required for both countries. You must have had a Tetanus injection in the last ten years, and highly recommend protection against Polio, Hepatitis A and Typhoid. We strongly recommend taking malarial prophylaxis. A yellow fever certificate is required only if coming from an infected area.

Detailed Itinerary (cont)

Day 7: Chau Doc – Takeo – Phnom Penh

Today we set off early, heading north towards Phnom Penh. After around 20km we reach the border with Cambodia and meet our new guides who will be waiting for us. We then head off through the lovely rural landscapes of Cambodia. At the small town of Takeo we load up into the buses, which take us the remaining distance to Phnom Penh, stopping en route to visit the infamous Killing Fields, which are harrowing but compelling at the same time. We then arrive at our hotel in Phnom Penh; once considered one of the most beautiful cities in the Orient and which, despite its turbulent recent history, retains a colonial charm. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 50km

Day 8: Phnom Penh – Kampong Chhnang

We start our day with a visit to the Tuol Sleung Museum, or School 21, a former school which was turned into the notorious Khmer Rouge interrogation camp during the Pol Pot regime. Although it tells a tragic story, it is a fascinating place to visit and essential to understanding present-day Cambodia. We then leave Phnom Penh by bus (approx. 1 hour) to avoid the city traffic before we start our ride. As we head to Udong we see the rice paddies stretching out for miles, busy with workers in the fields. The roads in the region tend to be a rich red which is very striking against the dazzling green paddy-fields – be prepared to take lots of photos! We ride through Udong, once the ancient capital, and pass by a hill temple with stunning views of the fertile region and many of the old Royal Palaces. Continuing on, we cycle towards Kampong Chhnang and the enormous Tonlé Sap Lake. Night hotel.

Cycle approx. 75km

Day 9: Kampong Chhnang – Siem Reap

A beautiful boat ride awaits us this morning, as we cross the immense Tonlé Sap. The largest freshwater lake in South-East Asia, it features an incredible biodiversity and has UNESCO biosphere status. We enjoy a rest from our bikes as we soak up the views of fishing communities and calm waters. Leaving the boat at Kampong Khlaeng, we ride on small roads through beautiful landscapes and villages, heading

Accommodation & Food

Accommodation is on a twin-share basis. When cycling we stay in small friendly hotels or guest-houses; some are very good, others more simple. In towns and cities our hotels are generally more Western-style and 2-3* standard.

All meals are included other than 2 meals as detailed. The food is good and there is plenty of it; most meals are local-style not western. Lunches are sometimes packed lunches but mainly cooked. Please let us know any dietary requirements well in advance.



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Detailed Itinerary (cont)

towards Siem Reap. This area is unspoilt and very traditional, and it's a lovely quiet ride to savour before reaching the main tourist draw of Angkor. Meeting our vehicles, we load up before reaching the busy streets and drive (approx 30 mins) into Siem Reap, the closest town to the temples. Night hotel.

Boat ride approx. 5 hours; cycle approx. 30-40km

Day 10: Angkor Wat Cycle

Today we ride to the famous World Heritage site of Angkor Wat. The area is dotted with many ancient buildings and temples amidst dense forest; the sheer scale of the complex will astound you. We ride a circuit around some of the temples, including Ta Prohm, the best-known of the temples overgrown by trees and reminiscent of scenes from *Tomb Raider*. Our ride also takes in the Bayon in Angkor Thom, the old city central to the area. It is a fascinating ruin, featuring many mysterious giant carved faces and some incredible wall carvings, and is one of the most remarkable sights in the area. Our ride ends at Angkor Wat itself, one of the most impressive and best-preserved temples of the complex. If there's time, it is worth climbing the remarkably steep and narrow steps of the central spire for the view over the whole temple surrounded by jungle. It's a wonderful place to finish our challenge after 500 hot kilometres across two countries! After the obligatory group photos we transfer back to our hotel (approx. 30 mins) and should have some free time this afternoon to spend as you wish – relax at the hotel, or explore Siem Reap's markets for last-minute shopping opportunities, or visit more of the temples. We meet again in the evening to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

(Dinner not included)

Cycle approx. 30km

Day 11: Free time; flight departs

We will have some time free for further exploration of the incredible temples and ruins that make up the Angkor complex; or simply relax or haggle in the markets if you prefer. How much time we have free depends on our flight schedules. We meet again at the hotel, say a fond farewell to Cambodia and transfer to the airport for our flight.

(Lunch not included)

Day 12: Arrive UK

Our flight connects en-route and we return to the UK.

Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

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Crew & Trip Support

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Depending on group size, an expedition doctor or medic will also accompany the group.

Our local support crew is made up of a friendly team of local guides and drivers. Local guides are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Support vehicles will be with the group at all times. All luggage and spares will be carried in the vehicles.



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