

saigon to angkor wat bike ride, q&a



how big is the group?

Each group is intended to be a minimum of 16 people in order to run and a maximum of approximately 30 people due to the wilderness environment in which the challenge is taking place.

do you have any information on the flights?

You will be flying from London to Ho Chi Minh. You will return from Siem Reap to London. The flying time from London, is approximately 15 hours. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. Please ensure you keep hold of your Departure Card issued on arrival in HCHM for your border crossing to Cambodia. If you choose to book your own flights you must confirm with the Charity Challenge office before paying otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance).

what's the luggage allowance?

As no formal clothes are needed, luggage should be kept to the absolute minimum - details on what to pack are provided in your kit list. Your rucksack/holdall (suitcases are not appropriate) must not exceed 15kgs in weight. Each day when you begin to ride, your personal kit will be transported to the next hotel. You will only need to have a handle bar bag or bum bag with you during the day and you will be able to access your day pack at rest stops.

what will the accommodation be like?

The standard of accommodation in Vietnam and Cambodia is generally very high. You will be sharing in rooms of two. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with, please let Charity Challenge know in advance.

will my valuables be safe?

While we will do everything to provide adequate safety for the group and security for your possessions, the general rule is that if you don't need it, don't bring it. This includes jewellery, necklaces, rings and even watches. Your passport and money should be kept on you at all times. You should take a photocopy of your passport, visas, and any vaccination certificates and leave a copy at home with a friend/relative in case of loss or damage to the originals.

what is the food and drink like?

Food in Vietnam is a delight. It is a blend of Thai and Chinese food and is always freshly cooked with plenty of vegetables. Typical Vietnamese dishes include *pho*, a type of rice noodle soup eaten for breakfast, *cha gio* and deep fried spring rolls and *goi ngo sen*, a delicious salad made with lotus stems, shrimps and peanuts. Cambodian meals are based on fish, poultry, pork, vegetables and rice. The dishes are all very tasty and different and not spicy. Food is usually prepared with a minimum of oil and served with ubiquitous fish sauce called *nuoc mam*. Saigon/Hanoi Beer are the local brews. Wines are very expensive unless you want to sample locally made rice wine – 'Roau' (pronounced zeeo). Throughout Vietnam and Cambodia you will come across plenty of Seafood dishes. Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies however being flexible

when eating in SE Asia is essential as some diets are hard to cater for! Water will be supplied while you cycle.

who will be leading the group?

We employ a number of first aid trained challenge leaders, all of whom speak English. They will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

what is a typical day?

During the cycling days you will cycle for 4-6 hours. Your support vehicles will back up the group and will choose shady rest stops every 15–20km where you can all regroup. Here you will be able to re-energise with fruit snacks and fill water bottles. At lunch you will re-group at a local restaurant or beauty spot for a picnic lunch. Occasionally you will need to take public ferries to cross the Mekong; these stops need to be taken in a timely manner to keep to the schedule. In the evening there is usually an hour or so free time before we meet to discuss the next day's adventure. Dinner follows the briefing.

what are the bikes like?

The bikes are good quality lightweight Trek 4300, 4500 & 4700 - 24 & 27 spd Mountain bikes with Shimano Deore components, V Brakes and Rock Shock front suspension 13" to 23.5", we also hire 24spd Challenger Sport Mountain bikes. We can offer a range of frame sizes. All bikes have water bottle carriers & quickly detachable wheels. (If you would like to bring your own spare inner tube this would help, the valve systems are Presta 26' x 1.8 or Schrader). On arrival you will be asked to sign a waiver issued by our local ground handler on arrival in case of incident caused by yourselves. **Please indicate your height on your booking form so that we can aim to book the correct size well in advance.**

how fit do I need to be?

Training is definitely required. It is important that you work specifically on your stamina, leg and joint strength, and balance in order to get as much out of the challenge as possible. Don't forget that the temperature and climate is different to the UK and that you will be exercising constantly for a number of days - the heat and distances will be your biggest challenge. Also see Fitness Training notes.

what if I can't keep up?

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. We allow for this. There will always be a staff member at the back of the group to ensure you are not left behind and can take things at your own pace. If we find somebody is unable to cycle at all, then we can transport them from one location to the next.

what happens if I fall ill, can't keep up or there is an emergency?

It is policy that participants must wear a helmet, please take your own for comfort reasons. Be aware that cycling

can be dangerous and accidents can happen, you must be responsible for your own safety whilst riding. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by, and we maintain mobile phone contact with the back up team. If for any reason any injury should occur, or continuation is not possible, a relief vehicle will be made available. The relief vehicle will be a private air-conditioned bus, minibus or jeep that will support the riding throughout the tour. The support bus is there for clients who need to rest, to carry the spare bike parts, and will often contain refreshments such as water, snacks and soft drinks to make riding more enjoyable. The support bus will follow at a discreet distance all the time. During transfer sections, the bikes will be carried in the bus where necessary. When riding off road on single track trails support will sometimes be by motorbike. The guide will carry water and the first aid kit with him/her until the trail joins the main track where the bus will be waiting.

what is included in the cost of the challenge?

Your international flights to Vietnam and from Cambodia, all meals and drinking water whilst cycling unless otherwise stated in the itinerary, all transfers in Vietnam & Cambodia, all hotel accommodation, bikes, group first aid supplies, an English-speaking challenge leader and full local support team, a Charity Challenge T-Shirt, US\$20 to the local community project, and discount from Nomad Travellers Stores for personal equipment. We also make a contribution through Climate Care to offset the equivalent CO2 emissions of your international flight.

what is not included in the cost of the challenge?

The following items are not included in your challenge and will be at your own expense – drinks with your evening meals, activities not mentioned in the itinerary, £38 Vietnamese visa (bought in UK) & approx \$21USD Cambodian Visa (bought at border), International departure tax (approx Cambodia \$25USD), personal spending money and travel to and from UK airports.

what shall I do about spending money?

You will not need large amounts of money during this trip. Other than at the start and end of the trip, you will spend a great deal of the trip in the countryside away from any foreign exchanges or banks. We recommend that you take approx £200 in small denominations. You can use USD\$ throughout the trip so only change approx £20 into Dong on arrival in Vietnam and can approx £20 into Riel for use in Cambodia. Travellers' cheques or credit cards are only accepted in major hotels or banks so should not be relied on.

how much would you recommend for tips?

Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. You should only tip if you feel that you have received good service. We recommend approx. USD\$80 per person for the team for your whole challenge. This should be given to your challenge leader at the start of your trip and they will run a kitty, giving it to all members of staff, hotels, rest stops along the way with your involvement.

should I take gifts or clothes for the locals?

We advise against giving small gifts to children as it can encourage begging. However, if you have any small items or clothing that you would like to donate, your challenge leader will collect it from you and make sure that it is distributed where it is needed most.

what is the weather likely to be like?

Vietnam is generally hot and sunny. But both countries have a tropical climate so you may experience tropical rain and very occasionally storms. During the wet season it may be very humid. Cambodia has 2 seasons. From December to May it is the dry season when the temperature is over 40c and the rainy season from June to early November when the temperature is around 25c but with a high humidity level.

what do you do to protect the environment?

By keeping to a relatively small group we limit the impact we have on the surrounding environment. We follow the local guidelines on cultural respect and environmental protection - during the challenge we ensure that the route does not disturb the life of the local people and environment. If any participants would like to deviate from the route we ask them to gain advice from the Tour Leader. Participants will notice quickly that Cambodian people in rural areas are not very concerned by environment protection. We contribute by educating them through our own actions. We will also be donating US\$20 per participant towards a local community project, which you will be informed about after your challenge (educational, health, or environmental). Also see Responsible Tourism notes.

can you recommend any literature about the region?

- *The Rough Guide to Cambodia*
- *First They Killed My Father*
- *The Girl In the Picture*

english	khmer	vietnamese
Hello	Chum Reap Sour / Sour Sdei	Xin Chao
Goodbye	Chum Reap Lea	Tam biet
Good morning	Arun Sour Sdei	
Good evening	Sayon Sour Sdei	
Good night	Reatrei Sour Sdei	
Please	Som/Som Meta	Xin
Thank you	Orkun	Cam un
How are you?	Teu Neak Sok	Toi Khue
	Sabay Te?	
You're welcome	Min Ei Te	Khong co gi
Excuse me	Som Tous	Xin loi
I'm sorry!	Khngom Som	
	Tous	
I understand	Khngom Yol	Toi hieu
I don't understand	Khngom Ot Yol	Toi Khong hieu
How much?	Thlay Bonman?	Bao nhieu tien?
When?	Angkal?	Belna?
Where is...?	Ae na.....?	
What is the time?	Moang	
	Bonmanheuy ?	
Do you speak English?	Neak nijei Anglais te?	
Zero	Soun	
One	Muy	Mot
Two	Pi	Hai
Three	Bey	Ba
Four	Bourn	Bon
Five	Pram	Nam
Six	Pram muy	Sau
Seven	Pram pi	Bay
Eight	Pram bey	Tam
Nine	Pram bourn	Chin
Ten	Dop	Muoi

NB: The information provided above was correct at the time of going to print.