CHARITY CHALLENGE

TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

SAIGON TO ANGKOR WAT BIKE RIDE VIETNAM

Thu 10 Nov - Sun 20 Nov 2016

In aid of your choice of charity

10 Nov - 20 Nov 2016

11 DAYS | VIETNAM & CAMBODIA | MODERATE

A challenge of great contrasts, this cycling route covers 450kms past plantations, across waterways and through villages deep in the heart of the lush Mekong Delta in Vietnam, to the dry lands and ancient sights of Cambodia. Venture off the beaten track to the heart of the Mekong, taking in countless tranquil temples and pagodas, as well as bustling markets selling anything and everything. Siem Reap is the overall destination. From here, the group will explore the ancient city of Angkor. Built from 879-1191AD by the Khmer civilization, Angkor represents one of humankind's most astonishing architectural achievements and in 1992 was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

- Cycle 450kms through heart of Mekong Delta
- Endless miles of quiet backwaters and country roads
- Ancient temples and countless colourful pagodas
- Angkor Wat, masterpiece of Khmer architecture
- Visit Saigon, Phnom Penh and Angkor

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 *Thu 10 Nov*

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International departure from London

Our journey begins at the airport where we'll meet our teammates and Charity Challenge representative. Any last minute nerves will turn to excitement as we touch down in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) after the overnight flight.

DAY 2 *Fri 11 Nov*

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Ho Chi Minh City

We will be met at the airport by a local Charity Challenge representative who will accompany the group to a centrally-located hotel. There will be lunch after check-in, followed by a full trip briefing and bike fitting – and perhaps a little spare time to explore. Overnight at the hotel.

DAY 3 *Sat 12 Nov*

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My Tho to Tra Vinh (approximately 52kms)

After breakfast we transfer to My Tho, gateway to the Mekong Delta. Our cycling adventure begins after a ferry journey across the Tien Giang river. A varied section of biking cuts off-road onto gravel and dirt lanes, weaving around hamlets, across water channels and through dense vegetation. The final ferry of the day sees us cross Co Chien river to Tra Vinh. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 4 *Sun 13 Nov*

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Can Tho (approximately 82kms)

The road may be long, but the atmosphere is calm and peaceful as we head along narrow and pretty roads to Can Tho. There is plenty to see, including the magnificent lotus flowers at Ba Om Pond. The route also takes in the contrasting architectural styles of ethnic Khmer homes and Khmer temples, as well as fascinating river scenes from countless wooden bridges. Overnight in hotel.

DAY 5 *Mon 14 Nov*

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Long Xuyen (approximately 90kms)

After a very early breakfast, we ride on a narrow paved road via Cai Rang floating market. Weave through the morning traders, as we pedal along the banks of the very busy river. Taking in another market, we continue on to Phong Dien Village and eventually stop for lunch. There's a 30 minute transfer to the town of Long Xuyen. Dinner and overnight in hotel.

DAY 6 *Tue 15 Nov*

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Chau Doc (approximately 80kms+)

After a short early morning transfer to Tri Ton, the cycling starts to undulate as we ride closer to Chau Doc. This afternoon we cycle to the killing fields of Vietnam at Ba Chuc, where Pol Pot's regime massacred over 3,000 Vietnamese in 1978. The route loops around to Chau Doc along the border. Dinner and overnight in hotel for the final night in Vietnam.

DAY 7 *Wed 16 Nov*

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Chau Doc to Phnom Penh

Rise and shine early for a boat journey up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh. It's three hours upstream to Phnom Penh, where meet our Cambodian guides and bikes. After lunch at the atmospheric Foreign Correspondents' Club we travel to Cambodia's killing fields and the Tuoel Sleng genocide museum, followed by a bike inspection at the hotel where we spend the night.

DAY 8 *Thu 17 Nov*

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Kampong Thom (approximately 65 kms)

It's an early morning bus transfer to Kampong Cham. Heading north via the ancient Japanese bridge, we visit one of Cambodia's most famous towns: Skun. We then transfer to Thnong village, from where we commence a 65km cycle through tropical countryside. Once we arrive at Kampong Thmor, it's another 38km to Kampong Thom, on the banks of the Stung Saen river. Overnight and dinner here.

DAY 9 *Fri 18 Nov*

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Kampong Thom to Siem Reap (approximately 66kms)

It's the final day of cycling and we're heading for Siem Reap, the gateway to the Angkor region. In order to avoid poor roads we will be transferred across 85km to an ancient bridge at Kampong Kdei. We rejoin our crew at Dombek village, from where we set off on a 66km ride. We reach the finish line as the sun sets over Angkor Wat.

DAY 10 *Sat 19 Nov*

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Full day in Angkor Wat, then depart Siem Reap

Catch the sunrise with an optional early morning visit to Angkor. Angkor Wat is just one of the many temples in the region, though probably the best preserved. From here, continue to Angkor Thom, which was the last capital of the Great Khmer Empire under the reign of Jayavarman VII. Also not to be missed is the temple of Ta Prohm. Head to airport for flight home.

DAY 11 *Sun 20 Nov*

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Arrive UK

Be sure to exchange contact details with your fellow cyclists as you arrive back home in the UK. Armed with a sense of achievement, you can feel proud as you touch down and share your fantastic journey with your family and friends.

NB

The itinerary and distance approximations are there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather, road conditions, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our best to keep to the itinerary, however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes. In all such circumstances, your expedition leader will have the final say.

HOW TO FUND YOUR CHALLENGE

This page provides you details of the costs of your challenge.
The costs below are per person.

SELF FUNDER

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Pay a registration fee of £475.00 when you book
Then a balance of £1948.00
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £475.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £3975.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

-

Registration fee of £475.00 when you book
Then £475.00 towards challenge costs
(8 weeks before your challenge)
Raise a minimum of £2995.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Risk assessment and emergency management planning
- Public liability insurance
- Discount on personal equipment from The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor and Nomad Travel Stores
- Access to "ask the expert" re your kit requirements
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)
- Warm up exercise routines
- 16 and 20 week trek/bike training schedule
- Fitness training notes
- Sponsorship forms (online and hard copy)
- Template press release
- A-Z of fundraising ideas
- Support materials (itinerary, kit list, fact file, Q&As, health notes, travel tips, responsible travel policy and guidance)
- Fundraising advice

On your challenge

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- International flights to and from the UK (including all known UK air taxes, and fuel surcharges, at the time of costing)
- Internal road and air transfers as per the itinerary
- Accommodation during the challenge (usually in twin share)
- Three meals a day (unless otherwise stated in the itinerary)
- Drinking water on challenge days
- Entrance fees to national parks or other places of interest visited on the itinerary
- All ground staff including English speaking guide, drivers, cooks, and porters
- Full back-up support including first-aid qualified staff and first-aid supplies
- Activity equipment such as bikes, tents and rafts as per the challenge activity
- A donation to a community project in one of the countries in which we operate
- A contribution towards funding the reduction of carbon emissions through Climate Care's portfolio of award winning projects
- A Charity Challenge T-Shirt
- All challenge management before, during and post event

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

Before you go

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- Travel to and from the UK airport of departure
- Visa
- Vaccinations (please check Trip Notes for requirements)
- Travel Insurance (you can buy at time of booking or in your Account Area, or provide your own policy details)
- Clothing and equipment listed on your Kit List

On your challenge

-

- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)
- Personal spending money
- Any other specific items listed as not included in your Trip Notes

THE DETAILS

Fundraising deadlines	You will need to send your sponsorship money to the charity as you raise it. At least 80% of the minimum sponsorship required must be sent to the charity 10 weeks before departure (by 01/09/2016), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 18/12/2016). If you have raised the necessary funds, the charity will then pay the balance of your challenge costs. The charity benefits by keeping the remaining sponsorship money and every pound over and above that you raise.
Prices include all known air taxes	We include ALL known air taxes (including fuel) at the time of costing. Many companies do not include air taxes at all, and clients are therefore hit with a surcharge of three or four hundreds of pounds just before departure. Our aim is to provide you with transparent pricing and clear instructions as to what is included in our prices and if applicable what isn't.
Typical group size	The typical group size is 16 - 30 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 16 participants. We can run this trip with 12-15 people, but there will be a small group supplement of £75. This is payable by your charity if you book under the Minimum Sponsorship or Flexi options, and by yourself if you choose the Self Funder option. We will notify you 12 weeks before departure if this is necessary.

Optional extras	Business class upgrades* Travel insurance Single room supplements* Extensions at end of trip* Trek/bike training weekends* (*subject to availability)
Travel insurance	Your safety when travelling with Charity Challenge is our main concern, which is why it is a booking condition that you have a suitable travel insurance policy, which covers you for the adventurous nature of your challenge, the activities you are undertaking, and the altitudes. We have chosen to partner with specialist travel insurance providers Campbell Irvine, who offer cover for an extensive number of adventurous activities. Cover is available directly from Campbell Irvine for most European residents and includes cover for emergency medical and repatriation and for your cancellation or curtailment of the challenge. Full details including costs may be found at https://www.campbellirvine.com/charitychallenge.

HUA HIN BEACH EXTENSION – £520.0

For those who can't face leaving the region so soon, we've created an amazing extension in neighbouring Thailand. The four-day trip includes a half-day city tour of Thailand's capital, Bangkok. You will also spend two days relaxing and enjoying the beautiful coastline at Hua Hin, where you can swim, sunbathe or indulge in a traditional Thai massage.

- Registration fee £50.0
- Balance £470.0

- Single Room £180.0

Level of Difficulty

The Saigon to Angkor Wat cycle challenge is graded as moderate. This is the perfect challenge for participants who are of an adventurous spirit and an open mind, but perhaps haven't taken on a strenuous challenge event before and are hoping to push themselves out of their comfort zone. You can tell your supporters that on your Saigon to Angkor Wat cycle Challenge you will be:

- Cycling for around 6-8 hours per day, covering approximately 450kms over 7 days.
- Battling the heat and humidity. Temperatures can reach the 30s.
- Cycling across waterways, plantations and on unpaved and dusty roads.

Money

Currency: The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). In Cambodia it is the Cambodian Riel (KHR). For up to date currency exchange, go to www.xe.com. We recommend exchanging currency before you go; however there are ATM's and currency exchanges available at Ho Chi Minh airport to exchange in Vietnamese currency. US dollars (small denominations) are preferred and widely accepted in Cambodia for payments. You can also exchange GBP in Siem Reap into local Cambodian Riel currency.

Credit Cards: Visacard and Mastercard are now accepted in many hotels and shops, but the preferred currency is dollars, cash.

ATMs: You will have access to ATMs in the main cities in Vietnam and Siem Reap (Cambodia).

How much to bring: All accommodation and meals are included within the price of the trip, as well as water during the days of your cycling challenge. You will not need to carry a lot of money with you during the challenge, but as there are daily opportunities to buy soft drinks, alcohol and snacks on the way we would suggest a maximum amount of about £15 a day (in local currency). Bring more if you intend to buy souvenirs and take up the opportunity of the additional things you can do during your time in Vietnam and Cambodia. You may have the opportunity of enjoying a relaxing post-cycle massage (about £30) in Siem Reap at the end of your challenge. There are plenty of great craft souvenirs, silk clothing and silver jewellery in Vietnam and Cambodia. Keep this in mind!

Tipping: Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff are paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture, and Vietnamese and Cambodian guides will generally receive a tip at the end of a job well done. If you choose to tip, we would suggest an amount of £100 - £150 per participant for the duration of the challenge. For those on Charity Challenge organised extensions, we would suggest between £5 and £6 per person per day.

Visa

Vietnam

UK Citizens do not require a visa to enter Vietnam for a period of less than 15 days. You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge, and at least one blank page for your visa and entry/exit stamps. British passport holders entering Vietnam for only 15 days or less will benefit from a visa exemption until the 30th June 2016. We will revisit this advice at that point.

If you wish to remain in Vietnam over 15 days or you are intending to re-enter the country after your challenge, you will have to apply for a regular visa (single or multiple entry) depending on your travelling plans. You can download

one visa form and all the information about the visas on the Vietnamese Embassy website at www.vietnamembassy.org.uk.

Cambodia

UK citizens do require a visa to enter Cambodia but this will be arranged locally. You must hold a full ten-year passport with at least six months to run from the end of your challenge, and at least two blank pages for your visas and entry/exit stamps. All nationalities must obtain a visa for entering Cambodia. It costs US$30 with a $5 handling fee at the border and allows a stay of up to 30 days and one entry only. You must pay in USD cash. You will need 2 passport photos and your guides will advise you on the procedure in Vietnam. If you are a British national and plan to stay for an extended period in Cambodia you are strongly advised to register with the British Embassy in Phnom Penh upon arrival. You can register online at www.britishembassy.gov.uk/cambodia.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the NHS 'Fit for Travel' website: http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk/home.aspx. Although the Charity Challenge team are travel professionals, they are not medical experts and we would encourage you to visit your GP or travel nurse to discuss vaccination requirements. Your GP may ask questions about the specific locations that you are visiting in Vietnam and Cambodia, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Flights

You will be flying from London Heathrow to Ho Chi Minh. The flying time is approx. 14-15 hours indirect. Your flight tickets will be issued to you upon departure at the airport. If you choose to book your own flights please confirm with the Charity Challenge office first, otherwise you may be liable for your included group flights (please contact flights@charitychallenge.com for further assistance). For more general flights questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Insurance

/more-information.html#faqsIt is a condition of booking that you have a suitable travel insurance policy whilst participating on the challenge. We have a special policy which covers among other things, medical (emergency, evacuation and repatriation) arrangements, cancellation and curtailment of the challenge, and more specifically for the adventurous activities undertaken on this challenge. If you have your own travel insurance policy, you must ensure that it provides at least the same level of cover as our recommended policy, including protecting the charity in the event of your cancellation 56 days or less prior to departure. If you choose not to purchase our recommended policy when you book we will send you a disclaimer which you should complete and return.

For more general travel insurance questions, please refer to our main FAQs page.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 16 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 30 people. We will be

able to run this challenge for 10 to 19 people by charging a small group supplement of £75 which will be added to your final balance invoice (self funders) or charged to your charity (minimum sponsorship or flexi).

Leadership

There will be an English-speaking challenge leader who will be responsible for the logistics and co-ordination of your challenge. There will also be numerous local support staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Climate

While hot and often humid, Vietnam has a tropical climate, and so you may experience tropical rain and very occasionally storms. During the wet season it can be very humid. Cambodia has 2 seasons. The dry season is from December to May, with temperatures of over 40c, and the rainy season from June to early November, during which the temperature is around 25c but with a high humidity level.

Terrain

As your cycle route is along the Mekong Delta the terrain will be fairly flat for the whole cycle, however please do not underestimate the length of the days as some days you will be covering 80 km - 90 km. Some areas of the cycle will be very exposed and with extreme heat and humidity which will be a challenge in itself. Please ensure you drink plenty of fluids and protect yourself from the sun. The cycle paths will be narrow and you will be navigating a variety of paths and bridges and so good use of changing gears is recommended.

Luggage allowance and valuables

The luggage allowance will depend on the airline we are using for your challenge, but in general it will be one piece of checked baggage at around 23 kg. However, we suggest that for our Saigon to Angkor Wat challenge you should only need around 15 kg-17 kg. If you don't need it, don't bring it, is a good rule. For any valuables, safe deposit boxes are usually provided to use in the hotels. Use a padlock on your luggage when in transit to reduce any risks. Carry your passport with you and make sure you have a photocopy of your documents (travel insurance etc.) in case they get lost or damaged.

Responsible Tourism

At Charity Challenge we are committed to sustainable and responsible tourism, and work closely with bodies such as the International Porter Protection Group and Climate Care to ensure that our challenges benefit the local environments and communities in which they take place. We ensure that all rubbish is disposed of responsibly, and following local guidelines on cultural and environmental protection and respect, we aim to limit our impact on the natural environment. In addition to taking these practical steps to ensure that our challenges are sustainable, we also make a contribution each year to a number of local community projects, so as to give something back directly to the communities that we visit. Since 2000 we have donated almost £200,000 to such projects, supporting a range

of initiatives, including schooling for children in Africa, shelter for street children in Brazil, and Orang-utan conservation in Indonesia. We recommend that any gifts brought over for children are given to the UK challenge leader and distributed where needed by them and our local Ground Agent. If you wish to do more, you should consider buying drinks, postcards and souvenirs from the local vendors. For many, it is their sole source of income. For more information, please visit our Responsible Tourism pages, where you will be able to view a list of the projects that we currently support.

Typical day

During your cycling days, you will wake at around 7am, have breakfast and start cycling for 6-8 hours. You will stop at shady rest stops every 15–20 km where you can rest and regroup. Here you will be able to re-energise with fruit snacks and fill water bottles. For lunch you will stop 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.

Accommodation

The standard of accommodation in Vietnam and Cambodia is generally very high. All rooms are en-suite and have facilities for charging batteries and wifi connection. If you are travelling with a friend or partner who you wish to share with please ensure that you note this where appropriate when booking or email challenges@charitychallenge.com.

Food & Drink

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, 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 for the most part not too spicy. Food is usually prepared with a minimum of oil and served with ubiquitous fish sauce called nuoc mam. Saigon/Hanoi/Angkor Beer are the local brews. Wines are very expensive unless you want to sample locally made rice wine – 'Roau' (pronounced zeeo). Please let Charity Challenge knows prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies. You will need to be somewhat flexible with your eating habits when travelling in SE Asia, however, as some diets are hard to cater for! Water will be supplied while you cycle. Please note that you may encounter a large amount of seafood on this challenge so please inform Charity Challenge of your dietary requirements if you do not eat seafood so we can accommodate you the best we can.

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 front suspension. All bikes have water bottle carriers & quickly detachable wheels. 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.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, a helmet is compulsory, and comfortable footwear for your cycle will be indispensable, particularly coupled with some good quality padded cycling shorts. The benefits of a comfortable day sack cannot be underestimated, so make sure that you train with this. Other essentials are a high quality gore-tex waterproof jacket and technical/Dry fit t-shirts rather than cotton shirts. Cycling gloves, and a cotton scarf or buff are also highly recommended, to protect you from the dust. A full kit list for this challenge can be found here, and once you book you will have access to kit discounts with our partners The Outdoor Shop, Outdoorhire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Toilets

These range from very basic during the cycling route to normal western standards in the accommodation. There will be en-suite toilet and washing facilities at the hotels. Remember bringing with you some tissue as you might find it difficult to find during your cycling route.

Phone and WiFi

Most of your accommodation will have limited WiFi which you will be able to use, but please do not rely upon this, particularly while in Cambodia as internet connections are not always reliable. You will have phone signal in almost all places on the challenge.

Safety

Charity Challenge considers the safety of all of our participants and staff to be a top priority, and as such we have set up Challenge Safe, one of the most advanced and thorough safety management systems in the industry. Challenge Safe formalises our ethos when it comes to safety, and brings together the procedures and risk management strategies that we use to audit all aspects of our challenges, from vehicles to accommodation to the challenge activity itself. Your welfare is absolutely paramount!

In terms of your Saigon to Angkor Wat challenge, there are a couple of important points that you should be aware of:

- The cycling route is very exposed, with almost no shade, and on sunny days the temperatures can soar. You should ideally be wearing a sun hat, sun cream, and hydrating constantly!
- Smoke alarms are not a legal requirement in Cambodia, and as such some of the hotels we use do not have them in place. Your leader will explain the emergency fire procedures to you.
- Vietnam and Cambodia are regions where still today, a high number of unexploded land mines are being found every day. Don't wander off well-trodden paths. You could encounter forgotten land mines and undetonated munitions. Never touch a leftover grenade or mine!
- You will be cycling on the opposite side of the world to what you are used to, and occasionally on main roads frequented by many vehicles. Take the first day slowly until you become accustomed to your surroundings.

Emergencies

The event is not run as a race and there is always a large discrepancy in people's cycling abilities. This is allowed for. There will be a staff member at the back of the group at all times to ensure that 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.

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 do happen – you must take responsibility for your own safety whilst riding. Throughout the challenge, back-up support will be close by. If for any reason any injury should occur, 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. It will follow at a discreet distance, and is there for clients who need to rest, to carry the spare bike parts, and will also often contain refreshments such as water, snacks and soft drinks. During transfer sections, the bikes will be carried in the bus. 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.

Training

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 distance will be your biggest challenge. You need to be able to sustain around 6-8 hours of cycling for 7 continuous days, so if you can then replicating this over a weekend would be fantastic training. In your members area you will find more comprehensive Fitness Training Notes in your account. You can also look to join one of our training weekends.

Challenge Training

If you would like to get a feel for our challenges ahead of your departure, why not consider booking on a 1 or 2 day UK Challenge?

We have a variety of challenges, covering all levels of difficulty, taking place in stunning National Parks across the UK that are led by highly qualified and experienced expedition and mountain leaders. These challenges will give you the perfect opportunity to monitor fitness levels, test out your kit, meet people in the great outdoors, share fundraising stories and gain valuable advice and support for the challenge ahead. We encourage participants to make use of our highly knowledgeable leaders and ask them any questions you may have about clothing and equipment, expedition health and wellbeing, trekking skills, walking techniques and teamwork!

We are offering all participants **50% off** the registration fee when you book on one of the UK challenges listed via the link below. Just use the code **TRAINING** when booking. T&C's – you must have an active booking on a challenge to avail of this offer. Discount cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Find out more here

CHARITY CHALLENGE

Any more questions?

Contact us:

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