

CH>RITY
CH>LLENGE



TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

SAIGON TO ANGKOR WAT BIKE
RIDE
VIETNAM

Fri 29 Mar - Mon 08 Apr 2019





In aid of your choice of charity

29 Mar - 08 Apr 2019

11 DAYS | VIETNAM & CAMBODIA | MODERATE

This is a challenge for those who love the tropical vibes of South East Asia, cycling the open road, and exploring ancient history. Follow the road less cycled from Saigon to Angkor Wat, venturing into the heart of the Vietnam's Mekong Delta. Ride the quiet backwater roads, stopping to explore ancient temples and bustling markets full of glorious street food. As you make your way to Siem Reap, admire the beautiful and varied rural landscapes from your saddle. Then, enjoy the fruits of your pedalling by exploring the incredible architecture of the Royal Temples of Angkor Wat. Covering 450km across seven days, this challenge is moderate, designed to enjoy the stunning scenery of South East Asia. Expert guides will be with you every pedal of the journey, ensuring your comfort and safety.

- Marvel at the Royal Temples of Angkor Wat
- Cycle 450kms through the Mekong Delta to Cambodia
- Follow endless miles of beautiful backwater roads
- Pass ancient temples and pagodas, and colourful villages
- Embrace the freedom of life on a bike

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Fri 29 Mar

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International departure from London

Your journey begins at the airport where you meet your fellow teammates. Any last minute nerves will turn to excitement as the plane touches down in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) after an overnight flight.

DAY 2 Sat 30 Mar

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Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

On arrival, a local Charity Challenge representative will accompany the group to a centrally-located hotel. Lunch will be served after check-in, followed by a full trip briefing and bike fitting, and perhaps a little spare time to explore the surrounding area.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 3 Sun 31 Mar

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My Tho to Tra Vinh (approximately 52kms)

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

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 4 Mon 01 Apr

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Can Tho (approximately 82kms)

The road may be long, but the atmosphere is calm and peaceful as you head along narrow and pretty roads to Can Tho. There's 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.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 5 Tue 02 Apr

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Long Xuyen (approximately 90kms)

After an early breakfast, take a ride on a narrow paved road via Cai Rang floating market. Weave through the morning traders, and pedal along the banks of the very busy river. After enjoying 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.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 6 Wed 03 Apr

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Chau Doc (approximately 80kms+)

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

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 7 Thu 04 Apr

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Chau Doc to Phnom Penh

Rise early to take a boat journey up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh. Its three hours upstream to Cambodian capital city, where you'll meet your Cambodian guides and be fitted with your new bike. After lunch at the atmospheric Foreign Correspondents' Club, travel to Cambodia's harrowing killing fields and the Tuol Sleng genocide museum.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 8 Fri 05 Apr

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Kampong Thom (approximately 65 kms)

Starting with an early morning bus transfer to Kampong Cham, The group heads north via the ancient Japanese bridge, to visit one of Cambodia's most famous towns, Skun. Here, you'll Transfer to Thnong village, from where you'll commence a 65km cycle through the stunning tropical countryside. Once you arrive at Kampong Thmor, it's another 38km to the final stop of Kampong Thom, on the banks of the Stung Saen river.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 9 Sat 06 Apr

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Kampong Thom to Siem Reap (approximately 66kms)

It's the final day; a 66km ride to the incredible Royal Temples of Angkor Wat. Reach the finish line as the sun sets over the Angkor temples, and provide the perfect finish to a successful challenge.

Accommodation: Hotel

DAY 10 *Sun 07 Apr*

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Full day in Angkor Wat, then depart Siem Reap

Shake off the heavy legs by watching an incredible sunrise over Angkor Wat (optional). Explore the rest of the temples in the complex, including Angkor Thom, the last capital of the Great Khmer Empire under the reign of Jayavarman VII, and Ta Prohm. Unfortunately, your challenge is over and it's off to the airport for your flight home.

Accommodation: In the air

DAY 11 *Mon 08 Apr*

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Arrive home

Armed with a sense of achievement, you can feel proud as you touch down into the UK and share your fantastic journey with your family and friends. Don't forget to exchange contact details with your fellow cyclist as you depart.

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 £525.00 when you book

Then a balance of £2084.00 (8 weeks before your challenge)

Raise as much as you can for your charity.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £525.00 when you book

Raise a minimum of £4255.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

-

Registration fee of £525.00 when you book

Then £525.00 towards challenge costs (8 weeks before your challenge)

Raise a minimum of £3185.00 for your charity.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

Before you go

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- 12.5% off Cotswold Outdoor, Snow + Rock, and Runners Need
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules

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)
- 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 Charity Challenge T-Shirt

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)

On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

policy details)

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 18/01/2019), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 06/05/2019). 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

Extensions at end of trip*
Single room supplements*
Business class upgrades*
(*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 <http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/charitychallenge>.

Level of Difficulty

The Saigon to Angkor Wat cycle challenge is graded as moderate. A "moderate" trip is the perfect challenge for someone who has perhaps never taken on a challenge event before, and is looking to test themselves on an active physical challenge. Although a moderate challenge might be culturally challenging, you will usually be staying in hotels/lodges rather than camping, and there will be no altitude involved. Training is necessary for all challenges to ensure you are fully prepared.

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.

Typical Day

During your cycling days, you will wake at around 7am, have breakfast and start cycling for 6-8 hours. You will stop in the shade every 15–20 km so you can rest and regroup. Here you will be able to re-energise with fruit and 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 of free time before we meet to discuss the next day's adventure. Dinner follows the briefing.

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 sun cream and a hat and be 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 still have a high number of unexploded land mines 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 road. Occasionally, you will be cycling on main roads frequented by many vehicles. Take the first day slowly until you become accustomed to your surroundings.

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.

Extensions

If an extension is available for your itinerary, this info will be included on the respective expedition website. If you wish to book an extension, you will need to do so no later than 4 months prior to departure.

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 e-mailed to you before departure. 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.

Visa

We will upload a Visa Application Advice document into your account area 3 months prior to your departure. The visa info is per the FCO website where a link will be provided together with a link to the visa office for that country.

The approximate cost of visas for this itinerary is \$35.

Insurance

It is a condition of travelling with Charity Challenge that you have a suitable travel insurance policy which covers you for your entire 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 must complete and return to Charity Challenge prior to travel.

On Day 7 of your Great Wall Discovery itinerary there is the opportunity to ride on a toboggan run at the end of your day's trek. Please note that, if you choose to ride the toboggan, you do so at your own risk and you will be not covered if you have taken out Endsleigh Travel Insurance as recommended by Charity Challenge. We strongly discourage using the toboggan run and cannot vouch for its safety. Your decision to ride the toboggan should take this into account.

For more travel insurance questions, please refer to our main [FAQs page](#) or for any specific queries, please contact us at bookings@charitychallenge.com.

Vaccinations

For up to date vaccination information please check the Travel pro health page:
<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>.

Charity Challenge team 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, and as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Medication

Carry medicines (including those bought over the counter) in their correctly labelled original packaging, as issued by the pharmacist. These should be carried in your hand luggage.

Consider packing a spare supply of medication in the hold luggage in case of loss of hand luggage

A letter from the prescriber detailing the medicines with the generic names for the medications can be helpful for border control checks, and in case medicines have to be replaced or medical help is required

Carry a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injection medications

Take out an appropriate level of travel health insurance including repatriation and specific cover for any pre-existing illnesses

N.B. Some medications are banned abroad so please check. You can find further information at
<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/factsheet/43/medicines-abroad>

Climate & Terrain

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. The rainy season is from June to early November, during which the temperature is around 25c but with a high humidity level.

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 so make good use of the bike's gears.

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. 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](#)

Luggage Allowance & 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 approximately 20kg.

Each trekking day, your personal kit will be transported to the next stop by a support vehicle. You will carry a daypack for your daily needs such as sun cream, lunch, water, camera and lightweight waterproofs.

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. 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.

We advise that you wear your walking boots on the plane and take a set of trekking clothing (especially your jacket) in your hand luggage. In the unlikely event that your hold bag should go missing, you will be able to begin the challenge until you are reunited with your luggage.

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 guides and staff to assist them. The challenge leader will be ultimately responsible for the running of the itinerary and the safety of your group.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 16 people minimum in order to run and a maximum of approx. 30 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 12 to 15 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).

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 in case of an 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 & 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.

Accommodation & Toilets

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

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 to bring some toilet paper with you as it may be difficult to find during your cycling day.

Food & Drink

Dietary Requirements

Please let Charity Challenge know prior to departure if you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies. You will need to be as flexible as possible with your eating habits when travelling in SE Asia, as some diets are hard to cater for! Please note that you may encounter a large amount of seafood on this challenge, so please inform Charity Challenge if you do not eat seafood so we can accommodate you the best we can.

Water will be supplied while you cycle.

Vietnam

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.

Cambodia

Cambodian meals are based on fish, poultry, pork, vegetables and rice. The dishes are all very tasty 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).

Money

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 of about £15 a day. 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 jewellers in Vietnam and Cambodia. Keep in mind that it is useful to have notes in small denominations.

Vietnam

The local currency is Vietnam Dong (VND), but US dollars are also accepted. It is almost impossible to change VND into US dollars without a flight ticket showing your onward destination. Only change money at official money exchange counters with a clear sign showing this status. Changing money elsewhere is illegal and, while a higher

rate may be on offer, you may risk losing your money. Credit cards are becoming more widely accepted, but outside main centres you may find cash the only acceptable currency. It also may be difficult to cash travellers' cheques. ATMs are widely available in major cities and tourist areas. You can have funds transferred to Vietnam via international money transfer companies like Western Union or Moneygram.

Cambodia

The US dollar is the main currency used in Cambodia. Prices in hotels, shops and restaurants are quoted in US dollars. Cambodian Riels are used only as small change at a rate of around 4000 Riels/US\$1. ATMs are available in Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville, Siem Reap and in some other major towns. Take care when withdrawing cash and be aware of your surroundings. Not all ATMs and banks accept foreign debit and credit cards so check with your bank before you travel. Credit cards aren't widely accepted, but some hotels and businesses in larger cities will accept them. Travellers cheques can be exchanged at some banks and bureaux de change.

Credit Cards

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

Tipping

Tipping is personal and at your sole discretion. We recommend approx. US\$10 per person per challenge-day. This should be given to the challenge leader who will distribute it among the support team, including guides, assistant guides, cooks and porters.

Phone & Wi-Fi

Most of your accommodation will have limited Wi-Fi 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.

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. In the event of an emergency, all guides and leaders are maintaining contact via radio, and the backup vehicle will not be far away. If somebody is unable to cycle at all, then the guides will arrange evacuation to a vehicle.

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Any more questions?

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