



TRIP NOTES

BELIEVE ACHIEVE INSPIRE

**NORTH TO SOUTH VIETNAM
CYCLE - THE OPENWORK
FOUNDATION
VIETNAM**

Fri 19 Oct - Sun 28 Oct 2018





In aid of The Openwork Foundation

19 Oct - 28 Oct 2018



10 DAYS | VIETNAM | CHALLENGING

This 400km cycle ride begins in the Vietnamese capital Hanoi and travels down to Saigon in the south. After a day spent exploring Hanoi, we head for Hué, which is dominated by majestic temples, ancient tombs, and the imperial citadel. Onwards to Hoi An, a sixteenth century trading town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. Culture and history abound here, as you will see at the next destination: Finally, we arrive in Saigon, with plenty of time to celebrate our incredible achievement.

- Cycle up to 400kms through Vietnam and gain a sense of achievement
- Be inspired by the beautiful landscapes and the people you meet on route
- Believe in yourself as you ride through the Marble Mountains and tackle the hill climbs
- Stay in the UNESCO World Heritage site of Hoi An and soak up the vibes
- Experience the rich culture of a country with a fascinating history

YOUR CHALLENGE DAY BY DAY

DAY 1 Fri 19 Oct

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International departure from London

The day has arrived for the challenge to start! You'll meet the rest of the team at the airport to our flight to Hanoi. The flight is approximately 12 hours so hopefully You'll have some time to relax and enjoy the in flight entertainment as well as get to know each other!

DAY 2 Sat 20 Oct

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Arrive Hanoi & excursion

Arrive in Hanoi as the day breaks to be greeted by your local team who will whisk you away for a refreshing coconut juice and some breakfast. After breakfast, enough a highlights tour of the city as it wakes up and soak up the vibes of the bustling and historic city. After your tour, you'll be able to check into your hotel, freshen up and relax. After lunch go for your bike fitting and a brief on road rules of Vietnam. In the evening you'll enjoy dinner at one of Hanoi's most famous restaurants.

DAY 3 Sun 21 Oct

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Hanoi cycle & overnight train

Today will see you cycle to Co Loa Ancient citadel taking in many sights en route such as the broom-making village, temples and pagodas. The cycle will take you through paddy fields and lush farmlands, with a stop off for lunch in a local restaurant after which you will take a small ferry over the Red River before continuing your cycle. As you cycle along the water's edge you'll find yourselves at the most important place of worship in Hanoi, Tay Ho temple. Transfer back to your hotel in the late afternoon and a cup of tea and some dinner before heading off to the train station to get the sleeper train to Hue.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 42km

DAY 4 Mon 22 Oct

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Explore Hué and the surrounding countryside

When you arrive in Hue where your guide will be waiting to take you on a cycle through the town, ride across the Perfume River to Hue's Imperial Citadel to explore this sprawling, historical complex on foot, before continuing the ride out to the countryside along dirt tracks to the Mausoleums of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh. Ride. Finish your day's cycle in the at the beautiful Thien Mu Pagoda on the banks of the Perfume River. Overnight in Hue

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 45km

DAY 5 Tue 23 Oct

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Hue to Lang Co

The morning's cycle begins with a ride along the coast from Hue to Lang Co fishing village. The road is flanked by sand dunes and palm trees with occasional mausoleums, pagodas, and war memorials scattered about. Stop for lunch at a local café before continuing the ride along small back roads through fishing villages and the Cau Hai lagoon to Lang Co Beach. Overnight in Lang Co

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 86km

DAY 6 Wed 24 Oct

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Lang Co Hoi An

Today marks one of the most intense rides of the trip, with the grand Hai Van Pass, Vietnam's highest mountain road. Warm up with a short, flat ride from the hotel to the base of the pass before the 10-kilometre ascent, gaining an elevation of 550 meters. The views of the coast are spectacular from the top; a great reward for the morning's climb. Cruise downhill to Danang City, a further 9 kilometres, for lunch. Continue towards Marble Mountain and My Khe Beach for a refreshing swim in the ocean. Finally, reach Hoi An late this afternoon and relax with a stroll through the quiet streets of this historic town. Overnight in Hoi A.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 75km

DAY 7 Thu 25 Oct

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Hoi An to Quang Ngai

In the morning we transfer from Hoi An to Chau O. From there, we ride along countryside route to My Lai, the site of one of the worst massacres of the American War as it is known in Vietnam. En route we will have small climb up to an old temple before we will visit the memorial and have a guided tour of the site and museum. We then continue cycling out into the Vietnamese countryside. Passing through quiet, rural villages before eventually arriving back at Highway 1 where we transfer to hotel) Overnight in Quang Ngai.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 70km

DAY 8 Fri 26 Oct

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Quang Ngai to Quy Nhon

An early start today for your cycle to Qui Nhon, an American port and supply centre during the Vietnam War which sheltered thousands of Vietnamese who fled the bombing of the countryside. Ride southeast along the coast pass Thi

Nai bridge and pedal along tranquil roads rarely visited by tourists before arriving at your hotel in Quy Nhon. Enjoy time on the beach in the afternoon to relax tired muscles. Overnight in Quy Nhon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Cycling distance: 70km

DAY 9 Sat 27 Oct

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Fly to Saigon

This morning, fly to Saigon, officially known as Ho Chi Minh City. This is an exciting and absorbing city where scooters pack the streets and temples stand defiantly alongside modern developments. Devastated by the Vietnam War, it is now a bustling free market city where anything goes. Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhat airport, meet your city guide and driver, transfer to Cu Chi tunnels for a half day sightseeing.

Visit the famous Cu Chi Tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the war the network covers 3 levels and approximately 240km of tunnels. The tunnels were used by the guerrillas as living quarters and escape routes during the Vietnam War. Your farewell and celebratory dinner in one of the finest restaurant in Saigon. Overnight in Saigon.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 10 Sun 28 Oct

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Arrival in UK

We touch down on home turf, full of pride over our achievements. Saying goodbye to your new-found friends will be hard, so make sure to exchange contact details.

NB

The itinerary is there as a guide and may change due to unusual weather patterns, the strength of the group, and so on. We will do our very best to keep to the set itinerary; however we cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes that may occur. 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.

MINIMUM SPONSORSHIP

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Registration fee of £475.00 when you book
Raise a minimum of £3995.00 for your charity.

FLEXI

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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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- Members only benefits and discounts at a wide range of clothing and equipment suppliers including Outdoorhire, Cotswold Outdoor, Runners Needs, Snow + Rock, Water to Go, The Altitude Centre, Sporttape and Nomad & MASTA.
- Access to your own password protected account including support materials and training schedules
- Access to training weekends (optional and at additional expense)

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)
- 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 policy details)

On your challenge

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- Tips
- Departure Tax (if applicable)

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 10/08/2018), and the remaining 20% within 4 weeks of completing the challenge (by 25/11/2018). 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 21 - 30 participants
Small group supplement	The costs and sponsorship levels on our website are based on a minimum of 21 participants. We can run this trip with 15-20 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	<p>Trek/bike training weekends*</p> <p>Extensions at end of trip*</p> <p>Single room supplements*</p> <p>Business class upgrades*</p> <p>Travel insurance</p> <p>(*subject to availability)</p>

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>.

Level of Difficulty

The Cycle Vietnam challenge is graded as challenging.

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 Vietnam cycle Challenge you will be:

- Cycling for around 6-8 hours per day, covering approximately 400kms over 7 days.
- Battling the heat and humidity. Temperatures can reach the 30s.
- Cycling across waterways, plantations and on unpaved and dusty roads.

Bike Information

The bikes are good quality lightweight Trek 4300, 4500 and 4700 - 24 & 27 SPD mountain bikes with Shimano Deore components, V Brakes and front suspension. All bikes have water bottle carriers and quickly detachable wheels. If you would like to bring your own spare inner tube, 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 groundhandler on arrival in case of incident caused by yourselves.

Visa

Always check the visa requirements with the relevant embassy as it can change on a regular basis or check with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

At the time of writing until 30 June 2017 'British Citizen' passport holders travelling for tourism or business can enter Vietnam for up to a maximum of 15 days without a visa. If you have a different type of British nationality – for example 'British national (overseas)'- you'll need to get a visa before entering Vietnam.

You must get a visa before you travel to Vietnam if you want to stay for longer than 15 days and/or if you wish to re-enter Vietnam within 30 days of your departure. If you plan to leave Vietnam and re-enter from another country make sure you get a multiple visit visa before travelling. Make sure you know before you travel the type of visa you need for the purpose and duration of your trip. If you're travelling for business reasons you should contact the relevant Vietnam government department in advance to check whether any licenses are required to carry out your duties.

Flights

You will be flying from London Heathrow to Hanoi and back from 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 [FAQ](#) page.

Group Size

Each group is intended to be 21 people minimum in order to run and maximum of approx. 30 people. We will be able to run this challenge for 15 to 20 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).

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 as such it may be useful to take a copy of your itinerary with you.

Climate & Terrain

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. From November to April, the north is cool and dry, while May to October is hot and rainy. The rainy season lasts from May to November. The temperature in Hanoi can range from 17 degrees in January to 30 degrees in June.

Terrain

Your cycle terrain will be fairly flat for the whole cycle; however, please do not underestimate the length of the days as you will regularly be covering distances of 70-90km each day. Some areas of the cycle will be very exposed and with extreme heat and humidity, which will be a challenge in itself. Please ensure that 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, including along the coastal line, so practice in efficient gear changing is recommended.

Insurance

It 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](#).

Money

Currency: The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). We recommend exchanging currency before you go, although there are ATMs and currency exchanges available at Hanoi Airport. For up to date currency exchange see www.xe.com

Credit Cards: Visa and Mastercard are now accepted in many hotels and shops, but the preferred currency is cash. You should bring a credit card in case of emergency, but please check any applicable charges with your bank.

ATMs: You will have access to ATMs in the main cities in Vietnam, but please bring cash for the rural areas that you will be staying in.

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. There are plenty of great craft souvenirs, silk clothing and silver jewellery in Vietnam. Keep this in mind!

Tipping: Tipping is at your sole discretion and all staff is paid a fair wage. However, tourism is a tipping culture and local 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 \$120-\$150 per participant for the duration of the challenge. For those on Charity Challenge organised extension, we would suggest between \$6-\$8 per person per day.

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.

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 23kg. However, we suggest that for our Cycle Vietnam challenge you should only need around 15kg-17kg. 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.

Typical Day

During your cycling days you will wake at around 7am, have breakfast and start cycling for 6-8 hours. We will stop at shady rest stops every 15-20km 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. 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 & Toilets

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

This 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.

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. 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 a fish sauce called nuoc mam. Saigon/Hanoi are the local brews. Wines are very expensive unless you want to sample locally made rice win - 'Roau' (pronounced zeeo). Please let Charity Challenge know 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.

Clothing and equipment

Good quality, durable kit could mean the difference between a fantastic challenge experience and an uncomfortable one. For this challenge, waterproof, helmet and comfortable foot wear for your cycling 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 cotton scarf or buff are also highly recommended, protecting 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, Outdoor Hire and Cotswold Outdoor.

Phone and WiFi

Most of the accommodation you are in will have limited WiFi which you will be able to use, but please do not rely upon this, 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. 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.

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 Cycle Vietnam 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 Vietnam, 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 is a region 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!

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 members' area. 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](#)

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Any more questions?

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