

## VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

### Ho Chi Minh to Angkor Wat Cycle

**Duration:** 12 days / 11 nights

**Trip Grade:** Moderate

**Dates:**

13 – 24 Feb 2010  
9 – 20 Oct 2010

12 – 23 Feb 2011  
8 – 19 Oct 2011

<b>Payment Options:</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>
Self Payment	£399	£449
Registration Fee	£399	£449
Trip Cost	£1250	£1250
<hr/>		
Fundraising		
Registration Fee	£399	£449
Min. Fundraising	£3125	£3125
Target		



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

**Our challenge takes us from Vietnamese Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City, through the rice-paddies and waterways of the beautiful Mekong Delta into Cambodia. We pedal on through this friendly country towards one of the most impressive sights in Southeast Asia, the Royal Temples of Angkor Wat.**

**We encounter some rolling hills, but the main challenge lies in the long, hot dusty days in the saddle as we cycle through these remote areas. Fascinating insights into the region's cultures, ancient and modern, are a real highlight of this challenge.**

## ITINERARY

### Day 1: Depart London

### Day 2: Arrive Ho Chi Minh City

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

### Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City – Tra Vinh

After breakfast we transfer out of the bustling city of Ho Chi Minh. Time permitting, we'll visit the famous Cu Chi Tunnels: a sanctuary for the Vietcong at the height of the Vietnam War; they give us a good insight into the country and its recent history. We then continue on to My Tho, the gateway to the Mekong Delta and a wonderful place to start our ride. We cycle on narrow lanes through the heart of this rural area, passing banana plantations, sugar cane fields and the lush rural landscape of the Delta. We have a couple of small ferry crossings before reaching Tra Vinh. Overnight hotel. *(Lunch not included)*. **Approx Cycling Distance: 52km**

### Day 4: Tra Vinh – Cau Ke – Can Tho

Our first full day's cycle takes us along quiet backroads to Can Tho, passing numerous Khmer temples and fascinating river scenes en-route. We will start to get a great feel for the friendly Vietnamese culture, and the traditional rural scenes we see are fascinating. Overnight hotel. **Approx Cycling Distance: 82km**



## Day 5: Can Tho – Long Xuyen

After an early breakfast we set off via the Can Tho floating market to Phong Dien. Weaving through the early morning market bustle, we cycle along the banks of the busy river and take a ferry to the other side before continuing towards the main road. After lunch we cycle upstream alongside the river towards Long Xuyen. Overnight hotel. **Approx Cycling Distance: 95km**

## Day 6: Long Xuyen – Tri Tron – Chau Doc

Our route starts to undulate as we near the mountains near Chau Doc; although the hills are fairly gentle, the heat will make them feel tougher. We cycle via the killing fields at Ba Chuc, where Pol Pot's regime massacred over 3000 Vietnamese people in 1978; a harrowing sight. Overnight hotel (near border). **Approx Cycling Distance: 65km**

## Day 7: Chau Doc – Phnom Penh

Today we swap our bikes for a motor boat and journey up the Mekong River to Phnom Penh. The capital city was once considered one of the most beautiful in the Orient, and despite its turbulent recent history it still retains a colonial charm. We have the opportunity in the



afternoon to cycle to the infamous Killing Fields or visit the Tuol Sleung Museum, a former school which was turned into the notorious Khmer Rouge prison during the Pol Pot regime. Although it tells a tragic story, it is a fascinating place to visit and essential to understanding present-day Cambodia. Overnight hotel. **Approx Cycling Distance: 30km**

## Day 8: Phnom Penh – Kompong Chhnang

Refreshed after yesterday's gentler day, an early start sees us heading out of the city for our first taste of rural Cambodia. The bustle around Phnom Penh soon fades away and as we head to Udong, we share the road only with light local traffic – getting a good sense for traditional Cambodian transport! We pass Udong, once the ancient capital, and visit one of the remaining stupas on Udong

Mountain, home to many of the old Royal Palaces.

Continuing on to Kampong Chhnang, we cycle through rural hills with excellent views over the river delta: it eventually becomes the enormous Tonlé Sap Lake. Overnight hotel.

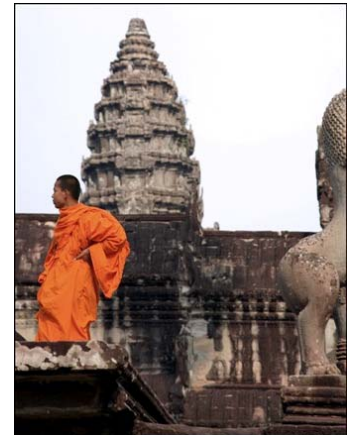
**Approx Cycling Distance: 91km**

## Day 9: Kompong Chhnang – Siem Reap – Angkor Wat

A beautiful boat ride awaits us this morning, as we cross the immense Tonlé Sap. The largest freshwater lake in South-East Asia, it features an incredible biodiversity and has UNESCO biosphere status. We enjoy a rest from our bikes as we soak up the views of floating forests and calm waters. Reaching Siem Reap, we pass the floating village of Chhong Kneas, an unforgettable insight into life on the lake. Reunited with our bikes, we cycle through Siem Reap

towards Angkor, to explore the world's largest heritage site. Most famous for Angkor Wat, the area is dotted with ancient buildings and temples amidst dense forest, and the sheer scale of the complex will astound you. We cycle the grand circuit, enjoying the shady roads and

soaking up the atmosphere of this incredible place. There is more cycling to complete before we explore these ruins closely, but the first impression gained today is tantalising! Overnight hotel. **Approx Cycling Distance: 40km**



## Day 10: Siem Reap – Beng Mealea

Our last day of cycling rewards us with a real and little-visited highlight!

We cycle northeast on flattish roads through beautiful scenery of forest and rice-paddies. We pass a few small villages; access to this area is very new and there is little here to detract from the sense of remote rural Cambodia. Passing the beautiful temple of Banteay Srey,



which is renowned for its intricate carvings, we head into still more remote countryside and cycle on to Beng Mealea. Cleared from landmines and open to tourists only in the past few years, this incredible temple dates from the early 12<sup>th</sup> Century and lies unrestored, swathed in jungle canopy. Incredible tree roots break through walls and stone carvings, illustrating the power of nature over man. Exploring it is truly atmospheric and reminiscent of 'Indiana Jones' and 'Tomb Raider.' We transfer back to Siem Reap and spend the evening celebrating our achievement. Overnight hotel. *(Dinner not included)*. **Approx Cycling Distance: 70km**

## Day 11: Explore Angkor Wat

We have most of the day free to explore the incredible temples and ruins that make up the complex. Angkor Wat itself is just one of the many temples in the region but is one of the best-preserved and most impressive. It is worth climbing the remarkably steep and narrow steps of the central spire for the view over the whole temple surrounded by jungle. The Bayon in Angkor Thom, the old city central to the area, is a fascinating ruin featuring many mysterious giant carved faces and some incredible wall carvings, and is one of the most remarkable sights in the area. You may also wish to explore the markets of Siem Reap and haggle for last-minute souvenirs. Meeting again at the hotel, we say a fond farewell to Cambodia and transfer to the airport for our flight. *(Lunch not included)*

## Day 12: Flight to UK

Our flight connects in one of South-East Asia's main cities and we return to the UK.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED?

The tour cost includes flights, all accommodation, transport and food other than 3 meals as detailed in itinerary. It also includes full trip support of experienced Discover Adventure leaders and medic; local guides, drivers and cooks (see Trip Support below). A bike can also be provided.

As a general guide, items not included in the tour cost are your



personal travel insurance, entry visas, airport departure tax, tips for local support crew, any extra meals and entry to other tourist sites you may wish to visit on your free day.

Approx £100.00 - £150.00 is recommended for personal expenses. Most people will not spend this much. There is plenty of opportunity to buy souvenirs; this sum will not cover extreme souvenir shopping! We strongly recommend you carry a credit card in case of personal emergency.

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick and are booked through Discover Adventure Ltd under ATOL licence 5636. By travelling with Discover Adventure you are protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

**Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline.**

### Connecting Flights

If you book flights to Heathrow or Gatwick, it is your responsibility to allow plenty of time to connect to the group flight and to cope with any flight schedule changes. Please be aware that the best deals allow little flexibility if you need to change them. We regret that we are unable to book connecting flights for you.

### Transit Stops

When booking group flights we endeavour to find the best flights that match our itinerary. There are often no direct flights to our destination, so do be prepared for transit stops: bring a good book or chat to your fellow trekkers! Airlines that do offer direct flights rarely offer competitive rates for groups. Please remember that the main purpose of our trips is to raise money for charity!

### Flying Separately

If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost. You will be responsible for making your own arrangements for meeting the rest of the group, though we can advise you. We need to know if you do not require our group flight as early as possible; please complete the form in the information pack you'll be sent with your booking confirmation.

## CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

For most people, the main attraction of travelling to a different country is to see new sights and enjoy new experiences. Sometimes those new experiences can make life harder or more inconvenient than you may like, such as toilet hygiene or different food, or simply a different attitude to solving problems. This is all part of the challenge you are signing up for!

We are very privileged to live in a country with a high standard of living, and travelling exposes us to different challenges – all of which help broaden our horizons. We can guarantee that coming face-to-face with experiences outside your normal 'comfort zone' will help you bond with your fellow trekkers and provide you with plenty of things to laugh about! A sense of humour and sense of adventure are two of the most important things to bring with you!

## ACCOMMODATION

When cycling we stay in small friendly hotels or guest-houses. Some are more basic than others! In cities our hotels are generally more Western-style and 2-3\* standard. Please do not expect the same standards as you would in the UK!

## FOOD

All meals are included other than 3 meals as detailed in the itinerary. The food is good and there is plenty of it; most meals are local-style not western. Lunches are mainly cooked, though occasionally we may have packed lunches.

### Dietary Requirements

Being vegetarian or having other dietary requirements is not usually a problem provided you let us know well in advance. Please do not expect as much variety as you would have access to at home – we will be in rural areas and among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help. If you know there are plenty of foods you cannot eat you may



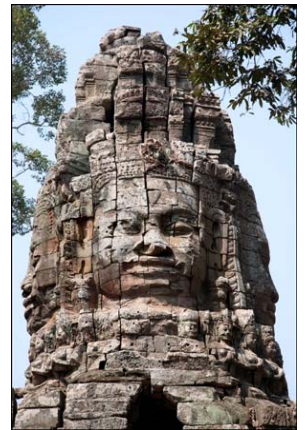
wish to bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

### Other Meals

Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally when we are in towns or cities and you are free to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit every budget.

## PASSPORT & VISA

A valid ten-year passport is essential for travel in Vietnam and Cambodia and must be valid for at least 6 months after entry. A Vietnamese visa is essential for British passport-holders, costing approx £38 in person (at time of writing). Visas are also required for Cambodia and can be obtained on entering the country with a passport-sized photograph and US\$20 (at time of writing). Most other nationalities require an entry visa for both countries and are responsible for checking their requirements with the respective embassies.



## VACCINATIONS

We recommend the following vaccinations:

- Tetanus (essential)
- Hepatitis A
- Typhoid
- Polio

We strongly recommend taking malarial prophylactics.

A yellow fever certificate is required only if coming from an infected area.

**You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.**

## CYCLING INFORMATION

**We are always happy to talk through the trip in more detail with you if you are worried about your fitness at any stage.**

## FITNESS WARNING: DESIGNED TO BE CHALLENGING!

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

### Terrain

Distances vary from 30 - 95km per day. Our route is mainly on tarmac roads of varying quality with some that are more like dirt tracks. Traffic is usually light and we will cycle at our own pace, but when we pass through a large town we go through as a group. We will always take safety into consideration and reserve the right to change the itinerary on that basis.

We will be using 21-speed mountain bikes fitted with semi slick tyres. If you are unsure whether to take your own bike or use of ours please just contact us.

### Bike Repairs

There will be a range of spares in the vehicle along with a full tool kit; however, it is impossible for us to carry spares for every eventuality. It is vital that if you bring your own bike it is in excellent working order before departure.

### IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT YOU SUPPLY YOUR OWN HELMET AND WEAR IT AT ALL TIMES WHILE CYCLING.

### Clothing & Equipment

We are travelling through remote areas where we could be exposed to bad weather at any time. The table below gives you an idea of the climate, but be prepared for all weathers and temperatures. Weather conditions can change quickly in these regions. We provide you with a detailed packing kit-list on registration, as well as details on useful discounts you are entitled to as a Discover Adventure customer. We are always available if you need advice.

### Weather

Temperatures shown are average min / max and number of rainy days for Phnom Penh:

Jan / Feb	21 - 31°C	2
Oct / Nov	28 - 34°C	7

It can be very hot & humid. This will add to the challenge

## TRIP SUPPORT

### Discover Adventure Crew

Your trip will be led by experienced Discover Adventure leaders. Our leaders are selected for their experience in harsh wilderness environments,

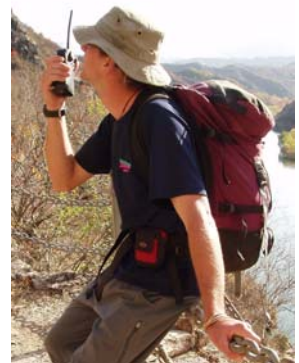


knowledge of travel in remote areas, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

All our leaders are from the UK or other English-speaking countries. Most work for us on an ad-hoc basis and have 'real' jobs in-between trips! We never send our leaders to the same destination for months on end – we want them to be as enthusiastic about your trip as you are.

Although our leaders are trained in expedition first-aid, they are accompanied by an expedition doctor or medic, who is there to look after the well-being of the whole group and deal with any incidents. They help the leaders to ensure the trip runs smoothly and encourage you when things get tough.

The number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but an average-sized group in Peru would be led by two leaders (at least one of which will be an experienced bike mechanic) and a doctor. At Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: cyclist ratio and believe it leads to greater trip enjoyment as well as excellent trip safety.



### Local Support Crew

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers and cooks. Your local guide knows the local area well, and is a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Drivers and cooks do not always speak English

but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

## Tips for Local Crew

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! Your leader will give you an idea of appropriate guidelines. All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in this country is far below what you would spend on a normal night out.

## Luggage

Support vehicles will be with the group at all times. All luggage and spares will be carried in the vehicles. Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft sailing bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already.

Bikes can be transported on flights in bike bags or – a much cheaper option – cardboard bike boxes: ask your local bike shop if they have any. You should also bring a small daypack or large bum-bag to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

## TRIP SAFETY

Your safety, and that of the rest of the group, is our highest priority. Our trips are designed and planned with safety in mind. Your crew will be equipped with radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. They always have access to our 24-hour emergency back-up in the UK. Our leaders are responsible for safety on the trip, and will make any changes to the itinerary they deem necessary should local conditions dictate.

Pre-trip administration – such as compulsory medical questionnaires and travel insurance – is all done with your safety in mind.

## RESPONSIBLE TOURISM

Long before 'Responsible Tourism' became a recognised phrase, we designed and ran our trips to ensure they made minimum impact on the environment and a positive impact on the local communities we pass through. AITO, our Trade

Association has recognised the work we do in this area and has awarded us 4 stars as a Responsible Tour Operator.

## CARBON OFFSETTING

We actively encourage all our customers to offset any emissions connected with their trip. You can offset at any time in the lead-up to departure by visiting Climate Care via our website and making a donation to a worthwhile project supported by them. Alternatively, if you wish to take more practical action you can volunteer for a day with BTCV and work on an environmental project near to where you live. Work may include construction footpaths, dry stone walling, creating wildlife habitats or planting trees in your community. Make your volunteer pledge by going to [www.btcv.org/dapledge](http://www.btcv.org/dapledge)



Please contact the Discover Adventure office with any queries using the contact details below.

Copyright Discover Adventure 2006 / Updated 2009