

HO CHI MINH TO ANGKOR

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How fit do I need to be?

This cycling challenge is all about **endurance** fitness rather than speed and it is certainly not a race. The best form of preparation is to get cycling up and down hills, for good periods of time and where possible to follow with another ride the next day. You will enjoy the challenge far more if you have a good level of fitness and are used to being on the saddle for long periods of time.

Keep in mind that this is a challenging cycle and many people will find elements of the trip difficult at times, whether it is the physical cycling, changing weather, the difference in culture or something else. It is great if you can work as a team and help each other out during any difficulties. While there are challenges, **the enjoyment and rewards that come from cycling in both these beautiful countries are extraordinary.**

What will the cycling be like?

You will cycle mainly on tarmac roads of varying quality, with some sections on sandy or hard-packed dirt tracks – this requires no technical off-road experience but we recommend some experience of cycling on tracks so you know what to expect. The terrain is generally flat with a few gentle hills, though they feel harder in the heat; there's a reason our Grade 1 trips are called **challenging!** You will travel through remote areas and the weather may have an impact on road conditions. There are several waterways we cross by small boat. Traffic is usually light and we will cycle at our own pace, but when we pass through a large town we may go through as a group, or load up for a short transfer. Distances vary widely, from 30 - 100km per day, and there is some flexibility built in to many of the days depending on the heat, conditions and group pace. Over the trip we aim to enable you to complete **500km – a huge achievement** in hot, humid conditions.

What bikes will we be using?

You will be provided with a **21-speed mountain bike with semi-slick tyres** when in-country. The group will spend some time at the beginning of the trip to ensure that you have the correct bike for your height and that they are in the correct position for your cycling comfort. You will have to change your bike once you reach the Cambodian border as we use a separate fleet of bikes in each country, these will be to the same standard you have been used to.

Can I bring my own bike attachments?

If you would prefer, you can bring your own **saddle** and **pedals** from home for your own personal comfort. During the initial bike fit, you can spend some time adapting the bike you have been allocated with your own equipment but remember to remove it and take it home with you at the end of the trip.

Can I bring my own bike from the UK?

Crossing the land border could be problematic with your own bike and authorities may levy fees which you would be responsible for – you would also need to pay the supplement charged by the airline for bike carriage (usually high). It is much easier to use the bikes provided in-country. They are of a **good standard**, so you needn't be concerned about this.

What about cycle safety?

We know that not everyone chooses to wear a cycling helmet all the time, but would like to point out that on this ride it is **obligatory**. Please do bring a **helmet** with you and have it fastened at all times whilst you are cycling. We also highly recommend that you wear a hi-vis cycling jersey or jacket, and you must bring lights for your bike when in poor light conditions (a lightweight, flashing bike light is sufficient) or if we run later than usual one day. You are encouraged to cycle at a pace that you are comfortable with throughout the trip. It is always safer and good for company as well to cycle in small groups with others of a similar pace to you. There is usually always someone else cycling at a similar speed!



What is the accommodation like?

You will stay in clean, comfortable and friendly hotels and guest-houses throughout the ride. Most are of a very good standard, though some may be simpler, so expect some variation. Rooms are on a twin-share basis. Our customers are usually pleasantly surprised at how good the accommodation is, but if you are only used to very high standards please be prepared for simpler conditions. Being out of your comfort zone adds to the challenge ... and makes your achievement all the sweeter. If you are travelling alone, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex and similar age – please let us know if you wish to share with a particular person, if you have not already done so.

Can I request single accommodation?

There may be a limited number of single rooms available, however these are subject to request and at an additional cost (on a first-come, first-served basis). Please contact us if this is important to you, but remember sharing a room is a really good ice-breaker if you don't know anyone else on the trip, so don't worry too much about it!

Who accompanies us on the cycle from Discover Adventure?

Your trip will be led by an **experienced Discover Adventure leader**. Sometimes they accompany you from the UK, but they may meet you in-country. They are chosen for their experience and know-ledge, friendliness and approachability, sense of humour and ability to safely and effectively deal with any situation that arises. They are also trained in expedition first-aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader.

Will there be a doctor cycling with us also?

Depending on group size, an expedition doctor or medic may accompany the group. Our medics are there to provide first aid and promote day-to-day welfare on the trip; they carry a robust medical kit, but cannot possibly be equipped with everything needed to counter any given situation. They also provide crucial support to our leaders and, as they are usually found at the back of our groups, are also experts at encouraging you when things get tough.

Who else will accompany the group on this challenge?

Our local support crew is made up of local guides, drivers and cooks. Local guides know the area well, and are a **great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles**. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

What are the transport arrangements for the group and our kit?

When you arrive in Vietnam you will travel on a coach or minibus depending on the group size. Your **luggage will be transported each day by truck as you cycle**, so you therefore cannot access your main packs during the day. You will need to make sure that you can carry anything you may need with you while cycling (eg something to cover up, sun-cream, hat, camera, etc. Due to the heat, it's better to avoid carrying a day-sack if you can; using a waist-pack or fitting items into your cycle jersey rear pockets is preferable to most people.

What will the weather be like?

It can be **very hot** on this cycle with temperatures reaching the high 30's, so your leader is likely to suggest an early start each morning in order to take the benefit from cooler temperatures. On the roads, you are at times cycling in direct sun and the heat will radiate off the tarmac, so it is important to bring a high factor sun-cream (at least SPF30) along with SPF lip salve. Never underestimate the power of the sun's rays, even when it feels cool, is cloudy or windy. Although we don't travel at the wettest times of year, you only have to look at how lush and green everything is to know it does rain regularly, so be prepared!

What will I be eating?

You will eat very well whilst on the trip but please don't always expect western-style food. Breakfast will generally be bread, jam, eggs and tea and coffee. Lunches will be a mixture of packed lunches or cooked meals. Dinner is traditional Asian food such as rice, noodles, vegetable dishes, soups and fish. The food is fresh and plentiful so do make sure you eat enough to give you the energy you will need for your exertions.



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I have a specific dietary need; will there be enough for me to eat?

Being vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free or having other dietary requirements is usually not a problem provided you **let us know well in advance** (airlines need to know at least 8 weeks prior to the departure). Please do not expect the variety you would have at home – we will be among people of a different culture who may not understand your requirements, however willing they are to help, and in some regions certain foods are hard to access. If you feel you aren't getting enough energy because of your dietary requirements please talk to the leaders on the trip – they can't help unless they know there's a problem. 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.

Do I need to bring snacks?

Bring enough snacks to keep you going each day - around **2-3 tasty treats a day will suffice**. We recommend a combination of slow and fast release snacks such as Tracker bars, flapjacks, salted nuts and a packet of sweets (your favourites from home). Bringing a combination of treats will keep you interested in snacking as consistent energy levels are important.

How much do I need to drink?

Drink, drink, drink! Due to the nature of the challenge and the **hot and humid climate**, you will need to drink significantly more than you would cycling in the UK. You will be provided with plenty of bottled water at breakfast for the day ahead, and in the evenings at dinner, so ensure that you keep topping up your bottles and hydration systems. It is vital to drink lots of water and you can add a re-hydration mix to top up your salt levels.

What is the celebration meal?

At the end of your challenge, there will be a special meal to celebrate your achievements. Please check your trip itinerary to confirm whether you will need to set aside funds to pay for this on the night.

What about toilets?

Toilet facilities won't be like home. You may be getting used to being out cycling for long periods of time and noticed that toilet facilities are not always in the most convenient places. This is also true of the challenge itself and there may be occasions where you need to discretely stop. You will need to take baby wipes, nappy sacks and paper in order to make sure you **leave no trace**. These can then be discarded in the nearest bin. The toilet facilities in your accommodation may not be up to the standard that you are used to; please remember that you are in remote, fairly poor regions that are not always in tourist areas.

What can I do to prevent illness during the challenge?

Illness can spread through the group very quickly when you are living closely together so it's important to bring **antiseptic hand sanitiser** for use after the toilet and before eating to minimise the spread of germs. Also, avoid sharing water bottles and sharing each other's food or sweets as this spreads germs very easily, even if you are being careful.

What if I have any issues during the trip?

Our leaders are very experienced and work very hard to ensure your trip runs as smoothly and enjoyably as possible, and we're sure that you'll have a wonderful time. If you do have any concerns or problems during the trip **please talk to the crew and give them the opportunity to explain or rectify things while they are able**. They are all very approachable!



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What will happen in the case of an emergency on this challenge?

The crew will have radios and emergency satellite phones, extensive medical kit and other safety apparatus where necessary. If you are feeling unwell on this trip, tell your leaders and listen to their advice as your health and safety is our top priority.

How much money will I need to bring with me?

We suggest that you take US dollars with you, as Vietnamese Dong is a closed currency. Cambodian Riel is hard to purchase and the US\$ works just as well in most areas. The usual amount that we suggest you take is around \$200 in spending money, though this does depend on how many souvenirs you may want to buy. Out of this spending money, you will need to set aside funds for any meals which are not included as part of your itinerary, personal expenses, crew tips, and \$25 for international departure tax when leaving Cambodia.

If for reasons due to fitness, illness or any unforeseen circumstances, you have to **depart from the group arrangements**, you must ensure that you have enough funds to cover any resultant costs – for example, extra hotel accommodation or meals. Some of these may be recoverable through your travel insurance, depending on your cover and the circumstances.

What do you recommend for crew tips?

The local crew work incredibly hard and it is great if we can show our appreciation in the form of a tip. The guide is \$40 - \$50 per participant which is split out between the local crew but this is of course at your discretion. Please do not give out individual tips to any crew who you feel have helped you personally as they work well as a team and those out of sight will be working just as hard as those with you on the cycle. Your trip leader will give you further advice.

Will there be Wi-Fi, phone reception and charging points?

There will be Wi-Fi in some hotels, though it may not be as fast as you're used to at home and there is unlikely to be any internet access when you're out cycling. The phone reception will be limited. You will have access to power for charging devices in the hotels. Treat this challenge like a 'Digital Detox' and tell your relatives that no news is good news; the leader will have a satellite phone for emergencies only.

Do I need travel insurance?

As part of your booking conditions, it is **compulsory that you ensure you have adequate travel insurance cover** to cover you for cycling. See the [insurance page on our website](#) for further information.

What if this trip does not meet minimum numbers?

Every group needs a minimum number of bookings for it to be feasible to run. Cancelling a trip is rare, and we do our utmost to avoid it. You will be contacted in plenty of time if we are concerned about the group size, and we will discuss options with you.

When will we know the flight details and meeting point?

Discover Adventure will usually confirm the main group flight details 5 months prior to the trip departure so you will know which airport you are travelling from and can arrange suitable transport. You will be sent your **Final Joining Instructions** in the month prior to the trip departure date, within which specific details of **where and when to meet your trip leader** and fellow participants will be confirmed.



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Will I need my flight ticket before the trip departure date?

Unless specified otherwise, you do not need to have your flight ticket prior to the trip departure date as this will be given to you by the trip leader or a Discover Adventure representative at the airport. If there are alternative plans, your Challenge Co-ordinator will inform you.

What is the luggage allowance?

Your main luggage limit on the plane is 20kg with a 5kg allowance for hand luggage. Do travel lightly and take only small bottles of toiletries. If you stick to the kit list you will manage this with no problems and don't forget that suitcases are not suitable, soft rucksacks/kitbags only. Discover Adventure Kitbags are specially designed for the rigours of our challenges and are very affordable, please ask for details.



Can I make my own flight arrangements or alter my flight from the main group?

Flights are included on this trip and you will automatically be booked on to the main group flights, unless you let us know otherwise in good time (no later than three months prior to the trip departure). It is possible to make your own flight arrangements and a land-only discount will be applied when you return the '**Flight Arrangements Form**' (sent at the time of booking).

It is also possible to extend your stay and deviate from the main group flight booking (fee applies); you will also need to return the 'Flight Arrangements Form' with your request. Note that you will remain on the same flight path returning from the same airport. There is sometimes a supplement to pay if the flights are more expensive on your requested day; early requests have the best chance of avoiding this. We will always contact you if this is the case to check whether you are happy to proceed. If you are keen to upgrade your flight, this may be possible at a supplement and you can contact us for an approximate price but please note that this is often very expensive and we will require full payment upfront.

What do I need to bring?

Refer to the **Kit List** sent to you to ensure that you have all the essentials for a comfortable trip. It will be very hot and humid during your challenge so wear tops with a wicking property as cotton t-shirts tend to retain water and will be uncomfortable. Cycle jerseys have generous rear pockets which are useful. Please do make sure that you take a long, loose pair of shorts or sarong, as on occasions you may need to cover your lycra shorts so as not to cause offence to local people (your leader will advise you on the trip). We also suggest that you take cycle tops with short sleeves rather than vest-style to be more culturally sensitive. Remember that your lycra shorts are best worn with nothing underneath for comfort. Don't forget your charity t-shirt for photos! If you are still to buy some kit don't forget that Cotswold Outdoor, Snow and Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need offer all Discover Adventure participants a 10% discount off any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

What are the passport and visa requirements?

A valid 10-year passport is essential; with at least six months remaining before expiry. Currently, UK passport holders **will only require a Tourist Visa to enter Cambodia but it is not requirement for Vietnam** (as per the below). Other nationalities are responsible for checking their entry requirements – please do so in good time. A number of British nationals have been refused entry due to their passport being damaged; make sure your passport is in good condition before arriving in Vietnam.

Cambodia - UK passport holders will need a visa for Cambodia. Please **do not** apply for an e-visa as the border you cross will not accept this. Only apply for a visa through the embassy, no earlier than 3 months before departure. Please [click here](#) for further information.

Vietnam - UK passport holders currently do not need a visa in Vietnam for up to 15 days. This arrangement may change at any time, so please check with the embassy directly. Please [click here](#) for further information.

There may also be health declarations to make. Do check the information for both countries (see links above) carefully, as regulations can and do change without warning.



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How can I find out more about the requirement for vaccinations?

You will need to ensure that you have the vaccinations required for this trip prior to travel. You can find some guidance and information on the www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk website. Always consult your local GP or travel clinic for the latest health advice, as they are aware of any updates in World Health Travel requirements.

Passenger Portal

We have a **Passenger Portal** which will enable you to see any outstanding information we need, the countdown to your challenge departure, see your outstanding balance, make payments and update your contact details. You can access this via the following link - [Passenger Portal Log in](#).



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