

## Ho Chi Minh To Angkor Wat Cycle



Duration: 12 days

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. The fascinating insight into the region's cultures, ancient and modern, are a real highlight of the trip.

Is trekking more your pace? Check out our [Trek to Angkor Wat](#).

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1: Depart London

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### 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! Night hotel.

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

After an early breakfast we drive (approx. 1.5 hours) out of the bustling city of Ho Chi Minh to 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's relatively recent history. We then drive south towards the Mekong Delta (approx. 2.5 hours). We stop near Ben Tre, the gateway to the Mekong Delta, and after lunch and ensuring our bikes are comfortable, we set off! It's a wonderful place to start our ride. We cycle on narrow lanes and tracks through the heart of this rural area, passing banana plantations, sugar cane fields and the lush rural landscape of the Delta. We have a short ferry crossing before reaching Tra Vinh. Night hotel.

**Drive approx. 1.5 & 2.5 hours; cycle approx. 42-50km**

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

Our first full day's cycle takes us along quiet backroads to Can Tho, the largest city in the Mekong Delta, known for its picturesque canals full of scenes of everyday life. En route we pass numerous Khmer temples and pagodas, and cross several waterways – some by footbridges, some on ferry crossings. We will start to get a great feel for the friendly Vietnamese culture, and the traditional rural scenes we see are fascinating. We ride today on a mix of roads and tracks; most of it is very quiet, but the last section gets busier as we approach Can Tho. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 90-95km**

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### Day 5: Can Tho – Long Xuyen

After an early breakfast we set off by boat through the Can Tho floating market, seeing a multitude of boats trading livestock, fruits, rice and fish. We then get back on our bikes and cycle along the banks of the busy river continuing towards Sa Dec. After lunch we cycle upstream alongside the river towards Long Xuyen. This is a beautiful day, with some wonderful photo opportunities. We end our ride at a bird sanctuary, home to thousands of storks – we can have a quick visit to see them before loading up into the vehicles for a short transfer (approx. 45 mins) into Long Xuyen. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 75km**

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

Our last day of cycling in Vietnam! A short transfer (30 mins) allows us to avoid the traffic, and we set off. Our route starts to undulate a little as we near the hills near Chau Doc; although these climbs are fairly gentle, our leg muscles have become used to flat terrain so they often feel harder than they really are! The heat, moreover, makes them feel tougher. We cycle via the Killing Fields at Ba Chuc, where Pol Pot's regime massacred over 3000 Vietnamese people in 1978; harrowing history. We continue our ride to the busy town of Chau Doc. Night hotel (near border).

**Cycle approx. 90-100km**

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### Day 7: Chau Doc – Takeo – Phnom Penh

Today we set off early, heading north towards Phnom Penh. After around 20km we reach the border with Cambodia

and meet our new guides who will be waiting for us. We then head off through the lovely rural landscapes of Cambodia. At the small town of Takeo we load up into the buses, which take us the remaining distance to Phnom Penh, stopping en route to visit the infamous Killing Fields, which are harrowing but compelling at the same time. We then arrive at our hotel in Phnom Penh; once considered one of the most beautiful cities in the Orient and which, despite its turbulent recent history, retains a colonial charm. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 50km**

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### **Day 8: Phnom Penh – Kampong Chhnang**

We start our day with a visit to the Tuol Sleung Museum, or School 21, a former school which was turned into the notorious Khmer Rouge interrogation camp 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. We then leave Phnom Penh by bus (approx. 1 hour) to avoid the city traffic before we start our ride. As we head to Udong we see the rice paddies stretching out for miles, busy with workers in the fields. The roads in the region tend to be a rich red which is very striking against the dazzling green paddy-fields – be prepared to take lots of photos! We ride through Udong, once the ancient capital, and pass by a hill temple with stunning views of the fertile region and many of the old Royal Palaces. Continuing on, we cycle towards Kampong Chhang and the enormous Tonlé Sap Lake. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 75km**

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### **Day 9: Kampong Chhnang – Siem Reap**

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 fishing communities and calm waters. Leaving the boat at Kampong Khlaeng, we ride on small roads through beautiful landscapes and villages, heading towards Siem Reap. This area is unspoilt and very traditional, and it's a lovely quiet ride to savour before reaching the main tourist draw of Angkor. Meeting our vehicles, we load up before reaching the busy streets and drive (approx 30 mins) into Siem Reap, the closest town to the temples. Night hotel.

**Boat ride approx. 5 hours; cycle approx. 30-40km**

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### **Day 10: Angkor Wat Cycle**

Today we ride to the famous World Heritage site of Angkor Wat. The area is dotted with many ancient buildings and temples amidst dense forest; the sheer scale of the complex will astound you. We ride a circuit around some of the temples, including Ta Prohm, the best-known of the temples overgrown by trees and reminiscent of scenes from Tomb Raider. Our ride also takes in the Bayon in Angkor Thom, the old city central to the area. It 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. Our ride ends at Angkor Wat itself, one of the most impressive and best-preserved temples of the complex. If there's time, it is worth climbing the remarkably steep and narrow steps of the central spire for the view over the whole temple surrounded by jungle. It's a wonderful place to finish our challenge after 500 hot kilometres across two countries! After the obligatory group photos we transfer back to our hotel (approx. 30 mins) and should have some free time this afternoon to spend as you wish – relax at the hotel, or explore Siem

Reap's markets for last-minute shopping opportunities, or visit more of the temples. We meet again in the evening to celebrate our achievements. Night hotel.

**Cycle approx. 30km**

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### Day 11: Free time; flight departs

We will have some time free for further exploration of the incredible temples and ruins that make up the Angkor complex; or simply relax or haggle in the markets if you prefer. How much time we have free depends on our flight schedules. We meet again at the hotel, say a fond farewell to Cambodia and transfer to the airport for our flight. *(Lunch not included)*

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### Day 12: Arrive UK

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All return transport from London to Ho Chi Minh City / Siem Reap to London
- All meals except where specified, and accommodation
- Discover Adventure leaders; local guides/mechanics and cooks
- Vehicle support and backup equipment on the trip
- 21-speed Mountain bike (Trek/Giant or equivalent)
- Entrance to Angkor Wat and any other sites visited as part of the itinerary

## WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- Any meals specified 'not included' in the itinerary
- Travel insurance
- Cycle helmet (compulsory) and water bottle
- Personal spending money, souvenirs and drinks
- Tips for the local guides and support crew
- Vietnam or Cambodia entry visa
- Fees for any optional sites, attractions or activities
- Airline taxes: we cap these so £250.00 is the maximum you will pay
- Any applicable surcharges as per Terms and Conditions

## GRADE | YELLOW

Trips are graded Yellow, Orange or Red, in increasing level of challenge. This trip lies within the **YELLOW** range.



The grade is determined by factors such as terrain, distance, climate, altitude, etc. Each colour grade has a **spectrum** which reflects the difficulty of these factors; trip duration, accommodation and living conditions (see icon) are also taken into account.

[Trip grading explained](#)

## CHALLENGE INFORMATION

### DETAILED INFORMATION

#### Leaders & Trip Support

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. They are also trained in expedition first aid. You are in very safe hands with a Discover Adventure leader. Usually leaders are based in the UK or other English-speaking countries and lead for us regularly throughout the year in many different countries. In some instances, trips are led by in-country guides with a wealth of knowledge about the region; they have been trained by us to provide the level of support expected on a Discover Adventure trip.

#### Trip Doctor

An expedition doctor or medic accompanies the group (dependent on group size.) Their role is 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 total number of crew looking after you will depend on the final size of your group, but at Discover Adventure we pride ourselves on our high leader: participant 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, assisted by drivers, porters, cooks and other support staff, depending on the type of trip. Local guides know the area well, and are a great source of knowledge about local customs and lifestyles. Not all support crew will speak English well, but are very friendly and approachable. The Discover Adventure crew work closely with the local crew to ensure your trip runs smoothly and safely.

Your leader will arrange a collection of tips for the local support crew at the end of your trek, and you will be provided with a guideline amount in advance. Tipping is not obligatory, but once you see how hard they work on your behalf you will be happy to donate something! All our local crew are paid wages, but bear in mind that the average wage in many

countries we travel to is far below what you would spend on a normal night out.

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## 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 communication devices (eg phones, radios and/or emergency satellite phones), medical kit and other safety apparatus appropriate to the destination. Our leaders always have access to our 24-hour emergency UK back-up. They 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 medical questionnaires and travel insurance as appropriate - is all done with your safety in mind.

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## Foreign Travel Advice

For the latest travel advice from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office including security and local laws, plus passport and visa information, check [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice).

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## Flight Information

Group flights leave from London Heathrow or Gatwick on scheduled airlines 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).

Your journey may involve a transit en route, details of route and flight times will be confirmed several months before departure. We do not always use the same airline for each destination; if you wish to know the probable carrier and flight times, please call for details. You will usually receive confirmed flight details several months before departure. Our itineraries are always based on current flight schedules and are therefore subject to change by the airline. If you prefer to book your own flights please ask us for a land-only cost.

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## Accommodation

We stay in a variety of hotels/lodges ranging from quite simple, friendly guesthouse-style to more international-style hotels in larger towns or cities. Standards are generally good, in great locations, but there may be a night or two where facilities are more basic, as you'd expect in very remote, untouristed or rural areas.

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## Roomshare Arrangements

Accommodation is usually on a twin-share basis in hotels or camp. Occasionally we may use hostel-style accommodation. Please tell us if you know somebody else on the trip that you would like to share with and we will try our best to accommodate your request. If you don't know anyone else in the group don't worry, we always pair you up with someone of the same gender, and a similar age where possible. We do not charge a single supplement if you are a solo traveller in a shared room.

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## Group Size

Your booking is part of a group challenge, and the tour costs and fundraising targets listed on our website are based on a minimum number of participants which is shown on the challenge. Our typical groups run with approximately 20-30 participants; however you may find your group is smaller or larger than this.

We will confirm at least 12 weeks prior to departure that your challenge is guaranteed to run. Occasionally it may be possible to still run the challenge with less than the minimum numbers, subject to a small group supplement. If we think a small group supplement may be necessary, we will discuss this with you as soon as possible, usually 5 months before your departure date.

**Minimum numbers and groups sizes may vary on Bespoke Charity challenges. If you are booked onto a bespoke challenge please contact your charity for full details.**

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## Food & Dietary Requirements

The food provided is plentiful, often local in style and freshly-cooked, and will give you plenty of energy. Sometimes we enjoy a buffet-style lunch-stop, other times we might have packed lunches. On some trips we stop at small local restaurants. Dinners are generally eaten in camp or at the hotel, depending on accommodation. In some regions there may be less variety than you are used to, and in others fresh meat or produce can be harder to come by. Any meals not included are listed in the itinerary and are generally on travel / free days, giving you the opportunity to explore and try other culinary experiences! There is always something to suit different budgets.

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 may be in very rural or remote 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 we strongly recommend you bring extra snacks from home so you can top up your energy supply. Please feel free to ask us for advice.

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## Luggage

Your luggage, food, water and equipment is transported for you from one night-stop to the next. If there is easy road access this is done by vehicle; if not porters, mules or even camels might carry your bags, depending on the destination and terrain.

Space is limited and hard-sided luggage is not suitable, so it is essential that your kit is packed in a soft bag, rucksack or expedition kitbag. Ask us about our specially-designed low-cost kitbags if you don't have one already. You should also bring a small daypack to carry for items needed during the day as you will not have access to your main luggage until the evening.

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## Cancelling your booking

In the unfortunate circumstance that you need to cancel your booking, we would ask that you notify us in writing either by post or email. Your cancellation will be considered effective from the date the notice is received. Registration fees, amendment fees and insurance premiums are non refundable and, depending on your payment option and how close it is to your challenge departure date, you may be liable for a cancellation charge.

Full details of all cancellation charges may be found in the Terms and Conditions of booking.

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## Passenger Portal

We have a Passenger Portal which will give you more details of the challenge itself. It also enables 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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## PREPARING FOR THE CHALLENGE

### Fitness Levels

This is designed to be a challenge, and it is vital that you train sufficiently for it. We will supply you with a thorough training guide once you have registered. We expect all participants to train hard in advance, but we respect everyone's limits and do not expect everyone to maintain the same pace. Inadequate training is likely to have an impact not just on your chances of completing the challenge, but enjoying it too - and we want you to have the time of your life!

Our challenges attract people of all levels of experience, fitness and ability as well as all ages and backgrounds. We design our challenges so that everyone can go at their own pace: this is not a race. If you have concerns about your fitness or if you have reduced mobility please do contact us for a confidential chat about whether this challenge is appropriate for you.

For logistical and safety reasons we sometimes need to re-group, so the front-runners may find themselves waiting for the slower ones. Please relax, and remember that this is a team effort that enables people to achieve their personal goals and earn sponsorship.

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### Passport & Visa / Vaccinations

Entry requirements vary depending on your destination and nationality. It is your responsibility to ensure your passport is valid, and any visas are obtained in good time. Check the [FCO's advice](#) on entry requirements for your destination to be sure. To find out if you need a visa you can check your requirements using our partner, Visa Machine, website [here](#); please ensure you allow plenty of time.

Your routine UK schedule of vaccinations should be up-to-date (especially tetanus). We recommend you check [Fit For Travel](#) for further details. You should always check with a GP or travel clinic for up-to-date travel health advice as it does change.

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### Clothing & Kit

We plan our trips around the optimal weather conditions, but could still be exposed to bad weather at any time. It is vital you are prepared for all conditions. 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.

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 **10% off** any purchases you make with them. Please ask us for the code if you do not have this already.

## Travel Insurance

Travel Insurance is compulsory on our challenges; we strongly suggest that you arrange insurance cover as soon as your booking with us is confirmed or at least 8 months prior to travel. Should you need to cancel on medical grounds, you will need insurance to cover the costs involved (registration fee and any trip costs depending on cancellation date).

You should also ensure that you have adequate cover for the type of challenge you are taking part in as well as medical emergencies, evacuation and repatriation.

Once your travel insurance is arranged, just remember to let us know the policy number and 24hr medical emergency phone number which is provided by your insurers!

For more information about travel insurance, please click [here](#).

## 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 participants 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!



Discover Adventure reserves the right to change the route or itinerary for safety reasons should local conditions dictate.

Please note: This document was downloaded on 21 Aug 2023, and the challenge is subject to change.