

Vietnam/Cambodia Cycle Ride From Saigon To Angkor Wat

Our challenge takes us through two of South East Asia's most fascinating countries, which have only opened up to foreign travellers in recent years. Starting in Vietnam's Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and finishing at Angkor Wat in Cambodia, we'll experience breathtaking scenery, timeless traditions, ancient temples and the warmth of the local people. The highlight of this memorable event is bound to be the Oxfam project visit in Kirirom National Park.

Day 1

Depart London

Overnight flight from London to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) via Kuala Lumpur.

Day 2

Arrive Saigon

Mid morning arrival in Saigon. Transfer to a centrally located hotel. After lunch free time to explore this fascinating city. Saigon is the heart and soul of Vietnam. The streets, where much of the city's life takes place, are a myriad of shops, stalls, stands on wheels and vendors selling their wares on the pavements. However, within this teeming metropolis are the timeless traditions and beauty of an ancient culture. Tonight after dinner we hear more about the challenge ahead from our guides.

Day 3

Saigon – Tay Ninh

77km approx.

We start with a 1 hour 30 minute journey through the Cu Chi Tunnels. Here we meet our bikes and have time to do the bike fitting and also for a quick visit. The Cu Chi Tunnels are an incredible underground network that was excavated by the Vietnamese and used by the Viet Cong during both the French-Indochina War (1946-1954) and the Vietnam War (1955-1975). At its height there were 250 km of tunnels in the Cu Chi area alone. After an early lunch we start the challenge cycling to Dau Tieng (20km) and from there it is a further 38km onto Tay Ninh. Today's route is on Tarmac roads with some undulations. Traffic should be very light as we cycle in a rural area though villages of simple wooden houses and past emerald green paddy fields. Overnight in Tay Ninh.

Day 4

Tay Ninh – Svay Rieng

80 km approx.

Tay Ninh is the headquarters of one of Vietnam's most interesting religions – Caodaism. The Caodai Great Temple is one of the most striking structures in the whole of South East Asia. This morning we visit the temple before setting off towards the Vietnam/Cambodia border at Moc Bai (36km). Border formalities could take some time but once into Cambodia we continue for a further 40 km on flat terrain to Svay Rieng, a quiet provincial town to overnight.

Day 5

Svay Rieng – Phnom Penh

123km approx.

The longest day so far sees us cycling through arid countryside on flat terrain. We are bound to cause quite a stir amongst the locals as we cycle through sleepy backwaters where Lycra-clad foreigners are a rare sight! The Cambodians have endured years of hardship but have come through the experience and today offer warmth and friendship to people visiting their country. This afternoon we encounter

the mighty Mekong River for the first time at Neak Loung. It is the lifeblood of South East Asia with more than 50 million people depending on it and its tributaries for food, water, transport and other important aspects of daily life. We cross the river by ferry, a very interesting and local experience, and head north from Neak Loung along the Mekong River to finish cycling in Phnom Penh, the capital city of the country, where we overnight. After lunch the road does become busier as we approach Phnom Penh.

Day 6

Phnom Penh – Kiriom National Park

99km approx.

After our long day yesterday we have a slightly shorter day today, but by now we should be acclimatised and familiar with our bikes! After leaving the city behind us the scenery today becomes more rural. We have a stretch in the morning where it is still built up, but by lunchtime we are back in rural Cambodia. We cycle through endless paddy fields and rubber plantations. There will be less traffic around and the terrain today is fairly flat. We cycle through Kompong Speu, a region famous for its palm sugar. We finish the day in Kiriom and we stay at the Kiriom Hill Resort.

Day 7

Kiriom National Park and project visit

20km approx.

A fantastic day today! We cycle today in the Kiriom National Park, home to pine forests and orchid flowers. We have time this morning to explore the stunning waterfall here and the Cham Bok Pagoda. We have a 1½ hour walk to explore this beautiful area. We will stop at the community centre where we hear more about the project, have chance to see a traditional dancing show and have lunch. We then get back on the bikes to return to Kiriom Hill Resort to finish this amazing challenge. A short section of off road cycling today and some narrow bridge to negotiate! From here we board a bus to take us to Phnom Penh where we will overnight.

Day 8

Phnom Penh – Siem Reap

We take a ferry along the Tonlé Sap River, then across the Tonlé Sap Lake to Siem Reap. En-route we will witness local people going about their everyday lives along the water's edge. Overnight Siem Reap close to Angkor Wat.

Day 9

Angkor Wat

Free day to explore Angkor Wat, which along with its surrounding temples are justifiably regarded as one of the wonders of the world. They rank alongside such treasures as the Pyramids in Egypt and the Taj Mahal in India. Built between the 10th and 13th centuries, they were left abandoned to the jungle until their "discovery" by a French explorer in the late 19th century. Still as yet unravaged by mass tourism, the temples retain an incredible sense of power and mystery. This evening we come together to enjoy a celebratory meal. Overnight Siem Reap.

Day 10

Siem Reap – London

Afternoon flight from Siem Reap to London via Kuala Lumpur.

Day 11

Arrive UK

Early morning arrival in London.

This is a complex itinerary and may be subject to change

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