

Impressions Of Vietnam



TRIP OVERVIEW

From the ancient waterways of the Mekong Delta to the bustling cities of Hanoi & Saigon, this captivating nine-day tour is a great introduction to this unique and vibrant country. Steeped in its own rich traditions and history, yet irrevocably shaped by the major ideas and events of the 20th century, all taking place against the backdrop of stunning landscapes and architecture, Vietnam really is a traveller's dream.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Vietnam. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Saigon

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Saigon International Airport.

DAY 2: Saigon D

On arrival in Saigon, also known as Ho Chi Minh, you will be met by your local guide and transferred to your hotel. Relax in the afternoon before enjoying a welcome dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant.

DAY 3: Saigon B/L/D

After breakfast, travel to the Cu Chi Tunnels, an impressive hand-dug network of underground passageways, spanning 75 miles in length; this labyrinth formerly housed hospitals, weapon factories and living quarters when it was used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. En route, your tour will pass through a traditional rice paper making village before lunch at a local restaurant. Start your afternoon city tour at the historically symbolic Reunification Palace, the former home and workplace of the wartime president of South Vietnam and the place where the Vietnam war ultimately concluded in spectacular fashion, when an army tank crashed through its gates. Continue to the enchanting neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral, an architectural wonder due to its distinctive red-brick exterior; built between 1877-1883 this iconic Basilica is the major seat of the Catholic religion in Vietnam and continues to entice a steady influx of intrigued visitors. Later, travel past the grand, French-style Saigon Post Office.

DAY 4: Saigon to Can Tho B/L/D

In the morning drive to My Tho and board your boat to cruise along the picturesque waterways of the Mekong River, passing rustic landscapes, floating markets, local villages and the four islands known as Dragon, Unicorn, Phoenix and Turtle, docking in Unicorn Island. A visual feast awaits as you wander around a vibrant showcase of exotic fruits being sold in copious farms, and also relish in the chance to sample local delights at the coconut sweet workshop for an authentic taste of Vietnamese indulgences. Later, arriving at a bee farm, taste the traditional honey tea, a locally produced refreshment, and meander along the Vam Chua Canal - a narrow channel, shaded by enveloping palm trees, listening to the serene sound of rippling water touching the sides of your rowing boat. Continue to Can Tho where you will spend the night.

DAY 5: Can Tho to Hanoi B/L/D

Your morning in Can Tho will begin with a gentle trip through the scenic canals and waterways in a small boat, taking in the sultry scenery and daily activities of the vendors of the floating markets who live along these Mekong canals. Stop to witness the Mekong Delta's largest floating market of Cai

Rang, a sight to behold where a bustling cluster of merchants compete with each other to sell fresh produce to local traders and tourists. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant, transfer to the airport in Can Tho for your flight to Hanoi, where you will have an evening at leisure to settle in.

DAY 6: Hanoi B/L/D

A full day tour of Hanoi begins by weaving through the charming courtyards and gardens of the ancient Temple of Literature, followed by a visit to the ornate Presidential Palace, a distinctive edifice, strikingly recognisable by its mustard façade. Next, observe the iconic One Pillar Pagoda, designed to resemble a lotus flower which is a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment, before taking a short drive out of the city centre to take part in a local authentic cooking demonstration; sampling traditional flavours and spices often associated with Vietnamese cuisine, enjoy your tantalising creation for lunch. The afternoon continues with an enlightening visit to the National History Museum to discover an assortment of ancient artefacts from imperial Vietnam, before briefly stopping at the Hanoi Opera House to capture the grandeur which exudes this imposing colonial structure. Conclude today's walking tour as you navigate the swarming market stalls of Hanoi's Old Quarter, before enjoying an evening at a charming Water Puppet Show, a tradition which originated from local rice paddy farmers over 1000 years ago.

DAY 7: Hanoi to Halong Bay* B/L/D

This memorable day takes you to the awe-inspiring Halong Bay where you will explore these tranquil islands on a luxury cruise boat, passing local towns and intricate limestone formations on the way. Sail to the narrow arched Luon Cave and embark on a kayak or bamboo boat to get closer to this impressive formation which has a maximum height of 4 metres - depending on the tide! After, enjoy some swimming at Ti Top (Titov) beach. Back on board, enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail party and a cooking demonstration class before savouring a delicious set dinner in the dining room. Evening activities are available including night time squid fishing.

DAY 8: Halong Bay to Hanoi* Brunch/D

Awake to the rising sun's glistening reflection from the centre of Halong Bay and begin your day with some calming Tai Chi. After breakfast, explore Sung Sot cave - one of the largest and most beautiful caves in Ha Long Bay. The cave has some unique rock formations which couldn't be found anywhere else. Return on board and sail towards Tuan Chau Marina where you will disembark and head back to the capital of Hanoi.

DAY 9/10: Hanoi to the UK London or Extension B

Following breakfast the day is left at leisure before transferring to the airport for your evening flight back to London, or continue on to your chosen extension.

*Please note: the Halong Bay cruise itinerary may change depending on the boat used. Depending on the weather and which beaches can be accessed, there is an opportunity to climb up the side of Titov Mountain. There are roughly 450 steps to reach the top to view Halong Bay. This is optional and not a guaranteed activity, but if you do wish to do it, you should pack suitable shoes just in case.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

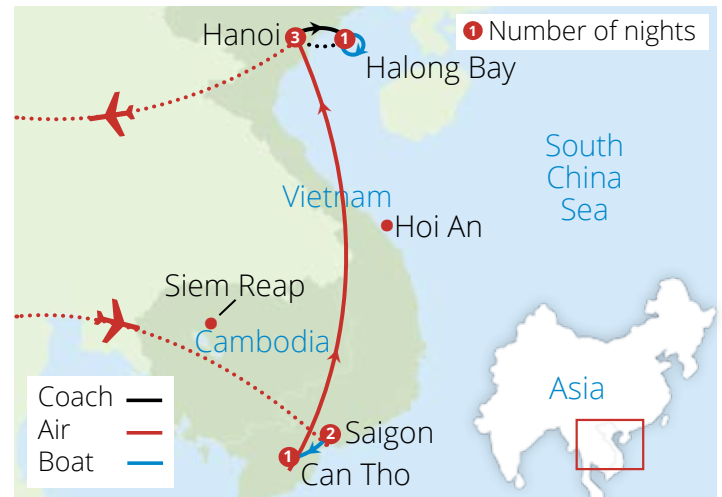
Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to guesthouses. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Vietnam. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed. Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs. If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Saigon you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Lac Viet (LV) Travel**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury holidays". The Mercury holidays/Vietnam Travel Service representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Lac Viet Travel (LV) Head Office, Hanoi

Floor 18, VTC Online Building,
No 18, Tam Trinh Str,
Hai Ba Trung District,
Hanoi, Vietnam
Telephone: 0084 2439 413 748
E-mail: operation@lvtravel.vn

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for LV Travel head office, Hanoi

Contact

Anna Hanh
Mr Len

Telephone number

Office: 0084 983 096 032
Office: 0084 989 200 116

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

Vietnam: For all arrivals from the 15 August 23, a visa is not required for UK nationals, for stays up to 45 days. A visa is required for entry into Vietnam for all stays longer than 45 days. All departures before the 15 August 23, a visa is required for all stays longer than 15 days. You can apply for an e-visa online at evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn. The cost of the visa is approximately USD\$25 and will take roughly 3 working days. Alternatively, we work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa will be advised upon application. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of entry. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. You can also visit the Embassy of Vietnam in London: 12-14 Victoria Road, London, W8 5RD. This visa information is a guide line only and is subject to change; up-to-date information regarding the process and fees will be advised at the time of calling the Travel Visa Company.

Cambodia: If you have booked the Temples of Cambodia extension following your tour, you will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia which can be purchased on arrival. The cost of this is approximately USD \$30 per person and you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well. Please note that you will need to have at least one completely blank page in your passport for the Cambodian visa to be issued.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24-hour emergency contact number as soon as possible.

Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Impressions of Vietnam is Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides - Local Guides

This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tipping

It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately 6/7 Euros per person per day. This is a total of 61 USD per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong, known as VND. You can exchange your currency in Vietnam, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Vietnam should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £200- £300 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Credit card information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Public Holidays - Vietnam

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Tet Holiday is between 10th-12th February 2024, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
 - Comfortable walking shoes
 - Camera and charger
 - An electric plug converter - the electricity in Vietnam/Cambodia is 220-240 V.
- You will need a 2 round pin plug or 2 flat pin plug adapter

- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars
- A small overnight bag to take on your cruise of Halong Bay
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

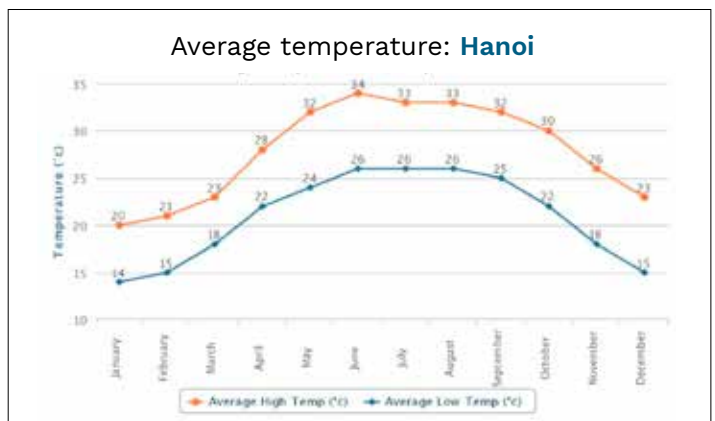
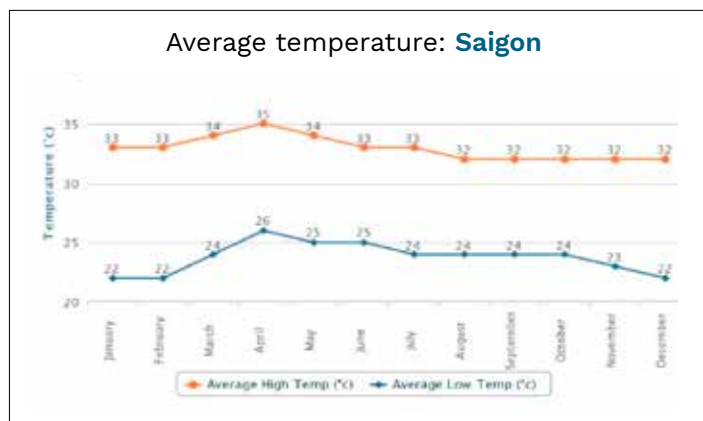
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Hoi An Beach Stay

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



Le Belhamy Resort

TRIP OVERVIEW

Six days, five nights in Hoi An is the perfect way to complete your tour. Relax and unwind by the turquoise ocean waters, sample local cuisine and explore the historic Old Town.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your beach extension to Hoi An.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

A former port town, Hoi An is a historic town with narrow streets, riverside cafes and a stunning nearby beach. The traditional Old Town is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site with numerous pedestrianised streets. The Hoi An beach sits close to the town, enjoying palm fringed shores and powder white sands.

DAY 9: Hanoi to Da Nang B

Depart Hanoi on your scheduled flight to Da Nang for your transfer to Hoi An and your first night.

DAYS 10 TO 13: Hoi An B

Relax and enjoy some free at your chosen beach hotel.

DAY 14: Hoi An to London B

After your transfer to Da Nang depart on your scheduled flight to London.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Hoi An is not escorted by a tour guide.

Hotels

Hoi An (4 nights)

Depending on your preference your Hoi An stay will take place at the 4★ **Le Belhamy Hotel** on Bed & Breakfast or the 5★ **Palm Garden Hoi An Resort** on Half Board. This will have been confirmed at booking.

Hotel Information

4★ Le Belhamy Resort

Address: Ha My Beach – Hoi An – Quang Nam

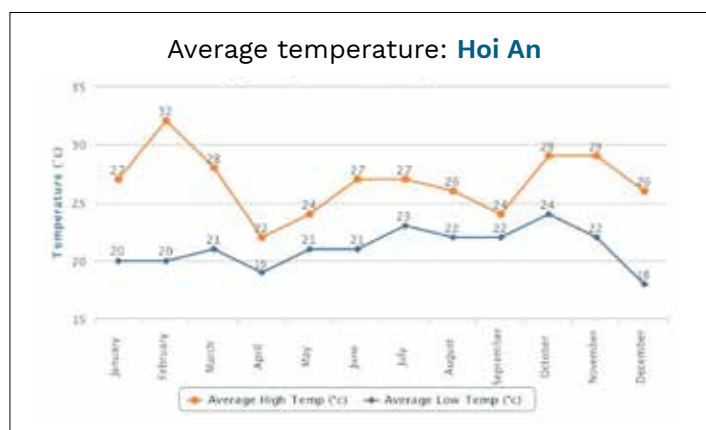
Tel: 0084 235 3941 888

5★ Palm Garden Hoi An Resort

Address: Lac Long Quân, Hoi An, Quảng Nam 560000, Vietnam

Tel: 0084 235 3927 927

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



Palm Garden Hoi An Resort

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Temples Of Cambodia

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



Tara Angkor Hotel

TRIP OVERVIEW

Your add-on of 6 days, 5 nights in Cambodia will explore the country's incredible and varied temples. A boat trip through the villages floating on the Tonlé Sap reveals stunning forest lakes, distinct communities and traditional river houses.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require during your add-on to Cambodia.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 9: Hanoi to Siem Reap B/D

Following breakfast at your hotel in Hanoi your morning will be spent at leisure before your transfer journey to the airport for your afternoon flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel, followed by an evening meal at a local restaurant.

DAY 10: Siem Reap B

Breakfast will be taken at your hotel, followed by a day at your leisure to enjoy the city in your own time, or simply relax by the hotel's stunning swimming pool.

DAY 11: Siem Reap B/L/D

After an early breakfast you will proceed to watch the sunrise over Angkor Wat – the 12th century temple which took over 30 years to build. It once served as the King Khmer's state temple and later as his mausoleum. It is one of Cambodia's best preserved temples and possibly Asia's most impressive archaeological site. The intricate towers and walls are set in green forest land, surrounded by a vast moat. You will then explore the fortified city of Angkor Thom, whose entrance is flanked by a row of 54 dramatic stone figures on each side. You will also get the chance to see some of the King's lesser known temples, including Bayon, the Terrace of the Elephants and Baphoun. After lunch you will take in the jungle covered Ta Prohm, undoubtedly the most atmospheric of all the ruins in Angkor. The temple sits among fig and banyan trees, with many passage ways and hidden chambers to discover. Finish the day by unwinding and watching the sun set over this incredible World Heritage Site before returning to Siem Reap for the night.

DAY 12: Siem Reap B/L/D

Today visit the stunning Banteay Srei, a 10th century Hindu temple dedicated to their god Shiva. Considered by many to be the "Jewel in the Crown" of Angkorian Art, this temple is carved from a pinkish stone and includes some of the finest stone carvings in the world. In the afternoon continue to the biggest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia, Tonlé Sap, where you will take a local boat and visit the charming village of Kampong Phluck. The boat will pass by traditional floating villages and houses built on stilts over the river, as well as meandering through forest lakes. The rest of the day is to spend at your leisure before your evening meal and the night in Siem Reap.

DAY 13: Siem Reap B

Today you will have some time at leisure to explore as you wish.

DAY 14: Siem Reap to London B

After breakfast, savour your last moments in Cambodia with some time at your leisure before being transferred to the airport in the afternoon for your return flight to London.

Hotel Information

Siem Reap (4 nights) 4★ Tara Angkor Hotel - Vithei Charles de Gaulle, Siem Reap. Contact number 0085 563 966 661

Visas

A visa is required. If you have booked the Temples of Cambodia extension following your tour, you will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia which can be purchased on arrival. The cost of this is approximately USD \$30 per person and you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well. Please note that you will need to have at least one completely blank page in your passport for the Cambodian visa to be issued.

Tour Guides

This extension tour to Cambodia is **semi-escorted**.

Your guide will meet you at your Hanoi hotel and take to the airport. Day 10 will be at your leisure, whilst day 11 and 12 will be fully accompanied. You will be met by your guide on day 13 to take you to the airport for your return flight to London Heathrow.

Tipping

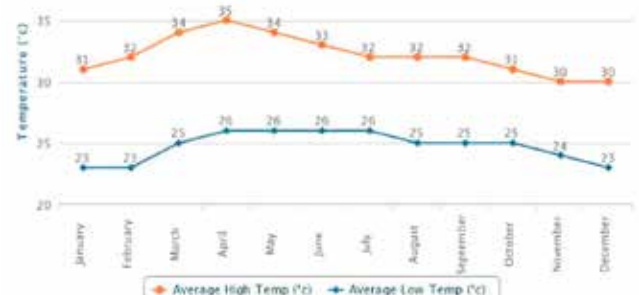
Tipping is common practice and seen as a way of life in Cambodia. It is customary to tip both your driver and guide \$5 (approximately £3.50) per person per day. For your convenience your guide will collect the full amount from you on your first day in Cambodia.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riel (KHR). We recommend that you take some US Dollars (USD) with you and exchange this currency whilst you are travelling.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Average temperature: Siem Reap



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**