

Vietnam & Cambodia Explorer



TRIP OVERVIEW

Steeped in history, discover an assortment of ancient treasures at the aweinspiring Angkor Wat complex and experience breath-taking panoramas in the heart of Halong Bay's azure waters.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Vietnam & Cambodia. 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, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner,

DAY 1: London to Hanoi

Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Hanoi.

DAY 2: Hanoi B/D

Upon arrival, meet your local guide and transfer to your hotel to relax after your flight.

DAY 3: Hanoi B/L/D

Begin today's tour of Hanoi at the distinctive Presidential Palace. Wander through pristinely manicured botanical gardens to uncover Ho Chi Minh's modestly sized house on stilts, nestled amongst the tranquillity of this rural oasis. From here, journey to Hanoi's emblematic One Pillar Pagoda and the 10th Century Temple of Literature before embarking on a street food tour, where you can sample Dried Beef Mannequin, Hanoi bread and Kebab Rice Noodles, as well as the delightful flavours of Egg-milk coffee within the vibrant Dong Xuan Market. Continue to Hoa Lo Prison known by American POWs as the Hanoi Hilton and then to the bustling Old Quarter Street to experience the daily life of the locals, before enjoying a traditional Water Puppet Performance this evening.

DAY 4: Hanoi to Halong Bay* B/L/D

Glide across the emerald waters of Halong Bay and experience a vision of extraordinary beauty, snaking past a landscape of scattered islands, limestone karsts and enchanting grottoes. Anchoring at the mouth of a secluded cove, disembark for the unique opportunity to swim in the azure waters, before spending a relaxing night in the midst of Halong Bay.

DAY 5: Halong Bay* to Hoi An BR/D

Awake to the serene sounds of lapping water and relish in a fresh morning breeze, as you slowly sail towards port whilst tucking into a delicious breakfast (brunch on some boats). Transfer to the airport and journey to Hoi An, where you can spend the rest of the day at leisure.

DAY 6: Hoi An B/D

Formerly one of Southeast Asia's chief ports, discover a labyrinth of riverside streets strewn with perfectly preserved Japanese merchant houses and Chinese tea warehouses. Explore this easily navigable town at leisure in the morning before joining a city tour in the afternoon, visiting the 17th century Japanese Pagoda Bridge. After the tour sample some of the street food in Hoi An Ancient Town including Cao Lau Noodles, White Rose Cake, Fried Wonton Dumplings, Chicken Rice and Fried Banana Cake.

DAY 7: Hoi An B

Today, experience Hoi An's charming character during a day at leisure.

DAY 8: Hoi An to Saigon B

After a morning at leisure, journey to the bustling city of Saigon, where an afternoon tour begins at the War Remnants Museum; presenting a collection of retired artillery and weaponry artefacts, explore the harrowing exhibits which highlight the grim realities of the Vietnam War. Next, head towards the distinctive neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and adjacent Saigon Post Office. Finally, experience a hive of activity amidst the vibrant market stalls of Ben Thanh Market.

DAY 9: Saigon B/L

After breakfast, discover the extraordinary underground Cu Chi tunnel network, spanning an astonishing 75 miles; famously housing hospitals, living quarters and weapon factories during the Vietnam war, these restricted passageways were used as the main base of operations by the Viet Cong. This afternoon, enjoy some time at leisure in the centre of cosmopolitan Saigon.

DAY 10: Saigon to Can Tho B/L/D

Travel south to the picturesque province of Ben Tre. Take a boat trip along the Hoa River, pausing en route to experience the unique regional trades of local residents, incorporating visits to a coconut sweets workshop, thriving bee garden and candy mill, relishing in a tasting along the way. Following a short walk towards a local farmer house, journey along village paths and through verdant vegetable plains on a tuk tuk, before continuing to Can Tho.

DAY 11: Can Tho to Chau Doc B/L/D

Experience a hive of activity upon Can Tho's crowded canals this morning, on a scenic journey towards Mekong Delta. The Cai Rang floating market is packed with an enormous array of vibrant fruit and vegetables to feast your eyes upon. Venture onwards, absorbing tranquil vistas along the enchanting Mekong, and head towards a local village for the chance to visit a rice husking mill and rice noodle shop, observing the process of producing these staple ingredients, before transferring to Chau Doc.

DAY 12: Chau Doc to Phnom Penh B/L/D

Following a speedboat journey into Cambodia's historic capital, immerse yourself in regal grandeur at the Cambodian King's residence; the ornately gilded Khmer roofs of the Royal Palace majestically rub shoulders with the neighbouring lavish Silver Pagoda. Later in the day, boasting one of Cambodia's largest collections of Khmer art dating from the prehistoric era through to the present day, wander through the National Museum's fascinating exhibition of Cambodian history, and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

DAY 13: Phnom Penh to Siem Reap B

Following breakfast, a moving tour of the Tuol Sleng Prison Museum and the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek explores the reality of Cambodia's troubled past. Although inconceivable to comprehend the harrowing events which once unfolded here, these excursions illustrate imperative pieces of Cambodia's historical puzzle. Pay your respects to the victims of the Pol Pot regime at Choeung Ek's poignant Buddhist memorial before travelling

to Siem Reap this evening. *Journey from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap takes approximately 6 hours by coach.

DAY 14: Siem Reap B

Take some time to relax, shop and discover the street life in Cambodia's most pleasant tourist town.

DAY 15: Siem Reap B/L/D

Today, embark on a tour of the Angkor Wat complex; a stunning example of enduring devotion to the gods, this grandiose temple has been in constant use since its construction in 1112. Flanked by a commanding row of 54 stone figures, enter the South Gate of the Angkor Thom and visit the mesmerising gothic towers of Bayon and later the Baphuon, Phimeanakas and the Elephant Terrace. Following lunch, uncover the mystical Ta Prohm temple, partially engulfed by the jungle's burgeoning canopy, before enjoying a

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character. 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.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Hanoi you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **LV Travel**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/ **LV Travel** representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. If you need to contact your representative during your stay the details are:

Lac Viet Travel (LV)

Telephone Number 0084 2439 413 748

e-mail operation@lvtravel.vn ; operate@lvtravel.vn

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-

farewell dinner and traditional Apsara dance performance.

Please note: Optional early morning departure (roughly 04:30am) to see the sunrise at Angkor Wat. You will then return to the hotel to have breakfast and then head back to explore Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom. If you chose not to do the sunrise trip you will join the rest of the group after breakfast.

DAY 16/17: Siem Reap to the UK B

Enjoy a morning at leisure before departing for your flight home or chosen extension, via Hanoi.

*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.



Please note the hotels listed on our website and brochure 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. Lunch and dinner will be taken in local Vietnamese restaurants. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

Emergency contact information

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

Mr Len - General Manager (Mobile); 0084989200116

Mrs Anna Hanh - Operation Manager (Mobile); 0084 983096032

Office number; 0084 24 3941 3748/ 49/ 50

date information regarding the process and fees will be advised at the time of calling the Travel Visa Company.

Please note: the entry point in Vietnam is Song Tien Landport.

Cambodia: 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. Visa is only available for purchase upon arrival at the border. E-Visas are only valid for airport arrivals, so not valid on our tours.

Visa requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Mercury Holidays. We recommend you check with your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy prior to departure for the most up to date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Tour 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 always have first-hand knowledge.

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 customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately \$6/7 per person per day. This is a total of \$140 per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips are accepted in the local currency. An additional \$15 tip is recommended at the Vietnam and Cambodia border.

Currency Exchange

Vietnam: 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.

Cambodia: The currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riels, known as KHR. You can exchange your currency in Cambodia, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Cambodia 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.

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.

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.

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

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 of Vietnam and Cambodia Explorer is rated 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.

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you may 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. MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

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

- Sunglasses, 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 adapters
- Loo paper for public WC's
- Antibacterial hand gel
- Binoculars
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- A small overnight bag to take on your cruise of Halong Bay
- Waterproof, lightweight jacket
- Lightweight clothing
- Sweater and jacket for the cooler months

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.

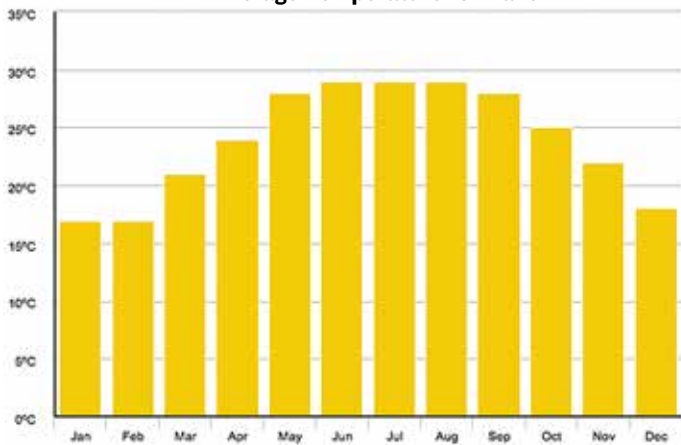
Airport Extras

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

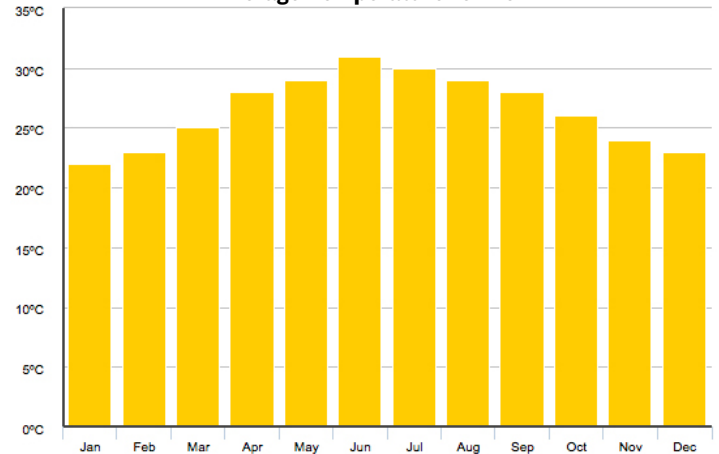
WEATHER AND CLIMATE

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

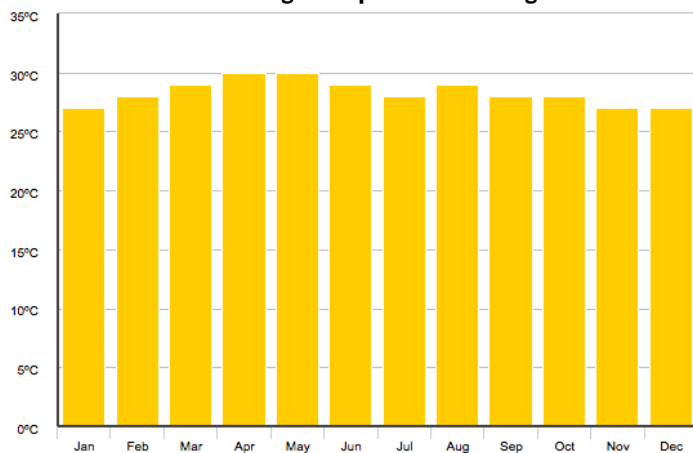
Average Temperature for Hanoi



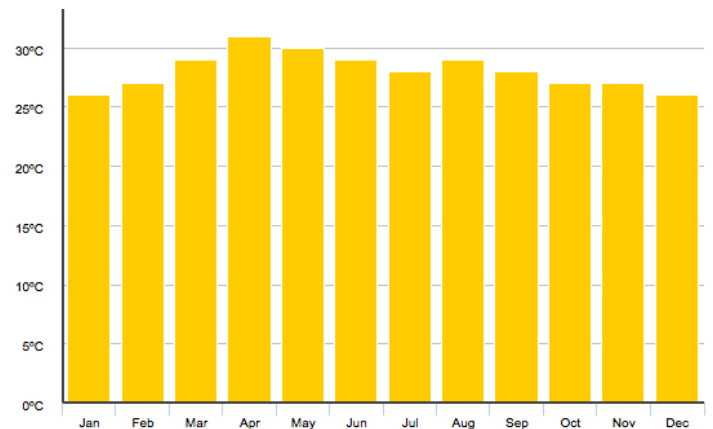
Average Temperature for Hoi An



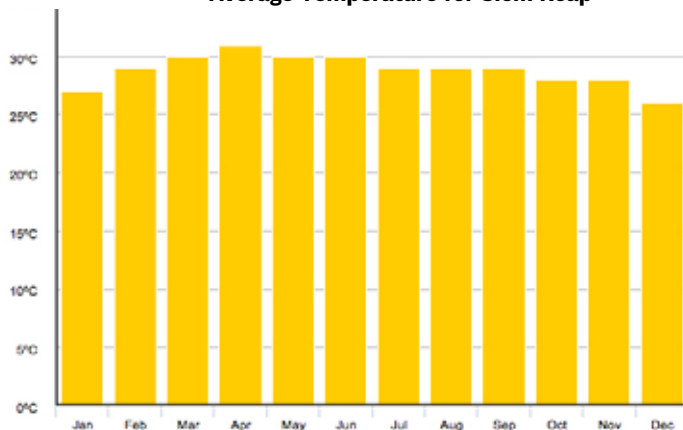
Average Temperature for Saigon



Average Temperature for Phnom Penh



Average Temperature for Siem Reap



Siem Reap Extension

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



TRIP OVERVIEW

Spend 3 extra nights in Cambodia to further explore Siem Reap or Angkor Wat at your own pace.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Siem Reap.

Hotel

Your 3 night stay in Siem Reap will take place at the **4★ Tara Angkor hotel** on Bed & Breakfast.

Conveniently situated just 6km from the World Heritage site of Angkor Wat Temples, and a few minutes walk to the Angkor National Museum, this stylish property comprises 206 rooms and suites. The hotel also offers good facilities and is a short ride to the city town centre for shopping, souvenirs and culture.

Hotel address: Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia, 17254, Charles De Gaulle, Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia. Contact number: 00855 63 966 661

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

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.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover lunches, snacks, dinner, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs and laundry.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Siem Reap is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Meals

Your stay in Cambodia is on a Bed and Breakfast basis

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.



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.