

# EXPLORE!

## Tour Notes



### Vietnam and Angkor Odyssey (DVNC 2014)



TOUR  
DURATION  
**14**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Premium  
**Tour Pace:** Moderate

**Tour Type:** Small Groups  
**Tour Comfort:** Comfortable

**Tour Code:** DVNC

#### Tour Highlights - Vietnam and Angkor Odyssey

- ✓ Hanoi - Wander through the bustling narrow streets of the Old Quarter lined with shop-houses
- ✓ Halong Bay - Luxury junk boat cruise through one of the most breathtaking limestone landscapes in Southeast Asia
- ✓ Hoi An - Charming ancient merchants' town on the banks of the Thu Bon River
- ✓ Mekong Delta - Riverside stilt houses and fascinating floating markets
- ✓ Siem Reap - Gateway to the iconic and awe-inspiring Khmer temple complex of Angkor

#### Tour Essentials

**Accommodation:** 12 nights Comfortable Hotel  
1 night Comfortable Boat

**Included Meals:** 13 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 dinner

**Start Point:** Join tour: Hanoi

**End Point:** Tour ends: Siem Reap

**Transport:** Bus, Boat

**Countries:** Vietnam, Cambodia

## Vietnam and Angkor Odyssey

Explore the fascinating sights of Vietnam and Cambodia and stay in a variety of comfortable hotels. We visit the imperial city of Hue, the historical port of Hoi An and Old Saigon. Cruise Halong Bay on a luxury junk and explore the Mekong Delta by boat. We also spend time in Cambodia exploring Angkor's magnificent jungle temple complex.

### Suitability

We've given each of our tours a comfort rating and a tour pace, walking or cycling grade to give you a general idea about the level of activity on each tour and the standard of accommodation you will be staying in at the end of your day's adventure.

Often you'll stay in different styles of accommodation during your tour; so we make an average rating across the entire tour. For more information on where you'll stay each night, please refer to the day by day tour itinerary.

### Tour Comfort: Comfortable

Hand-picked and chosen for their character, location or local importance, these properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

### Tour Style: Premium

These tours are perfect if you want to combine an original, off-beat classic adventure with the added comfort of hand-picked accommodation chosen for its character, location or local importance. Revel in adventurous days followed by relaxing nights.

### Tour Pace: Moderate

These moderately paced tours provide some busy days with plenty of experiences to enjoy, as well as time to relax along the way.

## Your tour itinerary

### Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. Overnight stops may vary from those suggested.

### Your Tour Leader

A Tour Leader is an integral part of any Explore tour and your tour will be led by one of our experienced tour leaders who have been handpicked and expertly trained. We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours; they are passionate travellers who are bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Your tour Leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey. Their passionate approach will make this tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others.

### DAY 1 Join tour in Hanoi

Arrive Hanoi and check-in at the hotel. The remainder of the day is free to make your first impressions of the Vietnam's capital city. You may choose to take a walk around the shores of Hoan Kiem Lake.

### Flower Garden Hotel

Located in the heart of downtown Hanoi, Flower Garden Hotel is a short drive from the Old Quarter and walking distance from Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, and the botanical gardens. The hotel offers 83 spacious rooms spread over 14 floors with views of the river, the lake or the city. Facilities include a spa and fitness centre, and a roof-top fine dining restaurant providing a stunning perspective over the city.

### Single Rooms Available

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## DAY 2 Discover the sights of Hanoi including the Old Quarter

This morning we make a tour of the main sights of Hanoi. Architecturally styled like a French provincial town with tree-lined boulevards and substantial low-built houses the city is wonderfully nostalgic. Among the interesting sights are the charming One-Pillar Pagoda, Confucius Temple and the Presidential Palace. Ho Chi Minh himself, a spartan-living and scholarly man, chose not to live in the Presidential Palace; he preferred instead a simple teak stilt-house specially built for him in the grounds. This walk through the narrow lanes of the fascinating Old Quarter, where the streets are named after various crafts or specialties: Paper Street, Silk Street, Basket Street and so on. The shops themselves have very narrow frontages but are actually quite deep; they are known locally as tube shops. On the pavements food sellers sell noodles, snacks and stir-fries from shoulder panniers. The smell of food mixes with the smell of incense from small temples dotted around.

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 3 Drive to Halong Bay; board junk for overnight cruise

Departing the city early this morning we head east, towards the Gulf of Tonkin and the spectacular scenery of Halong Bay. One of Southeast Asia's most spectacular settings, Halong Bay presents a breathtaking vista of thousands of limestone islands that rise from the jade green waters of the bay like the scales of some great submerged dragon. Indeed Halong means 'where the dragon descends to the sea' and local legend tells of a time when this rugged landscape was created by the pounding tail of a mighty dragon as he ran from the mountains into the sea. Boarding our junk around midday we set sail, threading our way through a flotilla of boats, junks and wooden sampans as they ply their way across the gentle waters of the bay; a timeless image of a way of life unchanged for generations. We will overnight on board the junk where we are comfortably accommodated in en suite twin share cabins, all with picture windows and air conditioning.

### Indochina Sails Junk

Newly built in traditional style our boat, or junk, is the ideal way to experience Halong Bay in style. Indochina Sails Junk boasts comfortable cabins with private en-suite bathrooms and air-conditioning. Facilities on board include a sun deck, bar and restaurant area. The junk is not exclusive to Explore and we will be sharing facilities with other travellers.

### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 4 Cruise Halong Bay; fly to Danang and drive to Hoi An

We cruise back to land this morning and drive back to Hanoi in time to catch the late afternoon flight to Danang. It is just a short drive from here to the UNESCO World Heritage town of Hoi An, a former merchant port and our base for the next three nights.

### Hoi An Trails Resort and Spa

Located just a kilometre from Cua Dai beach and three kilometers from the Old Town, Hoi An Trails Resort offers 100 spacious and comfortable rooms housed in six 3-storey chalets. Set in well-kept tropical gardens all rooms are decorated in traditional Vietnamese style. Facilities include a spa, swimming pool and fitness centre. A unique feature is the hotel's floating café bar, selling cocktails, coffee and cake.

### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 5 In Hoi An; cooking lesson and walking tour of Old Town

Hoi An had become one of the busiest international trading ports of Southeast Asia by the 17th and 18th centuries, and it still retains its medieval charm today, with many of its old buildings superbly preserved. We take a leisurely cruise along the river to one of the town's restaurants where we will be taught the flavoursome secrets of Vietnamese cuisine during a dedicated cookery lesson. We also take a walking tour of the Old Town including such sights as the Japanese Bridge and some of the Chinese temples and meeting halls. There are many shops, bars and restaurants in this charming town and is a great place to buy souvenirs, have clothing tailored or simply watch the world go by in a riverside café.

### Hoi An Trails Resort and Spa

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 6 Free day to explore Hoi An; optional visit to ancient My Son

Today is left free for you to enjoy Hoi An. There are many shops, bars and restaurants in this charming town and is a great place to buy souvenirs, have clothing tailored or simply watch the world go by in a riverside café. The beach is only a short drive by taxi alternatively a boat trip on the river as the late afternoon sun lights up the riverfront is a treat. There are also excursions that may be taken further afield such as to My Son one of the holiest and most evocative of Vietnam's Cham sites. The Chams were dynastic lords who rejected the authority of China in 2AD and established their own kingdom. Travel along the track that leads to the site is slow, as we bump through wooded hills southwest of Hoi An. But the site is certainly impressive with several groupings of Cham temples to be visited. Alternatively you may wish to take an optional excursion out the site of the My Lai village massacre memorial. The massacre was a significant turning point in the American War and the horrific story is told through a very emotive exhibition of photography.

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 7 Scenic drive via Danang to Hue

Today we head north along the coast to Hue with several interesting stops along the way. Our first stop is at the nearby five peaks of the Marble Mountains, said to represent the five elements of water, wood, fire, gold and earth. Naturally formed grottoes have been transformed into heavily carved Buddhist sanctuaries. A torch is useful to explore some of the caves and grottos. A short distance from the mountains we find the white sands of My Khe Beach (nicknamed China Beach by American troops - an ideal spot for a brief rest. Pausing in Danang, once the centre of the Kingdom of Champa (2nd century AD - 1720) we visit the Cham Museum, home to a fine collection of Cham sculptures. We enjoy a scenic drive across the spectacular Col des Nuages, otherwise known as the Hai Van Pass en route observing rural scenes of thatched, wooden houses and lime-green rice paddies as well as enjoying panoramic sea views as we make our way to Hue.

### Park View

This modern hotel offers 119 comfortable and well-appointed rooms designed in a blend of Western and Oriental style. Rooms are set within two towers, with views from the ninth floor overlooking the Perfume River and the stunning Imperial Citadel, which is just 10 minutes walk away. Facilities include a spa, swimming pool and fitness centre, as well as range of dining options.

### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 8 In Hué, visit the Imperial Citadel; free afternoon

This morning we appreciate Hué's fascinating history with a visit to the Imperial Citadel. Located on the left bank is the river, this palace was built by the Nguyen dynasty, Vietnam's ruling emperors from the early 1800s to 1945. The Citadel has formal moats and impressive ramparts that were constructed by 20,000 men and was a copy of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Although most of the inner part of the city was totally destroyed during the month-long Tet Offensive in 1968, the vast outer walls and the west wing remain an eloquent reminder of the palace's former glory. The remainder of the day is free to perhaps explore some of the outlying Tombs of the Emperors by bicycle.

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 9 Fly to Ho Chi Minh City; walking tour of Old Saigon and city sightseeing

This morning we return by road to Danang Airport for our flight to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest city and former capital of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). This afternoon we walk around the central sights of Old Saigon, now District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City. We see the Notre Dame Cathedral and the GPO building as well as some of the old French Colonial hotels such as The Rex. We then drive to the Independence Palace (renamed the Reunification Hall) and the graphic War Remnants Museum.

### Liberty Central Saigon Centre Hotel

The Liberty Central Saigon Central is walking distance from the famous Ben Thanh market and local restaurants, and within easy reach of central Saigon, location of the Notre-Dame Cathedral and Opera House. This 12-storey hotel offers 140 modern and well-appointed comfortable rooms. Facilities include a fitness centre and a rooftop swimming pool. Dining options include a restaurant and a Bistro Café with a daily happy hour.

### Single Rooms Available



## DAY 10 Cruise in Mekong Delta, then return to Ho Chi Minh City

Today we drive to Cai Be in the lush surroundings of the Mekong Delta and take a boat to its colourful floating market. We continue along the river and visit local family houses where popcorn and rice paper are produced. We enjoy a lunch of fresh local produce and specialities within a lush tropical garden by the river among pomelo, longan, mango, coconut and banana trees. After lunch our cruise continues into the countryside, where local houses are still made of wood and palm tree leaves and pass under several small traditional wooden and bamboo bridges. We then return to Ho Chi Minh City.

### Liberty Central Saigon Centre Hotel

The Liberty Central Saigon Central is walking distance from the famous Ben Thanh market and local restaurants, and within easy reach of central Saigon, location of the Notre-Dame Cathedral and Opera House. This 12-storey hotel offers 140 modern and well-appointed comfortable rooms. Facilities include a fitness centre and a rooftop swimming pool. Dining options include a restaurant and a Bistro Café with a daily happy hour.

### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 11 Visit Cu Chi Tunnels; fly to Siem Reap

We drive out early this morning to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels. This morning we take a short drive out of the city to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels, which formed an incredible underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops and were a major part of the 1968 Tet Offensive. The site is a fascinating insight into the resourcefulness of the Vietnamese. There is the opportunity to crawl through a small specially adapted section of the tunnels should you wish to sample the claustrophobic conditions the Viet Cong lived in. Later we fly to Siem Reap in Cambodia; our base for an exploration of the fascinating temples of Angkor.

### Tara Angkor

Tara Angkor Hotel is located just six kilometers from the iconic Temples of Angkor, a few minutes walk from the Angkor National Museum and a short drive to the town of Siem Reap itself. The hotel offers 206 stylish and contemporary Khmer style rooms. Facilities include a swimming pool with Jacuzzi, fitness centre, spa and sauna, two restaurants and cooking classes.

### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 12 From Siem Reap, explore Angkor Thom

Our exact programme over the 2 days at Angkor will be organised at the tour leader's discretion to avoid crowds, coincide with sunsets, etc. Our exact programme over the next three days may change slightly at our local guide's discretion (to avoid crowds, coincide with sunsets, etc.). Angkor was actually a series of cities, built between the 9th and the 13th centuries by the Khmer kings, with a population of 750,000 in its heyday. The Angkor complex is spread out over some 155 square kilometres, scattered with magnificent carved stone temples, elegant sculptures and incredible bas reliefs. We visit the temples of King Jayavarman VII, reputedly Angkor's greatest king. The fortified city of Angkor Thom, which he had built at the end of the 12th century, is enclosed by a square wall 8 metres high with five 20 metre high monumental gates decorated with stone elephant trunks. Originally, crocodiles inhabited the moat and huge statues of 54 different gods protected each gate. The city contains another of Angkor's true gems - The Bayon. Although not as impressive as Angkor Wat from a distance, The Bayon is nevertheless incredible for its maze of corridors, gothic style towers and magical central temples. We'll explore The Terrace of the Elephants and the Leper King, the Baphuon and Phimeanakas and some of the surrounding temples such as Preah Khan.

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 13 From Siem Reap, explore Ta Phrom and Angkor Wat

On our final day we make a visit to the 2nd Angkor capital which includes the temples of Prasat Kravan, Banteay Kdei and Takeo. A highlight for many is a visit to the atmospheric temple of Ta Phrom, where the film Tomb Raider was filmed, lying half consumed by the jungle. We leave the best known and most breathtaking of all the sights, Angkor Wat, to the end - where we stay until the sun sets on the last night of our adventure.

### Tara Angkor

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### Single Rooms Available

## DAY 14 Tour ends in Siem Reap

Tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may choose to browse the old market for some last minute bargains, or enjoy afternoon tea at The Foreign Correspondent's Club.

## Accommodation and Meals

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 13 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 dinner included in the price of this tour. Please be prepared to pay for non-included meals. Please note that costs for drinks and meals can vary depending on location.

## Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

### Other Sightseeing & Activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations.

Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

### Optional Excursions

Hanoi - Water Puppets Show from US\$4

Hoi An - Half day trip to My Son from US\$25

Hue - Cruise along Perfume River visiting Thien Mu Pagoda and the Royal Tombs from US\$15

Siem Reap - Scenic helicopter flight over Angkor from US\$110-260; Sunrise visit to Angkor US\$5; Half day cruise on Tonle Sap Lake US\$20-25 (depending on numbers)

### Tipping - Tour Leader

Tour Leader: At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

### Tipping - Local Crew

Local Crew: Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour.

Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 35.

## Foreign Exchange

### Vietnam

**ATM Availability:** There are ATMs virtually everywhere in Vietnam and in Cambodia, though we also recommend bringing cash.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Some shops in Hanoi, and Hoi An. The occasional restaurant.

**Travellers Cheques:** Travellers cheques can usually be changed in the towns, but only during bank opening hours.

**Local Currency:** Dong.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** Carry your money in US\$ Dollars cash. You can also take GBP but US\$ are easier to exchange. (Dollar bills can be used in some hotels and shops; change is often given in local currency).

**Where to Exchange:** Most towns.

### Cambodia

**ATM Availability:** There are ATMs in most towns and cities.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Credit cards are accepted in some large shops and restaurants in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap.

**Travellers Cheques:** They can be hard to change outside of Siem Reap and Phnom Penh; we recommend them for emergencies only.

**Local Currency:** Riel.

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** In Cambodia, US\$ is the most commonly used currency (small denomination notes are easier to use).

**Where to Exchange:** Large towns.

## Joining your Tour

### Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

For passengers making their own travel arrangements, please ensure you join the group as described on day one of the tour itinerary. If you are considering purchasing your own airline tickets, you can book these through any travel agent, directly with an airline or through an online flight consolidator. In all cases, we would be happy to arrange transfers to and from the joining point of your tour if required.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Clients booked on '**Land Only**' arrangements should make their own way to the joining point. Please refer to separate '**Joining Instructions**' for time and place of rendezvous with tour leader

### Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## Important Information

### Travel Insurance

It is a condition of joining **any** of our tours that you must have valid travel insurance. It must indicate that you have cover for (at least) medical expenses and emergency repatriation in the event of illness or injury. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling in England and Scotland. We also strongly recommend your policy includes curtailment, personal effects and cancellation protection as all deposits paid are non-refundable.

If you require travel insurance for your tour, Explore Worldwide is an appointed representative of Campbell Irvine Limited, who is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services authority. Our travel insurance policy is specially tailored to the needs of the adventure traveller and will cover you for any included activity on any Explore trip. You can either purchase this at the time of booking or call us on 0844 499 0903 after you have booked.

### Visa Information

Vietnam: A single entry visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and must be obtained prior to departure. Visas can be obtained through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK; Visaswift, at <http://www.visaswift.com/explore.aspx>. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Cambodia: A single visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. The current cost is 20USD, a passport sized photograph for immigration will also be required. Alternatively, you can arrange your visa in advance in the form of an e-Visa. To make your application, and for more information contact the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs direct at [www.mfaic.gov.kh](http://www.mfaic.gov.kh).

All visa information is subject to change. You should confirm all visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

### Vaccinations & Protection

#### Vietnam

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on different prophylaxis available against malaria. Although not compulsory travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

#### Cambodia

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against malaria, infectious hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, diphtheria and polio. Consult your GP regarding tablets advised for malaria. Though not compulsory, travellers may wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider.

## Preparing for your Tour

### Climate

#### Vietnam

As Vietnam is a long, narrow country from north to south climate conditions vary considerably. The climate can be divided into three distinct patterns between the north, central and south regions. The climate in the north is generally humid and subtropical, although the winter months from November to March can be colder with temperatures from 10 - 15 degrees. Summer months, May to September can be quite hot with temperatures from 30 - 35 degrees. Meanwhile south Vietnam enjoys a tropical climate all year round, with little variation throughout the year (around 27 - 32 degrees), however May to November is the rainy season when short, heavy downpours are quite frequent. Central Vietnam lies somewhere in between. The coastal strip is usually dry and hotter from April to October while November to March is wetter and cooler. A light rain jacket and small umbrella are recommended year round.

#### Cambodia

Cambodia is a hot and tropical country, being hottest in April and coolest in January (still high 20s). Although rainfall is at its maximum in October, Phnom Penh and Siem Reap receive very little rain compared to the coastal areas, and when it does rain it tends to be in the form of sporadic mid afternoon downpours. There is normally very little rain between December and March.

### Clothing

December through to February warmer clothing is needed for the North. Days are hot and humid. Lightweight rainwear essential at all times. The northern region is cold at night during the winter.

### Equipment

Torch and mosquito repellent

### Footwear

Comfortable shoes, trainers and sandals.

### Luggage: On Tour

One main lockable bag/case, an overnight bag for your trips to Halong Bay and the Mekong delta when your main luggage is left behind and a daypack.

Please remember that you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg

## General Information

### Food

The prices for meals and drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive. The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

#### Vietnam

**Lunch £:** 4.00

**Dinner £:** 9.00

#### Cambodia

**Lunch £:** 6.00

**Dinner £:** 9.00

### Drink

#### Vietnam

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.50

**Water £:** 0.50

#### Cambodia

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.30

**Water £:** 0.60



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## Country details

### Vietnam

**Population:** 90,549,390

**Size of Country:** 331,698 sq km

**Major Language:** Vietnamese

**Religion:** Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism

**Time Difference to GMT:** +7

### Cambodia

**Population:** 14,805,358

**Size of Country:** 181,035 sq km

**Major Language:** Khmer

**Religion:** Buddhism

**Time Difference to GMT:** +7

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## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Vietnam

2 Pin Round

### Cambodia

2 Pin Round

## Why Choose Explore

We've been creating award-winning pioneering adventure holidays for over 30 years, earning the trust of thousands of delighted customers, who feel safe in our hands. Our tour leaders have expert local knowledge and our tours are designed to take you off the beaten track to see the most exotic, inspiring and dramatic places in the world.

- With over 30 years experience, we are passionate about what we do.
- Pioneering small group adventures & tailor-made holidays.
- Award winning tour leaders who you can trust.
- Responsible travel is and always has been one of the driving principles of Explore.

Our adventure holidays are full of exciting things to see and do, exploring in small groups travelling by bus, boat, plane, rickshaw, camel, elephant, or any number of unusual forms of transport. Often you will stay in family-run hotels and village houses and enjoy authentic local cuisine. In this way, it's easy to discover the true heart of the people and the place you travel to – and make some new friends along the way. Each tour is uniquely different, so please feel free to browse through our tours to see what may whet your appetite.

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## Our commitment to the environment

We are passionate about sustainable travel and work hard to create tours where your holiday delivers real benefits to the local communities. We minimise our impact by travelling in small groups, respecting local cultures and traditions, reducing waste and offsetting 100% of the CO2 from our flights.

When you travel with Explore, you are directly contributing to local economies and helping empower the people you meet. We currently support a range of charities and good causes, including: The Sunshine Orphanage (which cares for abandoned children in Luxor, Egypt), Education for All (sponsoring children through their secondary education in Morocco), The Hope Foundation (helping an Indian Village to recover from the 2004 Tsunami) and the Mufindi Orphanage, which support AIDS orphans in Tanzania.

We also care passionately about the world's wildlife. We are patrons of the Born Free Organisation, Travel Operators for Tigers (helping save the Bengal Tiger from extinction) and Friends for Conservation. We have also adopted a beautiful Sri Lankan Elephant called 'Serendip'.

We are delighted to have received a Five Star sustainable tourism status from the Association of Independent Tour Operators in recognition of our on-going commitment to sustainable tourism.

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## Cool Earth

Explore are delighted to support Cool Earth to reduce carbon emissions through preventing the illegal deforestation of the South America rainforest. One of the top sources of global carbon emissions, rainforest deforestation equivalent to the USA's annual emissions, it also destroys flora and fauna, sometimes to the point of extinction. It also degrades the lives and communities of the 350 million residents of the rainforest.

Cool Earth prevents the deforestation through its support of local communities as forest guardians and by focussing on areas in immediate danger of deforestation. It has so far protected over 350,000 acres of rainforest, with each acre saving an emission of 260 tons of CO2, as well as protecting rare animals and plants. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth

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that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year. In addition to mitigating emissions, when you travel with Explore, you are helping to protect the source of 20% of the world's fresh water and oxygen, as well as the livelihoods of the 1.6 billion people who are reliant on the rainforest. [www.coolearth.org](http://www.coolearth.org)

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## Earth Matters

- [The Travel Foundation](#)

Explore are active members and supporters of the Travel Foundation which has established a variety of sustainable tourism projects in destinations and works with industry to improve practice. Visit their website [www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk](http://www.thetravelfoundation.org.uk)

- [Tourism Concern](#)

Explore support the work of Tourism Concern who campaign for fairly and ethically traded tourism, and are part of its Ethical Tour Operator Group [www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)

- For further information on responsible travel go to <http://www.explore.co.uk/ResponsibleTourism/>

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## Know before you go

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office Advice follow the link at <http://www.explore.co.uk/essential-travel-information/travel-resources/travel-safety>

## Booking Your Holiday

### Peace of mind - book with confidence

You can book your Explore holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected. Explore is a fully bonded tour operator licensed by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and by ABTOT.

The air holiday packages (Tours including flights) that we advertise are ATOL protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 2595. In addition, As a member of the Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited (ABTOT), Explore has provided a bond to meet the requirements of the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992. Please note that packages booked outside the UK are only protected when purchased directly with Explore.

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### Reserving your place

To reserve your place on this tour you will need to check availability on the Explore website or through our dedicated call centre based in the UK where you can. Our tours can fill up quickly so you are advised to book as early as possible. If your chosen date is 'Available' or 'Guaranteed' we will be able to provisionally hold you a space for up to 48 hours.

The easiest way to confirm your booking is through our website. When you are ready to book, we normally require a 10% non-refundable deposit, but for some holidays this may be more to cover such items as permit fees, internal flights or other non-refundable services. If your travel starts within 60 days of booking, full payment will be required at the time of booking

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### 100% No Surcharge Guarantee

The price paid for our holidays is no longer subject to change. Once booked and confirmed we will guarantee the price you pay will not increase, whatever the circumstances. You will not be approached to pay fuel surcharges unlike the vast majority of other adventure tour operators. The price guarantee applies to all new bookings departing between 1st January 2013 and 31st December 2014.

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### Tour Itinerary Versions

Itinerary details may vary depending on departure date and alternative itineraries for this tour may exist. Please refer to the dates and prices page on our website to check which itinerary operates on each departure date.

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes.

Please note: 2014 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2014. 2015/16 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2015.

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