

# EXPLORE!

## TRIP NOTES



### Indochina Encounter (QBK 2017)



TRIPDURATION  
**10**  
DAYS



**Tour Style:** Simply  
**Tour Pace:** Moderate

**Tour Type:** Small Groups  
**Accommodation**  
**Grade:** Standard

**Trip Code:** QBK

#### Trip Highlights - Indochina Encounter

- ✓ Bangkok - Explore the 'klongs', the network of waterways skirting the city's modern skyscrapers (optional)
- ✓ Siem Reap - Gateway to the iconic and awe-inspiring Khmer temple complex of Angkor
- ✓ Battambang - Dusty streets lined with Colonial buildings and Khmer temples
- ✓ Phnom Penh - Learn about the dark history of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia's buzzing capital (optional)
- ✓ Ho Chi Minh City - Learn about the resourcefulness of the Viet Cong at the Cu Chi Tunnels (optional)

#### Trip Essentials

**Accommodation:** 1 night Standard Hotel  
8 nights Simple Hotel

**Included Meals:** 5 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners

**Start Point:** Join trip: Bangkok

**End Point:** Trip ends: Ho Chi Minh City

**Transport:** Train, Public Bus, Taxi

**Countries:** Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam

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## Indochina Encounter

Travelling by local transport, we experience the variety that South East Asia has to offer. From the vibrant Thai capital of Bangkok we cross the border to Phnom Penh in Cambodia and continue to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam. Along the way we have the chance to explore the ancient temples of Angkor and cruise between floating fishing villages on Lake Tonle Sap.

### Why Book this trip

This classic journey through three countries from Bangkok to Ho Chi Minh City has been created for more adventurous travellers who enjoy discovering a destination by travelling overland predominantly using local transport. Some early starts and long journeys can be expected, as well as plenty of free time to explore this rewarding and fascinating region along the way. You will see a lot in a short space of time! If you have more time this tour combines with our Good Morning Vietnam (QVN) tour which covers the length and breadth of Vietnam.



### 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.

#### Accommodation Grade: Standard

Our mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en-suite facilities.

#### Tour Style: Simply

If your idea of adventure travel is to experience everyday local life in a country then try one of our Simply Explore tours. These grassroots adventures are flexible, affordable and fun

#### 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 trip 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

We believe that our Tour Leaders are the key to the success of our tours. Handpicked and expertly trained, they are native to the region and bursting with first-hand local knowledge which they love to share. Their passionate approach will make your tour fun and inspiring, bringing the destination to life whether you're travelling alone or with others. Your tour leader will also take care of all the planning and organisation throughout your journey, enabling you to relax and enjoy the



experience fully.

Our multi-country tours often have more than one tour leader, which helps us to really get under the skin of each unique destination. As such, the QBK tour has a different tour leader for Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam.

## DAY 1 Join tour in Bangkok

Arrive Bangkok and check-in at the hotel. If your flight time allows you may choose to take an optional cruise along the city's Klongs (canals) in a traditional longtail boat. This is the ideal way to explore Bangkok's network of meandering waterways that branch off from the main channel of the Chao Phraya River. The excursion will also include visits to the Royal Barge Museum and the iconic Wat Arun, the Temple of the Dawn, which was built to represent the towering slopes of Mount Meru, the home to the gods of Khmer mythology.

Overnight: **Standard Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 2 Journey overland to Siem Reap

This morning we make an early start with a train ride before boarding a scheduled bus service to the Cambodian city of Siem Reap. Operated as a through service, travellers will nevertheless change vehicles once in Cambodia. Your Thai leader will accompany you to the border and you will then meet your Cambodian Tour leader to continue your journey by local bus to Siem Reap.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 3 In Siem Reap; free time to discover the temples of Angkor

Today is left free to explore the incredible jungle temple complex of the Angkor period, whose history covers some 600 years, from the 9th through to the 15th centuries. No activities or excursions have been included in Siem Reap and your time here is very much your own, although your tour leader will be more than happy to help organise any visits that you wish. Two of the best ways to explore are by bicycle or striking a deal with one of the many tuk tuks that ply their trade here. Obvious choices are the magnificent complex of Angkor Wat, without doubt one of the most incredible of the jungle sites, the fortified city of Angkor Thom (home to the Bayon, with its mysterious giant faces) and the wonderfully overgrown and atmospheric Ta Prohm, set amidst tangled tree roots and lush jungle and famous as the setting for some of the Lara Croft film Tomb Raider. Other possibilities include taking to the waters of the Roluos River, to visit the floating villages and local wat at Kompong Phluk and explore the flooded forest and great lake of Tonle Sap (the largest freshwater lake in SE Asia, covering nearly a seventh of Cambodia's entire landmass). Those wishing to gain a little understanding of Cambodia's more recent past might like to seek out the fascinating Landmine Museum just to the south of Banteay Srei Temple. Set up in 1997 by a former Khmer Rouge soldier, the museum offers support for countless victims of landmines, as well as providing visitors with a poignant reminder of one of the country's most violent and tragic periods.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 4 In Siem Reap; free time to explore Angkor further

Today is left free to explore the incredible jungle temple complex of Angkor.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

**Swimming Pool Available** 

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 5 Public Bus past rural villages to Battambang

Today we travel by public bus from Siem Reap onto Battambang, a journey of approximately 3 hours. Battambang lies along a route that has seen countless Thai and the Khmer Rouge soldiers wind their way north and south, either in the pursuit of conquest, or in the case of the Khmer Rouge to escape the invading Vietnamese in 1979. The town is, surprisingly, Cambodia's second largest, a factor that has done little to detract from its laid-back feel, enhanced by a wealth of colonial villas and leafy streets. Depending upon our arrival time there may be an opportunity to explore this afternoon, taking in its traditional temples and French-colonial architecture.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

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 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 6 Drive to Phnom Penh; orientation walk in the city

A public bus takes us on to the Cambodian capital this morning, the 6-hour journey getting us to the city in time for an afternoon's orientation tour. Phnom Penh sits at the confluence of the Sap, Mekong and Bassac Rivers, a charming testament to the country's ancient and colonial past, with tree lined boulevards and colonial villas dotted amongst the reminders of its turbulent history. The Cambodian capital since the mid 15th century, Phnom Penh's origins lie in the legend of 4 statues of Buddha, washed on the shores of the Mekong and discovered by a woman named Penh, which were later housed in the 14th century Wat Phnom, located on a small hill at the northern end of the city. On arrival there should be time to freshen up, after which you may join your tour leader on a short walking tour of the city.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** None

## DAY 7 In Phnom Penh; free time to visit the Killing Fields

Today has been left free for you to continue exploring this fascinating city at your own pace. Options include the National Museum, with its impressive collection of Angkor statues and the impressive French built Royal Palace, whose spectacular pagoda style structure is without doubt one of Phnom Penh's most impressive sights. A replica of King Norodom's old wooden palace, the building presents an ostentatious display of elaborate Khmer architecture, with golden nagas, orange, sapphire and green tiles and scenes from the Ramayana painted on the ceiling. The Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and the 'Killing Fields' of Choeung Ek provide gruesome testaments to life under the Khmer Rouge and Pol Pot, the skull filled glass tower a vivid memorial to the 17,000 men, women and children who were murdered there between 1975-1978. You should be aware that by their very nature Tuol Sleng and the 'Killing Fields' can be a distressing experience for some people. You might like to take a trip along the Mekong, or perhaps visit some of the capital's numerous markets, such as the old Russian Market of Psar Toul Tom Pong, renowned for its textiles, jewellery and antiques. Of course you may just prefer to wander Phnom Penh's vibrant streets, soaking up the atmosphere and perhaps enjoying a drink in one of the city's old colonial riverfront bars.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 8 Drive to Ho Chi Minh City; orientation walk of Old Saigon

Transferring to the bus station this morning, we catch the non-stop public bus to Ho Chi Minh City, an unescorted journey of some 6.5 hours that gets into the city in time to meet up with our Vietnamese tour leader. We cross the border at Bouret (Cambodia) and Moc Bai (Vietnam). Lying to the north of the Mekong Delta, on the banks of the Saigon River and still unofficially referred to as 'Saigon', the city today is the largest in Vietnam, an eclectic mix of the traditional and the new, where pagodas and markets compete alongside the trappings of Vietnam's newly discovered entrepreneurial spirit. Depending upon our arrival time we plan to make a short orientation tour on foot around the city, taking in some of its more obvious highlights, including the prominent Hotel de Ville, whose ornate grandeur is today the home of the city's People's Committee, as well as the Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and the impressive French style edifice that is the GPO building (should our arrival time render this option impossible, then we will do the tour tomorrow morning instead).

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 9 In Ho Chi Minh City; free time to visit Cu Chi Tunnels or Mekong Delta

Today is free for you to choose from a number of options. You may wish to visit the remarkable Reunification Palace and the emotive War Remnants Museum, which contains a fascinating, and at times chilling reminder of the cost of what the Vietnamese refer to as the American War. Or perhaps browse the bustling stalls of the Binh Tay Market, the largest wholesale market in southern Vietnam and a fabulous place to stroll and meet the locals.

Overnight: **Simple Hotel**  
**Single Room Available**

 **Included Meals:** Breakfast

## DAY 10 Tour ends in Ho Chi Minh City

Tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may wish to take an excursion further afield to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels. Originally started during the French occupation of the country, the tunnels went on to achieve notoriety during the Vietnam War, when they formed an incredible underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops and were a major part of the Tet Offensive.



**Included Meals:** Breakfast

## Accommodation and Meals

### Accommodation Notes

On this tour we have opted for simple, basic and clean accommodation that provides value for money and a warm welcome. All hotel rooms have air-conditioning and attached bathrooms. Expect rooms to be furnished in a no frills manner and be prepared for both electricity supply and plumbing standards to be somewhat erratic.

### Food & Drink

Included meals: 5 breakfasts, 0 lunches, 0 dinners included in the price of this trip. 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 Trip

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

### Food

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.

#### Thailand

**Lunch £:** 3.00 - 5.00

**Dinner £:** 4.00 - 8.00

#### Cambodia

**Lunch £:** 6.00

**Dinner £:** 10.00 - 12.00

#### Vietnam

**Lunch £:** 5.00 - 7.00

**Dinner £:** 9.00

### Drink

The prices for 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.

#### Thailand

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.50

**Water £:** 0.50

#### Cambodia

**Bottle of Beer £:** 1.30

**Water £:** 0.60

#### Vietnam

**Bottle of Beer £:** 2.00 - 4.00

**Water £:** 0.50



## 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

Bangkok - Long tailed klong boat trip including Royal Barge museum and Wat Arun US\$ 20; Grand Palace (entrance fee only) US\$17; Wat Po (entrance fee only) US\$3.50

Siem Reap - One day Angkor Temples pass US\$ 37; Bicycle/rickshaw hire approximately US\$ 15-20 per day; Land Mines Museum US\$ 5; Banteay Srei and Banteay Sunrise visit to Angkor US\$ 48; Half day cruise on Tonle Sap Lake US\$ 30; Blessing ceremony at local monastery US\$33

Phnom Penh - Royal Palace US\$ 7; National Museum US\$ 3; Visit to Tuol Sleng & the Killing Fields US\$ 15; Private blessing US\$34; Private cooking class US\$36; Koh Dach Island US\$78

Ho Chi Minh City - Half day Cu Chi tunnels (includes transport) US\$ 30; Half day city tour US\$18; Cu Chi and half day city tour US\$ 43; Mekong Delta day trip to Ben Tre US\$ 55; Reunification Palace US\$ 2

The prices stated are based on a minimum number of participants (usually 5-6). Please be aware that the optional excursions can run with fewer people but the price may be higher. Likewise, a slightly reduced price may be applicable where the participation greater. These excursions are generally run via our agent in the country. Local companies may offer similar excursions at a cheaper price. Should you want to use these companies please be aware that a lower price may mean that not all costs are included (entrance fees etc.) or services will not operate at the same safety and quality standards.

### Tipping - 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

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\$ 30.

## Foreign Exchange

### Thailand

**ATM Availability:** ATMs are available in Bangkok but are limited on the islands.

**Credit Card Acceptance:** Major stores and restaurants.

**Travellers Cheques:** Can be exchanged at banks and exchange offices throughout the tour although rates may not be as favourable.

**Local Currency:** Thai Baht

**Recommended Currency for Exchange:** We recommend that you bring your money in GBP or US\$.

**Where to Exchange:** Most major towns and on the islands - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### 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.

### 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.

## Joining your Trip

### 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

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found on our website at [www.explore.co.uk](http://www.explore.co.uk), in the tour specific dates and prices section.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer. For more information please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer please refer to <https://www.explore.co.uk/transfers>.

### 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 booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

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CAMPBELL IRVINE  
DIRECT TRAVEL INSURANCE



Travel Insurance is essential. If you have not already arranged cover, please contact our recommended Travel Insurance providers [www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/Explore) who offer Travel Insurance specifically designed to cover travel with Explore or call **Campbell Irvine Direct** on Tel: 020 7938 1734

Explore Worldwide is an Introducer Appointed Representative of Campbell Irvine Ltd who are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

### Travel Aware

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 [www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety](http://www.explore.co.uk/travel-safety)

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We strongly advise that you register with the FCO to receive updates to the travel advice for your chosen destination. A hard copy of the current FCO Travel Advice for your chosen destination is available by contacting [cr@explore.co.uk](mailto:cr@explore.co.uk) or 01252 379438.

## Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

## Visa Information

Thailand: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens for a stay of less than 30 days. All passports must have at least 6 months validity remaining on entry to Thailand. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office.

Cambodia: A single visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, USA & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. A passport sized photograph for immigration will also be required. Alternatively you can now obtain an e-visa prior to departure from [www.mfaic.gov.kh](http://www.mfaic.gov.kh)

Vietnam: Until 30th June 2018 'British Citizen' passport holders can visit Vietnam for up to 15 days without a visa. A visa will be required if you enter after this date or if you wish to re-enter within 30 days of your departure.

For visits of up to 30 days, you can get an e-visa before you travel from <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/>

For visits of longer than 30 days you must get a visa from the nearest Vietnamese embassy before travelling to Vietnam. If you want to make a second visit within 30 days of leaving Vietnam, you'll need to get a multiple entry visa to re-enter.

Please note that it is a pre-requisite for entry into Vietnam that your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months from your date of entry

All visa related issues including information for other nationalities should be confirmed with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on **0208 5431846**.

## Vaccinations & Protection

### Thailand

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and infectious hepatitis. Although not compulsory, travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Please take preventative measures to avoid mosquito bites - these include mosquito repellent as well as long trousers and long sleeve shirts to cover up when necessary. 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.

### 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.

### Vietnam

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. 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.

## Preparing for your Trip

### Climate

#### Thailand

Generally hot with high humidity. There is some rainfall from April to September with most days being hot (around 33 Degrees) and a light breeze on the islands. If it does rain, it will be more of a heavy tropical downpour that lasts a few hours. Additional information and climate charts can be accessed at <http://www.explore.co.uk/weather>.

## 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.

## 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.

## Clothing

Pack essentially for hot weather. Bear in mind that the region is tropical (humid) and that days can be very hot. Lightweight rainwear or an umbrella is advisable at any time of the year, but especially between May and October. Casual clothes are the most practical (something with long sleeves, and long trousers for evenings). Bear in mind that 'short' shorts are generally unacceptable and a sunhat is essential. Shorts, vests, revealing or casual clothes and open backed sandals are not permitted in the Grand Palace in Bangkok.

## Equipment

A torch, water bottle, insect repellent and high factor sunscreen are all essential, as are good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection. Don't forget your swim wear!

## Footwear

Comfortable shoes and sandals/trainers for relaxing.

## Luggage: On Tour

One main piece and a daypack. Remember - you are expected to carry your own luggage and as we use local buses throughout this tour you might have to carry your baggage quite a distance in bus stations. Please also be aware that temperatures may be tropical.

Luggage allowance on trip: 20kg

# General Information

## Country details

### Thailand

**Population:** 67,000,000  
**Size of Country:** 514,000 sq km  
**Major Language:** Thai  
**Religion:** Buddhism  
**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

### 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

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## Electric Supply & Plugs

### Thailand

2 Pin Round

### Cambodia

2 Pin Round

### Vietnam

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, self-guided, private journeys & 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, 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.

### Cool Earth

Explore are proud to support Cool Earth in their effort to reduce global carbon dioxide levels through the prevention of deforestation in the South America rainforest. Cool Earth focus on areas in immediate danger of deforestation, supporting local communities to be forest guardians. To date 350,000 acres of rainforest has been protected. Saving rainforest also protects rare animals and plants, allows local forest communities to maintain their way of life, and protects a major source of oxygen and fresh water. When you travel on an Explore holiday we make a donation to Cool Earth that exceeds the impact of our customers flights each year.

### Earth Matters

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, 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: Toilet Twinning (helping to flush away poverty), Lone Buffalo Foundation (a community project based in Laos providing creative skills for young people) and have recently supported women's cooperatives in Borneo and Morocco. We are a member of Tourism Concern's Ethical Tour Operator Group ([www.tourismconcern.org.uk](http://www.tourismconcern.org.uk)) and support their campaign for fair and ethical tourism. We also care passionately about the world's wildlife and actively support and promote the Born Free Organisation and Mahouts Elephant Foundation.

## 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.

### 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.

For Self-Guided holidays and Private Journeys simply choose your date of travel and let us know so we can confirm all ground services.

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 2016 and 31st December 2017.

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### **Trip 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: 2017 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing in 2017. 2018/19 itinerary versions are applicable to tours departing from 1st January to 31st December 2018.

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