

Cambodia & Vietnam History & Legacy (12 days)



Departs anytime (2018 – 2019)



Please note: This itinerary can be modified in any way to best suit your school's particular aims, learning objectives and budget.

Please contact us detailing any changes you'd like to make.

From their staggering natural beauty and cultural complexities to their vibrant megacities and hill-tribe villages; Vietnam & Cambodia are southeast Asia's most exotic and captivating countries. Despite their shared geographical positions, these two countries are in fact, incredibly different; Cambodia's more laidback Indian influenced culture, sitting starkly juxtaposed with that of Vietnam's Chinese based values.

This 12-day trip across these two countries is specifically designed to appeal to students of culture and society and those interested in the tumultuous events that have shaped modern Indochina.

Beginning in Siem Reap, we will enjoy a thorough exploration of the Temples of Angkor before travelling to Phnom Penh where we will learn of the legacy of the Khmer Rouge. From here we will follow a seldom travelled river route deep into the southern reaches of Vietnam's Mekong Delta region before continuing our journey to bustling Ho Chi Minh City. Our final destination will be the former trading town of Hoi An in Vietnam's central region where we will enjoy wonderful cuisine, a cycling activity as well as other student-initiated activities.

Most importantly, this trip is designed to be highly enjoyable and will include several outdoor activities and programs designed to give students a very memorable insight into two of Asia's most welcoming countries.



Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Cambodia (Siem Reap)

Upon arrival, we will be greeted at the airport by our tour leader and escorted to our hotel. We will run through the following days program. There will be a short time this afternoon for an orientation walk around the city bustling esplanade before we enjoy board tuk-tuks for further exploration of Phnom Penh's waterfront, and diplomatic quarter. Following this, we will enjoy our first taste of Khmer cuisine at a popular local restraint. We will return to our hotel after this for a much-anticipated night's sleep! (dinner) **Flight details to be advised**

Day 2

Siem Reap (Temples of Angkor)



This morning we will set out to explore the magnificent Temples of Angkor and enjoy roaming this inspirational and ancient expanse on sturdy and environmentally friendly mountain bikes.

Often mistakenly referred to as 'Angkor Wat' (which simply denotes the name of the largest temple), the Angkor Temple complex is a multifarious arrangement of some 112 structures that began construction in the early to mid-12th Century and is dedicated to several gods as the Khmer Empire developed and its culture transitioned from a predominately Hindu to a Buddhist philosophy. Beginning our activity with a visit to the aesthetically

and architecturally breathtaking Angkor Wat Temple, we will explore this massive three-tiered pyramid crowned by five lotus-like towers.

After lunch, we will visit the Ta Prohm jungle temple over which nature has truly run riot. This quiet, sprawling monastic complex is only partially cleared of jungle overgrowth. Intentionally left partially unrestored, large fig and silk-cotton trees grow from the towers and corridors offering some of the best photo opportunities at Angkor.

This evening we will enjoy a walking tour of the city's central district before dinner at a local restaurant. Dinner will be at one of the local restaurants that provide a Court Apsara dance show.

NB: The bike ride is a highly enjoyable activity suitable for any student of average fitness with the ability to ride a bike. The activity will cover a total distance of around 15-20kms. The bikes we will use are new, sturdy mountain bikes with helmets provided. We also employ a support crew to following our group to make running repairs and carry students (up to 3) if they are not able to ride. Students will be required to carry their own water during this activity. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 3

Siem Reap (Tonle Sap Lake)



This morning we travel to a school located in a remote village and teach English to local students who rarely get the chance to practice English with kids their own age. We also have the opportunity to visit some of the student families as well as glean an idea of their daily lives as we visit them in their homes.

After lunch, we take a boat trip on the Tonle Sap Lake to witness Vietnamese and Cambodian floating fishing villages that fled to this remote part of the lake during the war years. While cruising on the lake we will learn about fragile ecosystems under threat including rare fish and bird

species. There will be time for a refreshing swim at our hotel pool before we head for a stroll around the town's vibrant night market.

Tonight, we will meet with the local non-governmental organisation (NGO) founded to educate Cambodian teenagers and young adults in vocational pursuits. Here students will have an opportunity to interact with their Cambodian contemporaries and learn of the lives of the country's youth through this educational initiative. While here we will also visit a local enterprise to see how newly acquired business skills are put into practice and generate income to ensure the NGO becomes self-sufficient. (breakfast, lunch)

Day 4

Siem Reap Phnom Penh



Cambodia is so much more than merely its temples and its urban areas can surprise with their sophistication. This we will discover today as we begin our journey to the Country's capital city, Phnom Penh. En route we will stop at a spider village where we may try eating a fried tarantula or crickets. Cambodia's capital can be an assault on the senses. Motorbikes whiz through laneways without a thought for pedestrians; markets exude powerful scents; and all the while the sounds of life – of commerce, of survival – reverberate through the streets. Once the 'Pearl of Asia' (depending on who you talk to!), Phnom Penh - like two generations of Cambodians, has been to hell and back. At the height of the colonial period Phnom Penh was reputed

to be the most beautiful city in French Indochina – a beauty lost during the years of conflict and neglect, although which can still be sought out today by the keen observer. Despite its turbulent history, Phnom Penh has emerged as a fun and friendly city haven risen from the ashes to become a centre of art and cuisine in the Indochina region.

Upon arrival, we check into our hotel and visit Wat Phnom located on the only hill overlooking the city. This evening we will enjoy a short orientation walk along the city's vibrant waterfront before dinner. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 5

Phnom Penh



Today we will visit Phnom Penh's most confronting places of interest including Tuol Sleng Prison and the disquieting Killing Fields – both stark reminders of Cambodia's tragic recent history during the Khmer Rouge reign from 1975-1979. It was during this relatively brief time a little know teacher called Pol Pot instituted a reign of terror over the country and implemented a plan to turn Cambodia into an agriculture-based society, systematically emptying the cities and forcibly moving the people onto collective (state-owned) farms where they performed hard labour. It is estimated that during this time over a fifth of the country's population perished by overwork, starvation and execution. We will also visit Phnom Penh's famous Central or Russian Market whose vendors sell handicrafts, silverware and the

cheapest software to be found anywhere in the world. After dinner we take an enjoyable tuk-tuk tour around Phnom Penh to view this vibrant city by night, passing the Royal Palace and iconic Independence Monument. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 6

Phnom Penh Chau Doc (Vietnam)



Another adventure begins as we begin our journey down the southern reaches of the Mekong Delta en route to Vietnam by river craft. Will quickly notice vast differences between these two nations who culturally have little in common despite their proximity to each other.

Our tour leader will explain to us the importance of the Mekong River to the people of Southeast Asia - essential to the economies of Laos, Vietnam as well as Cambodia's thriving fishing industry. We will learn about the impacts of damming upstream, fish migration and the implications for the Mekong's fragile ecosystems. Crossing the river border, we continue a short distance to the multicultural town trading town of Chau Doc. Home to ethnic

Vietnamese, Chinese, Khmer and Champa people. This afternoon we will enjoy a vigorous walk to the Peak of Sam Mountain which will afford us views at sunset across the Cambodia border. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 7

Chau Doc 🚢 Vinh Long

Departing early, this morning we will stroll through the rustic local market on the banks of the Mekong before driving to a small village to learn of the province tumultuous recent history and conflict with Cambodia. En route we will visit a local temple belonging to the Cao Dai religion before we begin the drive to Vinh Long province. Upon arrival in Vinh Long, we board our private boat to cruise through tributaries and make our way to a small



island nestled in the heart of the Delta, the site of our local family homestay. This evening we will experience true southern hospitality as our host family prepares a delicious Delta meal (which we will be required to help prepare!) and talks to us about life in the Delta. N.B: The home-stay is a 'basic but comfortable style home overlooking the Mekong River with separate sleeping areas for male students. Each room is equipped with an army-style stretcher, pillows, blankets, mosquito nets, ceiling fans, electric lights, mosquito coils and western style toilets. Main luggage will be left in our Ho Chi Minh City hotel storage room while on this overnight excursion. (breakfast, lunch, dinner)

Day 8

Vinh Long 🚢 Ho Chi Minh City



Days begins early in the Mekong, and the early morning is indeed the best time to experience the region vibrant floating markets and thriving commerce. This morning we will visit a number of local concerns and learn of the sustainable methods of production that have ensured these industries success and survival over several centuries. We will also visit a local primary school to learn of the school system in Vietnam and the teaching methodology, quite different from that found in developed countries.

In the afternoon we will farewell this watery world and make our way to Ho Chi Minh City. Arriving in the city will quickly reveal the incredible contrast between rural and urban lifestyle- much more pronounced in southeast Asia than in most other countries. Ho Chi Minh City is a truly dynamic metropolis – the powerhouse of the south and a place of fascinating contrasts.

After time to freshen up we will head out to visit some of the city's most important sites including its historical Post Office, a beautiful French built church as well as the War Remnants Museum to learn of the American War in Vietnam from a local perspective. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 9

Ho Chi Minh City (Cu Chi Tunnels, Great Race activity)



This morning we will set out for a thorough exploration of Ho Chi Minh City – one of Asia's most dynamic metropolises and the powerhouse of Vietnam. We will enjoy a 'Great Race' around Ho Chi Minh City. This activity is designed to facilitate urban exploration and to enhance students' knowledge of this historic city as well as our appreciation of Southeast Asian culture. We will complete tasks, navigate and collect information and complete activities that will be challenging, fun and educational.

After lunch, we will take an excursion to the province of Cu Chi, once home to the country's communist guerrillas in their struggle against the French and Americans. We can climb down into the tunnels to learn of the conditions the local communist guerrillas had to endure. It is this area of South Vietnam that witnessed the fiercest fighting during the American conflict and was also subject to extensive air defoliation program, the results of which can still be observed in the area today. On our return trip to Ho Chi Minh City, we will visit a Centre for homeless children to learn of the plight of children abandoned at birth. There will be time to interact with the children. (breakfast, dinner)

Day 10

Ho Chi Minh City ✈️ Hoi An

This morning we will depart South Vietnam for our short flight to the country's central provinces. On arrival in Danang, we will meet our awaiting bus for our transfer to Hoi An. This beautiful town is an exceptionally well-preserved example of a Southeast Asian trading port dating from the 15th to the 19th century. Its After lunch today, we will enjoy a cycling excursion through hidden fields and up buffalo paths to one of the areas delightful beaches for a refreshing swim and a game of beach football. We will also enjoy cycling through the hinterland around the outskirts of town stopping en route at rural villages and traversing buffalo fields. We will also learn more about Hoi An's rich history and architecture and of its heyday as an important trading port during the 15th & 16th centuries.

Day 11 Hoi An

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that your students might like to add to their overseas experience. These activities can be included *based on students' knowledge* of the country or their interests or passions for any aspect of a country's culture. The activities we can include are many and varied. These may include; an introduction to a country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to international and local schools, great race activities, outdoor educational pursuits such as abseiling, basket boating, snorkelling or mountain biking or a plethora of cultural programs. Please contact us for further ideas.

OPTION 1:



Day trip to the Imperial Capital of Hue (Day trip): Departing early we will travel from Hoi An to the beautiful imperial city of Hue. On arrival, we will set out at a leisurely pace by bicycle (or cyclo), taking in Dong Ba market, the moated ruins of the Imperial Citadel and the famous Thien Mu Pagoda.

We will venture into the countryside, exploring markets and isolated villages far removed from the mainstream attractions and visit one of the intriguing tombs of the Nguyen Emperors to learn of Vietnam's royal traditions. NB: As an alternative to cycling, it will be possible for students to travel on mopeds (pillion passengers) escorted by local drivers. This is a unique experience allowing students to travel further into the hinterland to visit remote villages. Please note: this is a safe and controlled activity. Travelling is on quiet roads and villages paths. Students are in the care of experienced drivers and wear helmets.

OPTION 2:

Cham Island snorkelling excursion (Day trip): Today we will venture out for a day snorkelling trip to the remote Cham Islands a short distance from the mainland. We will board our private boat for our trip to the island where we can relax on a secluded beach as well as enjoy swimming, snorkelling and a delicious lunch. We will also visit a remote fishing village and enjoy beach volleyball or soccer with our local contemporaries.

OPTION 3:



Basket boat excursion (Day trip): Today we will take a highly enjoyable journey by "basket boats" to explore the wetlands of central Vietnam to see fishermen in action, bird life and the impact of urban development on this fragile ecosystem. In the evening time is set aside to stroll around this peaceful town looking at historic buildings and myriad of tailor shops before dinner.

Before departure students will discuss their preference and have to come to a consensus decision on which option to take. Later in the day, we take a short sunset boat cruise to see the trading town from another perspective. Tonight, we all enjoy a hands-on cooking class hosted by one of the town's talented chefs to learn the secrets of Vietnam's essential dishes. (2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 1 dinner)

Day 12

Depart Hoi An ✈️

Today is departure day. We will prepare our things for our homestay journey and farewell this morning. En route to the airport we will visit Marble Mountain, a cluster of five limestone karsts. This site is a pilgrimage destination for devout Buddhists and is peppered with caves, temples, tunnels and peaks. Whilst here we will visit e will climb to the top to take in views of local beaches. This morning we will before transferring to the airport for our homebound flight. Our group leaders will take care of all flight re-confirmations, assist with check-in and wave us farewell. (Please note hotel check out time is 12noon). (breakfast) **Flight details to be advised**

Summary

Grading

Moderate: Students will be required to be in good health to get the most out of this trip while any one of reasonable fitness will be able to take part. There are no real physical difficulties however students will be expected to walk every day. You will also be expected to work diligently during the days of the community service project. You will also be expected to be able to ride a bike. It will be necessary for you to carry your own luggage throughout the trip but only for short distances.

Accommodation

Student accommodation is on a twin/triple share basis. Teacher accommodation is on a single room basis. Hotels hold a 3-star equivalent rating.

Transport

Modern air-conditioned bus, boat, bicycle.

Group Size

Minimum group size 20 students & 2 staff members travelling free of charge.

▲ [Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application](#)

Your Tour Leader

Your tour leader is probably the person who most influences the success of your trip. Thus, Student Educational Adventures employs our own team of meticulously trained student dedicated, local tour leaders - not foreigners, imported at your students' expense with no language skills or insight into your host culture.

These nationals are not only the best folk to show you their country. They are your teachers, translators and an enthusiastic purveyor of authentic experiences. They are there to facilitate your immersion into new cultures and are the bridge between you and the world of education and new experiences.

Your tour leader is always with your students and is thoroughly versed in safety protocols and duty of care responsibilities. This ranges from assisting in the most basic of health and safety measures to ensuring that teachers & students are well looked after during our trips. All have been chosen because of their ability to deal with the needs and unique issues associated with escorting young people through this wonderful and at times, most foreign of regions.

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Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as describe in the itinerary
- Student Educational Adventures tour leader throughout the trip & additional specialist guides
- **Additional internal flight Ho Chi Minh – Da Nang**
- Meals (+ drinking water) as listed in the daily itinerary
- Pre-departure support, briefings & planning meetings for students and parents
- 24/7 in-country support

Exclusions

- International flights to Cambodia / from Vietnam
- Meals not listed in the itinerary
- Cambodia & Vietnam Visas (not required by some nationalities)