

Cambodia & Vietnam *History & Legacy (12 days)*



Departs anytime (2021-2022)



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

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, 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 an interactive cooking class, a cycling excursion as well as a choice of student-initiated activities.

Most importantly, this trip is designed to be highly enjoyable and provide students with a memorable insight into two of Asia's most welcoming countries.



Billy Penfold
Director

Day 1

Arrive Cambodia (Siem Reap)



On arrival in Cambodia, we will be greeted by our tour leader at Phnom Penh International Airport. With no time to lose, we will board our bus and travel to our centrally located hotel in the downtown precinct. En route our tour leader will discuss with us our itinerary and provide us with a thorough rundown of all the things we need to know when travelling in Cambodia, as well as giving us a short history and *Khmer* language lesson. There will be time this afternoon for an orientation walk around the city's bustling esplanade before we enjoy boarding *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 for a much-anticipated night's sleep! *(meals: 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 buildings that began construction in the early to mid-12th Century. These amazing structures are dedicated to several gods - originally Hindu, and subsequently Buddhist deities - as the later Khmer kings transitioned from a Hindu to a Buddhist viewpoint. Beginning our biking activity with a visit to the 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, monastic complex is intentionally left partially unrestored, with large silk-cotton trees growing from its 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 a special Apsara dance performance. ***NB: Our bike ride is an 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. A support crew will follow 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. (meals: breakfast, dinner)***

Day 3

Siem Reap (Tonle Sap Lake activity)



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 visit some of the student's families as well as glean an idea of their daily lives as we meet 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.

Whilst 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. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

Day 4

Siem Reap 🚗 Phnom Penh



Cambodia is, of course, more than its temples with urban areas that can surprise with their sophistication. This we will discover later when we arrive in the country's capital of 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.

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

Day 5

Phnom Penh



Today we will visit Cambodia's most confronting places of interest including *Tuol Sleng* Prison and the disquieting *Killing Fields* – both stark reminders of the country's tragic 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. The regime's henchmen 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.

Our afternoon's activity will be less confronting, entailing a visit to the city'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 a fun *tuk-tuk* tour around Phnom Penh to view this vibrant city by night, passing the Royal Palace and iconic Independence Monument. *(meals: breakfast, dinner)*

Day 6

Phnom Penh 🚢 Chau Doc (Vietnam)



Another adventure greets us this morning as we farewell Cambodia and board our river going vessel for our journey down the southern reaches of the Mekong Delta en route to Vietnam. We will quickly notice the considerable 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 downstream to the multiethnic trading town of Chau Doc, a likeable little town with significant Chinese, Cham and Khmer communities. This afternoon we will

enjoy a vigorous walk to the peak of Sam Mountain which will afford us views at sunset across the Cambodian border. *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 7

Chau Doc 🚗 Vinh Long



Rising early, we will stroll through the rustic local market on the banks of the Mekong before journeying by private coach to a small village to learn of Vietnam's involvement 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-style meal (which we will be required to help prepare!) and talks to us about life in the Delta. ***NB: The homestay is a comfortable style home overlooking the Mekong River with separate sleeping areas for male & female students. Each room is equipped with comfortable beds & bedding mosquito nets, ceiling fans and western-style toilets.*** *(meals: breakfast, lunch, dinner)*

Day 8

Vinh Long 🚗 Ho Chi Minh City



Days begin early in the Mekong, and the early morning is indeed the best time to experience the region's vibrant floating markets and thriving commerce. This morning we will visit several cottage industries and learn of the sustainable methods of production that has 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 regions. Ho Chi Minh City is a truly dynamic metropolis - the powerhouse of the south and a place of fascinating contrasts.

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. *(meals: breakfast, dinner)*

Day 9

Ho Chi Minh City (*Cu Chi Tunnels, 'Amazing 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 an 'Amazing Race' style activity 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 be involved in 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. During our time here we will explore the series of once hidden tunnels to learn of the conditions the communist guerrillas had to endure during the war years. 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 today. *(meals: 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 colonial trading port dating from the 15th to the 19th century.

After lunch, we will enjoy a bicycle ride 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 the town, stopping en route at rural villages and

traversing buffalo fields. This evening we will enjoy a boat cruise along its main waterway before dinner at one of the town's great local eateries. *(meals: breakfast, dinner)*

Day 11

Hoi An *(student-initiated activities)*

Prior to travelling, a Student Educational Adventures staff member will talk to teachers and students about specific activities that you might like to add to your Vietnam travel experience. These activities can be included based on students' knowledge of the country or their interests or passions for any aspect of the country's culture.

These activities can include an introduction to the country's creative or performing arts scene, visits to international and local schools, An 'Amazing Race' activity, outdoor educational pursuits such as abseiling, basket boating, snorkelling or mountain biking. 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. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

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. During the day there will also be time to explore a secluded beach as well as enjoy swimming, snorkelling and a delicious lunch. We will have the chance to visit a remote fishing village and play a game of beach volleyball or soccer. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

OPTION 3:



Basket boating: We will venture out after breakfast to explore the hidden waterways and palm-laden backwaters in the Hoi An hinterland by way of basket boats. These quintessential Vietnamese vessels have changed little in 600 years. They will provide us with a fun and physical way to access the canals and experience the lives of local rural dwellers. We will also enjoy a delicious lunch and visit a ceramics community to try our hand at tradition pottery making *(meals: breakfast, lunch)*

Day 12

Depart Hoi An ✈️



Today is departure day. There will be a final time for independent exploration of the town before we departure. En route to the airport, we will visit Marble Mountain, a cluster of limestone karsts and a site of pilgrimage for devout Buddhists, peppered with caves, temples, tunnels and peaks that we will have ample time to explore.

From here we will enjoy a quick lunch before transferring in time to board our flight. Our group leaders will take care of all our onward travel arrangements and wave us farewell. *(meals: breakfast, lunch)* **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 anyone 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.

Group Size

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

▲ Smaller group sizes can be quoted upon application

Specific Trip Activities

SIEM REAP

- Mountain biking excursion of the *Angkor Temples*
- Khmer performing arts circus activity
- Apsara cultural dance activity
- **NGO school activity #**
- Silk farm visit
- *Mt. Kulen* waterfall day trip
- *Tonle Sap* Lake excursion

PHNOM PENH

- *Toul Sleng* centre excursion
- *'killing fields'* excursion
- Phnom Penh city tour
- *Q&A session with Khmer Rouge Collaborator and/or survivor*
- Russian Market tour
- Tuk-Tuk exploratory activity
- Day trip to Cambodian- Vietnam border

CHAU DOC

- *Overland river journey to Chau Doc (Vietnam)*
- *waterway Exploration*
- *Vietnamese village excursion*

MEKONG DELTA

- *Cottage industry excursion*
- *Boating activity*
- *Interaction with local student contemporaries*

HO CHI MINH CITY

- *Cu Chi Tunnels* excursion
- *War Remnants museum* visit
- *Ho Chi Minh City 'Amazing Race'*
- *Bitexco tower survey* activity

HOI AN

- *Marble Mountain* exploration activity
- Beach cycling excursion
- Hands-on cooking class activity
- Student-Initiated activity (options):
 - *Cham Island* boat trip
 - Hue day trip excursion
 - Basket boat ecological excursion

Cambodia & Vietnam - *History & Legacy* (12 days)

Please contact *Student Educational Adventures* for a competitive flight quote for flights from your country.

Inclusions

- All accommodation, transport, activities, entrance costs and other programs as described in the itinerary
- **internal flight Ho Chi Minh City – Da Nang**
- Professional *Student Educational Adventures* tour leader throughout trip & additional specialist guides
- Community project sourcing and arrangements
- Extensive destination-specific risk management and assessments
- Meals (along with drinking water) as listed and underlined in the daily itinerary
- 24 hours **IN COUNTRY** support from *Student Educational Adventures* staff
- Pre-departure support, briefings and planning meetings for students and parents
- All equipment
- Parents information evening presentation
- Parental & student advice for vaccinations & equipment etc.
- Tips for local guides & drivers

Exclusions

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

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.

NGO school activity

Visiting a local school as part of an educational travel program is a carefully planned activity that Student Educational Adventures initiate after consultation with local teaching staff.

This activity is always initiated based on a model of mutual learning and designed as an immersion experience. An understanding of the importance of an integrated approach to community development is useful to frame what students might see, learn or experience during such an activity.

Prior to the activity, visiting students are provided with basic teaching materials and rudimentary teaching skills (i.e. methods of eliciting language, lesson planning etc.). This preparation is conducted by our tour leaders, most of whom are trained primary or secondary teachers.

NB: Typically, visiting students are divided into small groups to teach English. If local students have a sound grasp of English, the activity can be modified to be of a cultural exchange nature.

7 things to check before choosing a student travel company



Choosing the right travel company is one of the most important decisions you'll make for your students. As you compare different school travel providers, you'll need to weigh up everything from staffing arrangements to overall trip cost – and, of course, educational value.

To help you choose with confidence, we've created a checklist of seven essential factors to consider when you're assessing travel companies. You'll be pleased to know that these factors are a feature of every trip we run.

1. Does your travel provider have a truly local presence?

You might not know it, but many school travel companies have no local presence in the countries they send your students to. Behind the façade, these providers are marketing companies who outsource their trips to in-country operators – often importing a foreign manager at your schools' expense. Value for money aside, running trips in this way has far-reaching consequences in an emergency, when access to language skills and local knowledge are vital.

To make sure you're getting a genuinely local experience, it's important to choose a bonafide in-country travel company who has a real local presence in the country you're travelling to. For example, we use our own in-country supervisors and tour leaders to manage the school trips we run. As local experts, they travel with you and your students throughout your entire trip and are responsible for every aspect of your students' wellbeing.

2. Is your school trip *really* of value to your students?

A trip abroad with friends will appeal to any young person, and many will relish the chance to explore a world away from home. But to be of real and enduring educational value, a school trip should challenge students beyond the kinds of basic touristic experiences they might just as easily have on a family holiday.

To this end, your school travel provider should provide a customised itinerary that shows quality and depth of engagement. We tailor each of our itineraries to push students beyond a surface-level exchange and maximise their time in-country so they're learning the whole time they're travelling. Our activity-rich programs are big on cross-cultural interaction, team-building and authentic local experiences. We also include community service projects wherever possible, which make our trips not only highly educational but life-changing, too.

3. Is the person leading your students up to the task?

The best people to lead you through a country are the folk who live there. But on top of having expert local knowledge, the people leading your students should also be expertly trained to deal with young student travellers. A tour leader who's up to the task can teach across the full range of personalities, interests and abilities found among every student group.

For this reason, we make sure our tour leaders have at least three years' experience leading student groups before they go in-field with yours. And they're more than just guides – they're also teachers, translators and troubleshooters. Our tour leaders will welcome you warmly when your group arrive, manage all of your trip logistics, and work responsibly to make sure you and your students always stay healthy and safe.

4. How safe is your travel provider, really?

While some travel companies offer a 24-hour call centre, there's no substitute for having local people by your side and looking after you where you are. Local staff know the lay of the land, how to access the best medical attention in times of crisis and which dialect or language to speak when you need it most. This is especially important outside of major cities, where major providers' services can be limited.

Our in-country staff and tour leaders not only access the best international providers (such as SOS, Global Rescue and Columbia Asia), but also complement these with expert knowledge of the nearest and most appropriate medical attention within every local area. So, if a worst-case scenario happens – when you need to communicate with non-English speaking doctors; when a comprehensive first aid kit won't do the job; or when the phone number of an international medical provider just isn't sufficient – you can be sure your student group is in the best of hands, no matter where they are.

5. How authentic are your service-learning programs?

Today, having students raise money for their overseas trip is a common way for schools to give back to the places they visit. However, exchanging skills – and smiles – with local communities can leave a positive legacy that's even more powerful.

Fundraising, while well-intentioned, can be in vain if it's not done in consultation with local communities. To make sure your impact isn't simply an add-on, choose a school travel company that facilitates projects that solve real community problems and which help build local capacity.

Take our community service projects, for instance. We develop them through extensive cooperation with local people's committees, NGOs and women's organisations to ensure your students' altruism has a lasting impact. All our service components are meticulously planned, designed to be meaningful and transparent, and, most importantly, provide tangible long-term benefits for communities.

6. Does the program you're being offered match your students' learning needs?

No two school groups are the same, which is why no two school trips should follow the same itinerary. Check that the travel company you choose offers a customised program that's flexibly designed to match your students' unique interests. In our experience, nothing inhibits a successful trip more than 'off the shelf' programs with generic activities.

For this reason, each trip we run is tailored to your school's curriculum and your students' distinct learning needs. We also like to involve students in co-designing their itinerary. Prior to their trip, we run a series of student-initiated activities to promote agency and collaboration, setting them up for success once they're overseas.

7. Is the tour priced competitively?

A foreign travel experience for your students needn't cost the earth. And while variations in destinations, flights and trip durations add complexity to the task of pricing your trip, the school travel company you choose should offer you that transparency, without question.

Alongside integrity in pricing sit sound educational outcomes. If your trip provider can't quantify how your students will benefit from the trip, then you might ask whether they're the right fit for you and your school.

Because we operate entirely in-country, with exclusively local staff, our overheads are significantly lower compared to those of other travel companies. With us, your money goes directly toward creating your tour, rather than to overseas administration costs or third-party suppliers.