TRIP OVERVIEW

A leisurely yet enthralling itinerary that takes its time to travel from the mountainous and humid north of Vietnam through to the wealthier colonial south then along the sultry Mekong Delta to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Encompassing five nights of cruising and four train journeys this tour covers all the iconic sights you’d expect with the added bonus of no internal flights.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Vietnam & Cambodia. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as airline and hotel details and visa requirements.

Your included meal guide:
B = Breakfast, BR = Brunch, L = Lunch, D = Dinner,

DAY 1: UK to Hanoi
Depart London on your scheduled overnight flight to Hanoi.

DAY 2: Hanoi D
You will be met by your local guide on arrival by your local guide who’ll accompany you through this bustling city to your hotel where there’ll be some time to check-in and relax before joining the group again for dinner and a traditional Water Puppet Performance, a unique form of Vietnamese art derived from the wet rice civilisation in South East Asia.

DAY 3: Hanoi B/L/D
A full day tour of this historic city begins with the Ho Chi Minh Complex where the father of modern day Vietnam declared the nation’s independence in 1945. Visit sites including the Presidential Palace built by the French colonialists in the early 20th century, Ho Chi Minh’s House of Stilts and the One Pillar Pagoda. After lunch travel away from the centre of the city to learn about Vietnam’s 54 ethnic groups in the the Museum of Ethnology, built to conserve their rich cultural heritage. Later return to the heart of the lively Old Quarter to explore this bustling commercial centre on cyclo, a two person cycle carriage once the fashionable mode of transport for French elite and Vietnam’s noblemen.

DAY 4: Hanoi to Halong Bay B/L/D
This memorable day marks the start of your two-night cruise around the awe-inspiring Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a vision of ethereal beauty. You’ll explore these marvellous islands, intricate limestone rock formation and hidden wave-eroded grottoes on a luxury cruise boat and begin with a visit to Vung Vieng Fishing village by rowing boat, a floating settlement dating back hundreds of years. After lunch on board there’ll be some time to swim and relax on Ban Chan sandy beach before continuing your journey to Cong Do where the boat will anchor overnight. Finish your day with a local cookery demonstration before enjoying a delicious set dinner in the restaurant’s dining room.

DAY 5: Halong Bay B/L/D
Begin your day with some calming Tai Chi on the boat’s deck or simply watch the sunrise from your cabin before setting off for a more active day on the water. Transfer to a smaller day boat enabling you to cruise to some of Bai Tu Long network of rivers in the Mekong Delta that will journey all the way up to Phnom Penh. Explore the temple of the Buddha at Vong Vieng Fishing village then continue to the Reunification Palace as well as nearby Notre Dame Cathedral built between 1877 and 1883 in Neo-Romanesque form. Next travel to the French-style Saigon Post Office then finish at the Ben Thanh Market, a symbol of the bustling city where colourful stalls are packed to the rafters with piles of fresh fruit, tourist kitsch and true bargains.

DAY 6: Halong Bay to Hue B/R/D
Rise early for some tea, coffee and pastries before your final water excursion – a trip to explore the well-hidden and prehistoric Thien Canh Son cave before returning to the boat for a farewell brunch and arrival on the mainland. Enjoy an early dinner back in Hanoi before boarding a sleeper train for an overnight journey to Hue, once the nation’s capital between 1802-1945 famed for its vast 19th century citadel.

DAY 7: Hue L/D
Enjoy the morning view from your window as the train approaches its final destination, passing verdant farmlands and local villages along the way. The first visit of the day is to the Citadel of Hue, a large fortress build in the 18th century whose architectural style takes inspiration from both the Forbidden City in Beijing and the military principles of the French army. Then continue to the partially ruined Dien Tho Residence before visiting Thai Hoa Palace, an ornate timber royal retreat that was the site of the Emperor’s official receptions and finally to Thien Mu pagoda and the Imperial tomb of Emperor Minh Mang before retiring to your hotel for your overnight stay.

DAY 8: Hue to Hoi An B/D
Leaving Hue after breakfast, you’ll board the train for a trip along the Reunification Railway to Danang that links Hanoi to Saigon. The train glides through the world class scenic route that runs along the South China Sea, snaking between jungle-covered cliffs and past white beaches and finally heading through lush green mountains via the Hai Van pass to reach Danang. You’ll then continue south via the Marble Mountains, a range of five craggy marble outcrops all topped with pagodas. Take some time to relax at your Hoi An hotel and explore the local area this afternoon before reconvening for dinner.

DAY 9: Hoi An B/L
Your morning in Hoi An will begin with a walking tour of the town, taking you past traditional Japanese merchant houses, ancient Chinese tea warehouses and finishes at the Japanese Pagoda Bridge, an early 17th century Japanese temple that spans across the waterfront. After lunch the rest of the day is free for you to explore the myriad of silk and tailor shops or simply take in the views over a coffee at one of the many waterside cafes.

DAY 10: Hoi An to Nha Trang B/L/D
Following breakfast at your hotel, it’s time to board the train for the day-long journey south to the coastal city of Nha Trang, widely considered to be home to one of the most beautiful bays in the world. Arrive in the late evening and check into your hotel.

DAY 11: Nha Trang B/L/D
Today you will enjoy a day of island hopping, starting with a trip to Mun Island, the premium spot for snorkelling in Nha Trang blessed with a wealth of colourful coral reefs and marine life. Enjoy lunch on Con Se Tre island before returning to your hotel to refresh, have dinner, then board the overnight train to Saigon.

DAY 12: Saigon B/L/D
The train arrives into Saigon in the early hours so you’ll be transferred straight to your hotel for an early check-in with time to enjoy breakfast and rest a little before the day’s excursions. Spend the afternoon touring Saigon’s highlights with a visit to the Reunification Palace as well as nearby Notre Dame Cathedral built between 1877 and 1883 in Neo-Romanesque form. Next travel to the French-style Saigon Post Office then finish at the Ben Thanh Market, a symbol of the bustling city where colourful stalls are packed to the rafters with piles of fresh fruit, tourist kit and true bargains.

DAY 13: Saigon B/L/D
After breakfast travel to the Cu Chi Tunnels, an impressive network of underground tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. This immense labyrinth of 75 miles in length once housed hospitals, weapon factories and living quarters and proved to be crucial to the Tet Offensive in 1968. Return to Saigon for an afternoon and evening at leisure.

DAY 14: Saigon to Mekong Cruise B/L/D
Leaving Saigon behind, embark on a three-night cruise along the fascinating network of rivers in the Mekong Delta that will journey all the way up to Phnom Penh.
Penh in Cambodia. First visit CanTho, the largest town on the Mekong, before the sun rises, and enjoy the serene views of the river. Continue to Cai Be where there’ll be a guided walk to a rural village, passing luscious green orchards and the chance to taste banana and other homemade products. Return to the boat in the early evening to enjoy the sunset dinner on the top deck before sitting down to dinner.

DAY 15: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

The boat will depart early in the morning with an excursion on long rowing sampans boating allowing you to meander through the small canals of Tan Phong islet and visit the local candy and candy making factories. This afternoon the boat moors at Chau Doc, a small, sleepy town is truly a hidden gem on the Mekong Delta where you’ll enjoy a gentle cycle around the winding roads or simply explore the area by foot. The off-the-beaten track islet is rarely visited by tourists and is famous for the product of Beo. The second islet is so small that only a few people can live on it, and the roads are only accessible by boat. At the start of the island, you’ll find a collection of Khmer art, notably sculptures, throughout the ages. Check into your hotel and enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

DAY 16: Mekong Cruise B/L/D

Arrive at Cao Lanh in the morning and after breakfast on board the top deck, disembark for a morning excursion to Tan Thuan Dong islet where you can enjoy a gentle cycle through picturesque canals and waterways, taking in the sultry scenery and daily activities of the small Mekong people. Continue to Sa Dec, a charming colonial town of Sa Dec. Famous for its beautiful flower gardens, the small, sleepy town is truly a hidden gem on the Mekong Delta where you’ll enjoy a gentle cycle around the winding roads or simply explore the area by foot.

DAY 17: Mekong to Phnom Penh B/L/D

After an early breakfast on board it’s time to check out and transfer to Phnom Penh. On the way to the city, you will be invited to a sunset dinner on board.

DAY 19: Siem Reap B/L/D

Depart Siem Reap for your return flight back to the UK via Hanoi, or continue on to your chosen extension.

*Please note: an extra night in Siem Reap is required at the end of the tour for the departure dates: 26th April, 3rd May, 10th May, 17th May & 31st May, 6th September, 4th & 25th October 2019. (Unless you are taking an extension then an extra night will not be required).
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Hanoi you will be met by a representative from our local agent, Lac Viet (LV) Travel, holding a sign displaying: “Mercury Holidays”. The Mercury holidays/Vietnam Travel Service representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact LV Travel during your stay the details are:

Lac Viet Travel (LV) Head Office, Hanoi
Floor 18, VTC Online Building, No 18, Tam Trinh Str, Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi, Vietnam
Telephone Number 0084 439 413 748/49/50
e-mail operation@lvtravel.vn

WHY CAN'T I USE MY OWN FLIGHTS?

As a Mercury Holidays customer you further agree to the terms of the condition that your flight will be originated and operated by Vietnam Airlines (VN), and your final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Airport Extras
If you wish to arrange Airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extra Tel. 0871 380 2000, quoting HOX13.

Baggage Allowance
Each passenger is entitled to 30kg of hold luggage.
Hand luggage: One piece not exceeding 7Kg and with maximum total dimensions not exceeding 115 cm (56 cm x 36cm x 23 cm). Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in.

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas
Vietnam: We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote “Mercury Holidays”. The cost of the visa through The Travel Visa Company is £105. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of entry. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. You can also visit the Embassy of Vietnam in London: 12-14 Victoria Road, London, W8 5RD. This visa information is a guide line only and is subject to change; up-to-date information regarding the process and fees will be advised at the time of calling the Travel Visa Company. Please note the exit point in Vietnam is Song Tien Landport.

A visa is required for entry into Cambodia and this can be purchased on arrival at the airport in Siem Reap. The cost of this is approximately USD $30 per person. Please note that you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well as USD $30 cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival into Cambodia. A visa will need to be paid for again if entering Cambodia a second time, at the same cost of USD $30 (for example if you are taking both the Laos extension and the Cambodia extension).

A visa is required for entry into Laos and this can be purchased on arrival at the airport in Luang Prabang. The cost of this is approximately USD $35 per person and you will need to bring the money in cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival into Laos, you will also be required to bring two passport photos.

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

Accommodation/Hotel Voucher
We do not produce a separate Accommodation/Hotel voucher; simply ensure that you take your Confirmation invoice with you because it doubles as your voucher. If you have not yet received an invoice please call our Administration Department on 0843 224 0723 or email us using the “Contact us” option on our website: www.mercuryholidays.co.uk. Please note that it is not necessary for you to have an invoice showing your balance paid; your original invoice will suffice for the hotel.

Tour Guides
This is an escorted tour, meaning the you will have the services of an English speaking guide during each excursion ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping
It is customary to tip your guide and driver; please allow approximately £2-£4 (US $3-6) per person per day for the guide and £3.50 (US $5) per person per day for the driver.

Currency Exchange
The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND) and the currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riel (KHR). We recommend that you take some US Dollars (USD) with you and exchange this currency whilst you are travelling.

Personal Expenses
You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any dinners where these are not mentioned on your itinerary and personal purchases, such as souvenirs, extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £600-£700 per person should be sufficient for the duration of your tour.

Group Size
The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 38. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Itinerary Changes
The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the regional flights within and between South-East Asian countries are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Insurance
We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote ‘WK830’ for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations
It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include: www.fco.gov.uk; www.travelhealthpro.org.uk; www.hpa.org.uk; your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility
This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

Credit Card Information
As normal practice you may be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extra incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card, you may be asked for a cash deposit. MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.
WHAT TO PACK

- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person
- Personal toiletries
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- Travel plug adapter – the electricity in Vietnam/Cambodia is 220-240 V. You will need a 2 round pin plug or 2 flat pin plug adapter

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

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

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so, please contact 0843 224 0723

TRIP OVERVIEW
Surrounded by the Mekong and Khan rivers, Laos’ ancient cities are rich in history, culture and cuisine. This 5 night mini tour visiting Luang Prabang and Vientiane is the ideal way to conclude your tour of Vietnam and Cambodia.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

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

DAY 20: Siem Reap to Luang Prabang D
Transfer to the airport for your flight to Luang Prabang. On arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel for check-in. The rest of the day is at leisure and dinner is included in a local Laos Restaurant.

DAY 21: Luang Prabang B/L/D
Visit the Royal Palace Museum, which hosts a range of interesting artefacts before embarking on a cruise upstream along the Mekong River, take in the breath-taking views of the tranquil countryside, before reaching the mysterious Pak Ou Caves. Here find two linked caves crammed with thousands of gold lacquered Buddha statues of various shapes and sizes left by pilgrims. Next, stop at the village of Ban Xanghaisai, where they make the local rice wine. On arrival, back into the city visit the magnificent Wat Xiengthong, Temple of the Golden City, with its roof sweeping low to the ground, representing classical Laotian architecture. Continue to the Traditional Art and Ethnology centre to learn about Laos many ethnic cultures. After breakfast enjoy a visit to the Elephant Village. On arrival you will be greeted by the Camp Manager who will provide you with a short briefing, before taking a boat trip to the Tad Sae Waterfall where you can swim in crystal clear waters. Lunch is provided in the Elephant Village Restaurant. Transfer to the airport for your flight to Vientiane where you will stop to take pictures of the imposing Patuxay monument before enjoying a spectacular sunset over the Mekong River.

DAY 22: Luang Prabang B/L/D
Start your morning with the option to participate in the daily morning rituals of saffron-clad monks collecting offerings of Aims, sticky rice, from the faithful residents. This tradition is unique to Laos, as it is the only Buddhist nation still preserving the procession. From there visit a local market near the Royal Palace, a perfect opportunity to experience the real flavour of local culture. After breakfast ascend the 329 steps to the top of Phousi Hill for a panoramic view of the city and Mekong River. We then visit Wat Visoun, Luang Prabangs oldest temple and once home to the Prabang Buddhas. Continue to the beautiful Kuang Si Waterfall where you can choose to take a dip in the turquoise pools or walk along the forest paths. En route back to Luang Prabang admire the Kuang Si Falls Butterfly Park, a must see visit whilst in Laos. The final stop is Ock Pop Tock, meaning East Meets West, where you will learn about the traditional weaving in Laos.

DAY 23: Luang Prabang to Vientiane B/L/D
After breakfast enjoy a visit to the Elephant Village. On arrival you will be greeted by the Camp Manager who will provide you with a short briefing, before taking a boat trip to the Tad Sae Waterfall where you can swim in crystal clear waters. Lunch is provided in the Elephant Village Restaurant. Transfer to the airport for your flight to Vientiane where you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 24: Vientiane B/L/D
Following breakfast, visit Wat Si Muang famous for its supernatural power before continuing to the Buddha Park to admire an enchanting collection of Buddhist and Hindu sculptures situated on the riverside of the Mekong River close to Friendship Bridge. In the afternoon take a city tour of the capital of Laos visiting the oldest Wat Sisaket which is surrounded by thousands of miniature Buddhas and the former royal temple of Wat Phraeak which previously housed the famous Emerald Buddha image. Continue to Laos national icon the famous and sacred structure of That Luang Stupa and stop to take pictures of the imposing Patuxay monument before enjoying a spectacular sunset over the Mekong River.

DAY 25: Vientiane to the UK B
Enjoy th morning at leisure before you transfer to the airport for your return flight back to the UK.

Personal Expenses
You will need to take money with you to cover personal purchases, laundry service, souvenirs, drinks plus any meals not included.

Tour Guides
This is a fully escorted tour extension, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Currency exchange
The currency in Laos is the Laos Kip, known as LAK. You can exchange your currency in Laos, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Laos should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

Please note
This extension takes place after your main tour.

Hotel information
Luang Prabang (3 nights): 4☆ Santi Resort & Spa Deluxe
Ban Na Duey, Na Duey Road, Luang Prabang 06000, Laos.
Contact number: 00856 7125 3470

Vientiane (2 nights): 4☆ Le Thatluang D'oR a Boutique Hotel by D Varee
Thatluang Neua, Saysettha, Vientiane Capital, Laos.
Contact number: 00856 21 417 958

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

FLIGHT INFORMATION
Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.
TRIP OVERVIEW

Relax for 3 nights/4 days at the end of your tour in Sihanoukville, a popular coastal city located at the tip of an elevated peninsula in Cambodia’s south-west at the Gulf of Thailand.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

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

**Hotel**

Your stay in Sihanoukville will take place at the 4★ Independence Hotel on Bed & Breakfast. The 4★ Independence hotel enjoys an enviable position on a private white sandy beach, surrounded by lush vegetation with facilities including an attractive swimming pool and spa.

Street 2 Thnom, Sangkat No. 03, Khan Mittapheap, Sihanoukville, Kingdom of Cambodia, Cambodia

Telephone: 00855 34 934 300

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

**The hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.**

**Personal Expenses**

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

**Tour Guides**

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

**Visas**

You will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia costing USD $30 on arrival at the airport in Siem Reap. Please note that you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well as USD $30 cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival in Cambodia.

**Currency**

The currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riel, known as AHR. You can exchange your currency in Cambodia, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Cambodia should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

**Please note**

This extension takes place after your main tour.

**NB:** Your return flight from Sihanoukville to the UK will require a layover of approximately 7.5 hours in Siem Reap. Full flight details and documentation will be sent to you 10 days before departure.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on 0843 224 0723