

VIETNAM & CAMBODIA

# Trails of Indochina

A Guided Walking Adventure





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## Travel Style

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep into the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.

And, with our **optional Flight + Tour Combo, Luang Prabang Pre-Tour Extension,** and **Bangkok Post-Tour Extension** to complement this destination, we take care of all the travel to simplify the journey. Refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

## Overview

In an inextricable interplay between geography and culture, the many bodies of water encountered in these regions of Indochina serve as a gateway to the beauty and mysteries of this area. The tour begins along Vietnam's golden Perfume River, with its magnificent fortress and temples, and walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter. A magical centerpiece of the tour is a cruise through awe-inspiring Halong Bay in northern Vietnam, an expanse of deep still waters and coves studded with thousands of seemingly endless limestone karsts that drop into the bay. Enjoy the turquoise waters and white sand beaches of the Sea of China off Vietnam's central coast before transferring to Siem Reap, Cambodia, home to some of humanity's most amazing architectural achievements, the temples of Angkor. This town was originally a cluster of small villages along the Siem Reap River, but is now nicknamed the "Great Gate to Angkor." The towns and cities along these waterways—Hanoi, Hoi An and Siem Reap—reveal architecture ranging from ancient temples and steep-roofed merchants' houses to rows and walls of pastel-colored French colonial buildings in their charming old quarters. You are welcomed into these towns and nearby villages with true hospitality and genuine warmth from your Vietnamese, and Cambodian hosts.





# Daily Itinerary

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## DAY 1

Walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter; 1-2 miles, easy. Hoan Kiem Lake; 2 miles, easy

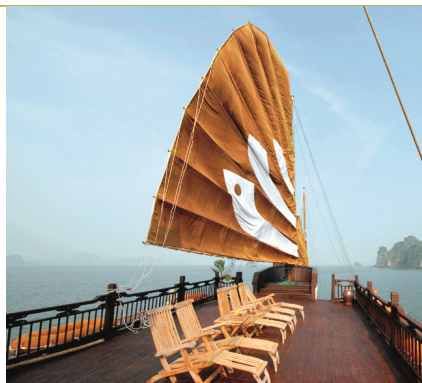
Today you enjoy an orientation of the tree-lined streets of Hanoi, resplendent with French colonial architecture, including the recently restored Opera House. You head into Hanoi's Old Quarter and stroll through the Ancient Quarter or 36 Streets District. This densely populated corner of the city was once a center of commerce where goods were sold under the street name of a particular guild. Still a thriving community of sellers today, you will see street names such as Sugar Street, Tin Street, and Paper Street. Ancient homes and temples are interspersed with stores in this souvenir hunter's paradise! In the afternoon you may choose between a walk around the Hoan Kiem Lake, located in the very center of the city and known as Lake of the Restored Sword from the legend that surrounds it, or free time at your deluxe hotel.

Early this evening you enjoy the wonderful Thang Long Water Puppet Show. This amazing art form originated over one thousand years ago in the Red River Delta. The performers who operate the puppets have to spend over an hour in the water, and the result is an intriguing show full of local tales about ancient legends, romance, farming, fishing, and children playing. After the show, you

head out to the Wild Lotus Restaurant for a dinner of delicious Vietnamese specialties.

### **Hotel de l'Opera , Hanoi**

As its name implies, this 5-star hotel exudes French elegance. Totally rebuilt in 2004, the hotel features sumptuous guest rooms, elegant dining, a fitness room with sauna, and a spectacular swimming pool that projects onto an open-air terrace. You may be reluctant to leave this luxury, but when you do, you'll find yourself in the former French Quarter, close to the Opera House, and just a short walk to Hoan Kiem Lake and many other downtown points of interest.



## **DAY 2**

Transfer to Halong Bay. Visit Vung Vieng Fishing Village

After a delicious breakfast, you depart Hanoi heading to fantastical Halong Bay, 600-square-miles studded with almost 2,000 jutting, lushly forested limestone islands, or karsts. This transfer takes approximately four hours including a short break along the way. After boarding the junk you enjoy a welcome cocktail followed by a cruise briefing and *al fresco* lunch as the Bhaya heads to Bai Tu Long Bay passing the towns of Hon Gai and Cam Pha, Oan Lagoon, Mat Quy (Monster Head) and Am Tich (Teapot) Islets. Those who wish visit Vung Vieng fishing village via row boat before returning to the junk for a Vietnamese cooking demonstration on the sundeck followed by a sumptuous seafood dinner.

### **Bhaya Cruise Private Junk, Halong Bay**

This traditional wooden junk combines oriental style with contemporary design and classic beauty. There are deluxe sleeping cabins, a sundeck, a lounge and bar, plus a wonderful staff who will take care of all of your needs. All cabins have panoramic windows and air conditioning.



### DAY 3

Cat Ba Island: Viet Hai Village; 3-7 miles, easy to moderate

Sip coffee as the junk sets sail to Cat Ba Island, home to the Cat Ba National Park. Your walk follows a quiet, dirt road surrounded by thick forest and gently ascends to the tiny village of Viet Hai, home to a small community which

produces much of the organic vegetables served on your junk! Upon arrival learn about the community's efforts to protect the Cat Ba langur, endemic to the island and one of the most endangered primates in the world. After a break in the shade, you continue through the village to visit a primary school and a small cave, or return to the junk via a local *tuk-tuk* taxi. While easy, this walk can feel more challenging due to the heat and lack of shade. Those who do not wish to walk today may enjoy more time on the boat, swimming, kayaking, or perhaps indulging in a massage (not included in the tour price). A sunset cocktail is followed by a dinner of freshly caught seafood delicately seasoned and served in the dining room. The lights from the other boats anchored in the area reflect in the calm waters and provide a unique, intimate atmosphere.

## Bhaya Cruise Private Junk, Halong Bay

### DAY 4

Visit to Sung Sot Grotto. Transfer to Hanoi for flight to Danang

During a light breakfast, your boat makes its way to Sun Sot Grotto and Luon Dave, passing beautiful spots like Trong (Drum), Trinh Nu (Virgin), and Me Cung Caves, as well as Coc Ngoi (Toad) Islet.

Sung Sot Grotto consists of two chambers, one being similar to a wide theater hall, where many stalactites hang from the high ceiling, and a second chamber that is so immense it could hold thousands of people at one time. At the deepest point of the grotto, a "royal garden" appears, with a clear pond and a fascinating landscape of mountains. Many birds and plants (benjamin figs, cycads, and centenary banyan trees) live here. After this visit, head back to the junk and enjoy a delicious brunch. Later, you disembark at Halong Pier and transfer back to Hanoi, where you board your flight to Danang. Upon arrival, you drive to Hoi

An, where after checking into your hotel, you have time to freshen up before a dinner of delightful Vietnamese cuisine.

### **Almanity Hoi An Hotel, Hoi An**

This property located in the French colonial quarter of Hoi An beautifully integrates elements of the local surroundings into its neo-colonial architecture. Rooms are spacious and modern with private porches overlooking tropical courtyard gardens.

Amenities include a swimming pool, two restaurants, a lively bar, and a full-service spa.



### **DAY 5**

Cam Thanh and Cam Chau villages and countryside; 4 miles, easy to moderate.  
Guided tour of Hoi An; 2 miles, easy

This morning choose between a visit to a seamstress where fabric can be made into a garment in one day (you may bring your own or purchase it from their impressive displays). Or, you may choose to stroll through the early morning market. Afterwards, wind through the villages of Cam Thanh and Cam Chau between rice paddies and organic gardens where there may be a chance to stop at a local school and visit with the children. Lunch is on your own today in order to give you time to either enjoy the hotel's lovely swimming pool (perhaps dining pool-side), or to venture into Hoi An.

After lunch, continue on to the wonderful old part of Hoi An, where your guide shares amazing insights into the history of this area. Hoi An was an international trading center from the 17th to the 19th century, frequented by merchants from China, Japan, India, and Holland. The winding narrow streets and old Chinese-style buildings of its historic center are remarkably intact and have earned it UNESCO World Heritage site status. Particularly fascinating is the Japanese covered bridge, built by the 17<sup>th</sup> century Japanese colonists with its Buddhist temple on one side. You may venture inside a former merchant's house as well as shops, courtyards, and temples, eventually reaching Hoi An's colorful central market, its stalls brimming over with tropical produce. This evening, gather for

dinner at Brothers Café Restaurant overlooking the Hoi An River and surrounded by lush gardens.

### **Almanity Hoi An Hotel, Hoi An**

#### **DAY 6**

Cam Ha Village to An Bang Beach; 4 miles, easy. Free afternoon

This morning's initial destination is a small fishing village far removed from the hustle and bustle of the modern world. The relaxing walk to Cam Ha follows a palm-lined trail along the broad De Vong River, passing small homes, vegetable gardens, and shrimp farms; then continuing on a quiet unpaved road to An Bang Beach for a simple lunch of fresh-caught fish.

After lunch there's time to relax on the beach or at the hotel, where you may opt for a complimentary spa massage in the late afternoon or early evening. Dinner is on your own, so enjoy exploring Hoi An's charming streets to discover a special restaurant for your evening meal.

### **Almanity Hoi An Hotel, Hoi An**

#### **DAY 7**

Flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Angkor Thom; 1-2 miles, easy

After a wonderful buffet breakfast of muesli, traditional noodle soup, fresh fruits, eggs, and pastries, you pack for your transfer to Siem Reap. On arrival, you will be met at the airport by your local Cambodian guide and then transferred to your hotel where you take a *tuk-tuk* to the gate at Bayon, which is at the beginning of your walk to explore the mysterious royal city of Angkor Thom. Stroll along the trail to the Terrace of the Elephants and the Terrace of the Leper King. Wander through the narrow alleyways and see its awe-inspiring fifty tower temple. The enormous stone sculptures reveal enigmatic faces from a remote era. Continue on to Takeo Temple, a towering but plainly decorated structure dedicated to Shiva. Known in its time as the "mountain with golden peaks," it was the first temple to be constructed wholly of sandstone. Dinner tonight is at the hotel, featuring some of Cambodia's most delicious cuisine.



## Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap

This upscale, colonial-style property features tastefully-appointed rooms, beautiful Khmer artwork throughout, and a pool surrounded by peaceful gardens.

### DAY 8

K'bal Spean Trail; 3 miles, easy to moderate. Afternoon visit to Ta Prohm



This morning you depart early from the hotel in order to beat the heat. Transfer to K'bal Spean, which is situated on the southwestern slopes of the Kulen Hills and within Phnom Kulen National Park. It was here in 802 AD that King Jayavarman declared himself the god-king and broke away from the Java kingdom. This is the birthplace of the Angkor kingdom and modern Cambodia. You follow a trail through a quiet forest, where at the top you find the K'bal Spean site and riverbed, which is covered with sculptures of lingas, the symbol of the god Shiva's supreme essence. This amazing Hindu site, referred to as the "River of a Thousand Lingas," predates Angkor Wat by roughly two hundred years, making it one of the most ancient sites in the region. Along your route there is a lovely waterfall and great views of the valley below. Lunch today is in a local restaurant at the foot of K'bal Spean which has great views over the area.

In the afternoon you visit Ta Prohm, a site nearly lost due to the deep jungle growing around it. The overgrown vegetation combined with the remains provide a somewhat haunted and exotic landscape. Enormous tree roots, pushing between the stone blocks of the temple in a sort of embrace, emphasize the legend of a "lost city." Intentionally left partially unrestored, massive fig and silk-cotton trees grow from the towers and alleyways, offering ample photo opportunities of temple ruins juxtaposed with overgrown trees.

Later, you may choose between a dip in the hotel's swimming pool or an optional performance by musicians from Cambodian Living Arts, a project of World Education which supports the revival of traditional Khmer performing arts. Dinner is at a local restaurant, which serves some of the best authentic Cambodian food in the area.

## Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap

## DAY 9

Visit of Angkor Wat; 1 mile, easy. Departure from Siem Reap

This morning you rise very early in order to beat the crowds for an exploration of Angkor Wat—the enormous and intricately carved Khmer ruins—one of the world’s architectural wonders. A product of the Khmer civilization, the temple was constructed between the 9th and 13th centuries. Strolling its extensive alleys and courtyards, you see many small shrines still in use by the local residents living near the ancient site. Housed in the main temple are hundreds of fine carvings of Apsaras, depicted from Hindu mythology.

After this remarkable visit to Angkor Wat, you bid farewell to your newfound friends. A complimentary transfer to the airport is included for your onward travel.

## **ITINERARY CHANGES**

Please bear in mind that this is a typical itinerary, and the actual activities, sites, and accommodations may vary due to season, special events, weather, or transportation schedules. We reserve the right to alter the itinerary, since tour arrangements are made up to a year in advance and unforeseen circumstances may arise that mandate change. Itinerary changes are made to improve the tour and your experience.

## **RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL**

Country Walkers is a leader in active travel with responsible tourism an integral part of our core values. Our tours reflect our dedication to best travel practices—and to the preservation of indigenous cultures and the environment. Country Walkers has made a donation on behalf of every traveler to the CW Travelers Fund, which supports designated projects in the communities and habitats in which we travel. We invite you to learn more about our efforts and initiatives for giving back.

Country Walkers is delighted to introduce an inspiring social enterprise, STREETS International, that provides intensive, comprehensive training in hospitality and culinary arts to orphans and other disadvantaged “street kids” to prepare them for careers. On tour, you dine at their Hoi An restaurant, an unforgettable (and delicious!) experience.

# Tour Itinerary Overview

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## TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Hotel de l'Opera (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.

## NIGHT 1

### Hotel de l'Opera

Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel 011 84 462 825 555

Email [h7832-re@accor.com](mailto:h7832-re@accor.com)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHTS 2 & 3

### Bhaya Cruise Private Junk

Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel 011 84 439 446 777

Email [sales@bhayacruises.com](mailto:sales@bhayacruises.com)

Hair dryers available. Wireless Internet and laundry service unavailable.

## NIGHTS 4, 5 & 6

### Almanity Hoi An

326 Ly Thuong Kiet, Tan An Ward

Hoi An, Vietnam

Tel 011 84 510 3666 888

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## NIGHTS 7 & 8

### Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa

Siem Reap, Cambodia

Tel 011 855 63 760 350

Email [resa.angkor@victoriahotels.asia](mailto:resa.angkor@victoriahotels.asia)

[victoriahotels.asia/en/our-hotel-in-cambodia](http://victoriahotels.asia/en/our-hotel-in-cambodia)

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

## TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME

Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2:00 p.m.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT**

### **One Call International**

Email [mail@oncallinternational.com](mailto:mail@oncallinternational.com)

### **If communicating from within the US**

Text 603.945.0103

Tel 800.555.9095

### **If calling from outside the US**

Tel 603.894.4710

When calling from outside the USA, you will need to dial the access code for the country you are calling from (a complete list of access codes, provided by AT&T, can be found on the Country Walkers website under Travel Tips and Travel Resources: International Access Codes).

In the unlikely event you are unable to connect by phone with One Call, or the region you are calling from does not have an access code, you should speak with a live international operator and ask them to place a collect call to 800.555.9095 or 603.894.4710.

## **TRAVEL INSURANCE**

We offer guests the opportunity to purchase a Travel Protection Plan. Please contact us for details.

# Tour Facts at a Glance

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## **TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)**

9 days, 8 nights

## **DEPARTURE DATES AND PRICE**

Please refer to our website for the most current list of departure dates, scheduled group tour and private group tour prices.

## **TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME**

Hotel de l'Opera (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.

## **TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME**

Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2:00 p.m.

## **ACTIVITY LEVEL**

This tour is one of our Guided Walking Adventures, rated easy to moderate. You walk on a variety of terrain including country dirt roads, cement paths, bustling city streets, and forest trails, some with rocks and exposed roots. Some days involve walking up many steps to access temples. There is a fairly fast pace on the days when you are visiting the cities and sites within those cities, however, these days are balanced by the more relaxed pace when walking in the countryside.

## **INCLUSIONS**

- » Experienced, friendly and knowledgeable guides. On this tour there will be a Vietnamese Country Walkers guide with you throughout the tour plus local guides in Halong Bay, Hoi An, and Siem Reap.
- » All meals included, except one lunch and one dinner; wine and local beer included with dinner
- » All accommodations while on tour
- » Complimentary airport transfer to the first hotel on arrival in Hanoi, and on departure in Siem Reap
- » Transportation from the meeting point to the departure point
- » Mandatory internal airfare of \$480

- » Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary
- » Destination information (weather, visa requirements, etc.) and other travel assistance available 24/7 provided by One Call International
- » The unbeatable and cumulative experience of the Country Walkers staff

### **LET THE JOURNEY BEGIN**

Prior to your adventure you will be asked to sign a Passenger Participation Agreement and you will receive:

- » Luggage tags
- » List of travel companions and guide biographies

### **GRATUITIES**

Gratuities for all hotels, meals, and services that are included in your tour price will be paid by Country Walkers. Should you wish to tip your Country Walkers guide(s), the standard in the industry ranges from \$10 to \$15 per person, per guide, per day (or \$20 to \$30 per couple, per guide, per day), and can be paid in USD or local currency. **Please note that on this particular tour, you will have one full-time Country Walkers guide with you throughout the tour joined by local guides in each region we visit in order to offer the deepest immersion and best local expertise.**

# Traveling To and From Your Tour

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If you are interested in reserving the **optional Flight + Tour Combo** and **pre- or post-tour extensions**, please refer to the attached itinerary for more details.

## **TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME**

**Hotel de l'Opera (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.**

You will be met in the lobby by your Country Walkers Guide(s). Please be dressed for walking.

## **MOST CONVENIENT AIRPORT**

Hanoi (Noi Bai) International Airport (HAN), Hanoi, Vietnam  
[hanoiairportonline.com/](http://hanoiairportonline.com/)

## **GETTING TO THE MEETING POINT**

A complimentary transfer from the airport to the meeting-point hotel will be provided for you regardless of your arrival time and date (and whether or not you have reserved the optional Flight + Tour Combo). Please be sure to inform Country Walkers of your flight arrival date and time at least 60 days prior to the tour start date so that we can confirm this transfer. A local representative holding a Country Walkers sign will meet you as you exit the airport (only passengers are allowed inside the airport terminal).

## **PRE-TOUR ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you are not reserving our optional Flight + Tour Combo, you may wish to stay at the Hotel de l'Opera, our meeting-point hotel, for the night prior to the tour. To make a reservation, please contact the hotel directly. In order to guarantee you will not have to move rooms, please mention you're with the Country Walkers group when you make the reservation and request a l'Opera deluxe room. Rates depend on the time of year you travel but start at approximately \$185 USD, not including breakfast or taxes.

**Hotel de l'Opera (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.**

Hanoi, Vietnam  
Tel 011 84 462 825 555  
Email [h7832-re@accor.com](mailto:h7832-re@accor.com)



## **DELAYS AND LATE ARRIVALS**

If you are delayed or miss the scheduled group meeting point for any reason, we kindly request that you contact our emergency assistance provider, One Call International. This service is available 24 hours/day, 7 days/week to assist you with any type of travel delay. Please refer to the Emergency Contact details on your Tour Itinerary Overview page for One Call International contact details.

## **TOUR DEPARTURE POINT AND TIME**

**Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap, Cambodia, 2:00 p.m.**

## **LEAVING SIEM REAP**

A complimentary transfer to Siem Reap Airport is included for all guests even if you depart after the final day of the tour (and regardless of whether you reserved the optional Flight + Tour Combo). There are direct flights from Siem Reap International Airport (REP) to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi on Vietnam Airlines ([vietnamairlines.com](http://vietnamairlines.com)), to Bangkok on Bangkok Airways, and to many other gateway cities in Asia. From these gateway cities you will be able to connect with most major airlines for your return to the U.S.

# Information & Policies

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## **GUARANTEED DEPARTURES**

Country Walkers guarantees the departure of every tour\*—no exceptions and no disappointments! From the moment you make your deposit, you can start preparing for your adventure. We take care of all the details to ensure a seamless, small-group experience (with an average of 6 or 7 guests per guide). For best availability, reserve your trip today!

*\*except in cases of force majeure*

## **RESERVATIONS**

Reservations for this tour may be made by calling Country Walkers at 800.464.9255. We can confirm your reservation with a deposit of \$350 per person. Final tour cost is due 90 days prior to tour departure date. As arrangements are confirmed at least a year in advance, the tour price is subject to change.

## **GUEST RESPONSIBILITIES**

Each guest has the responsibility to select a trip appropriate to his/her abilities and interests and to prepare for the trip by carefully reading the confirmation materials. To join this trip, you must be in good health and capable of completing activities as described in the day-to-day itinerary. Our in-house experts welcome the opportunity to discuss the tour in more detail. In order to meet your needs, we ask that you please share any relevant physical limitations or health conditions when you make your reservation.

## **CANCELLATION POLICY**

Cancellations received 91 days or more prior to the tour start date will incur a loss of \$150; cancellations received between 90 and 61 days prior to the tour start date incur a loss of 25 percent of the tour price; there are no refunds within 60 days of the tour start date. Up to 91 days prior to departure, you may transfer your reservation, depending on availability, from one departure to another in the same calendar year at no cost\*. Please notify us in writing.

*\*One transfer per year; afterwards a modest per person transfer fee will apply. Please note that tours with seasonal prices may involve a higher price.*

# Vietnam at a Glance

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## VISITING VIETNAM

Vietnam is a developing country. Infrastructure, including modern roads, is fairly good, but poverty is apparent. The Country Walkers tour has been designed to maximize exposure to the diversity, land, people, and culture of Vietnam, both on foot and during the travel days. The most important tools that a traveler can bring are a sense of humor, flexibility, and an open mind to cultural differences. While the itinerary in Vietnam has been established with the assistance of local expert guides and partners, each experience is unique and requires patience on the part of the traveler.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



**U.S. citizens:** Passports are required and must be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of travel, as the actual visa will be stamped into your passport. Visas are required and must be obtained before travel. To apply for a single-entry 30-day visa, complete a Visa Application Form (found on the Vietnam Embassy website: [vietnamembassy-usa.org/consular](http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/consular)). As of April 2016, the fee for US citizens is approximately \$100.

### Important

On the Visa Application Form under name and address of host or contact in Vietnam, please list the following information:

### Destination Asia

55 Truong Quoc Dung St  
Phu Nhuan District, HCMC Vietnam  
Tel 011 84 838 448 071  
Fax 011 84 838 447 885

For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

## CURRENCY

Vietnam uses the Vietnamese dong (VND). For up-to-date exchange rates, see [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

## TIME ZONE

Vietnam is 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. For more information on worldwide time zones, see [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

## PHONE & INTERNET



Vietnam country code: +84

Cell phone coverage throughout Vietnam is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American phone models or to work at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

## LANGUAGE

The official language in Vietnam is Vietnamese, which is a fusion of Mon-Khmer, Tai, and Chinese elements. It is spoken throughout the country, although there are dialectal differences between the north and central regions. Much of Vietnam's older population still speaks French, but Vietnamese youth have fully embraced the English language.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

## ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Vietnam. The most common plugs are the type with two round pins and two flat blades. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see [electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org).

### Travel Tip

- Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), and some dollars to exchange.
- There are ATMs in major towns.

## WEATHER

Vietnam has a tropical climate with a rainy season from May to October. From November to April, the weather is warm, sunny, and humid, although less humid than during the rainy season. Occasional short rain showers can occur year-round, although typically rain falls at night during the drier winter months. In northern Vietnam the average temperatures in November (high/low) are 75/66 ° F and in March 73/64 ° F, and central Vietnam, 79/72 ° F in November and 81/72 ° F in March. For up-to-date forecasts, see [qwikcast.com](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com).

## HEALTH CONCERNS

No immunizations are required to enter Vietnam. Always consult a travel clinic at a local university, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, and/or your personal physician for the most up-to-date recommendations and routine vaccinations. Malaria medication, hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella vaccinations are generally recommended for all travelers. For the threat of malaria, you should consult the CDC or your physician for the most current information. Importantly, plan ahead for immunizations because some require administration several months prior to departure. The CDC provides the most current medical requirements and recommendations. Recommendations change frequently, so you must check directly with the CDC, a travelers' clinic, or other medical authority. See [cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel) or telephone 877.394.8747.

## FOOD & DRINK



Vietnamese food has an amazing amount of sauces, dips, herbs, and spices. Pho is a wonderfully healthy soup (available in Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia). It is a rice noodle soup, and varying amounts of vegetables or any type of meat may be added. Of course, rice is a way of life here and can be found cooked in a few different ways—sticky, steamed, or fried. In Vietnam, one of the most popular dishes is spring rolls. They are usually made of rice paper and filled with vegetables, either

### Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores.
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

### Travel Tip

Bartering in markets for some of Vietnam's lovely fabrics, clothes, and crafts is an accepted and expected practice. Once in Vietnam, with your tour representative's assistance, you will develop a sense of a fair price—relax and keep it light to enjoy this cultural experience. Once you've agreed upon a price with the vendor, it is expected that you will purchase the item.

cooked or raw, plus crab, vermicelli, shrimp, and minced pork. You can also find them fried and steamed. As Vietnam has an incredibly long seacoast, there is an abundance of fresh seafood, such as shrimp, prawn, crab, clams, eel, and shellfish. After rice, fruits and vegetables make up the bulk of the Vietnamese diet. The variety of vegetables is incredible, and at any meal you can enjoy a vast array of local, fresh produce, including bok choy, broccoli, cauliflower, green beans, and cabbage. French baguettes, a legacy of the French colonial period, are available, often served as sandwiches with pâté.

**Food tips:** Avoid eating foods sold by local street vendors, peeled fruit or unwashed vegetables (unless peeled or washed by your tour staff), as well as fresh salads. We recommend following the simple rule, “If you

can't peel it, don't eat it.”

**Water:** We advise that you drink only bottled water, including for ice cubes in drinks and brushing your teeth. Bottled water is widely available.

## LIFE IN VIETNAM

### Shopping and banking hours



Shops, stores, and open markets are generally open daily between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

Banks are open from 8:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday to Friday, and Saturday morning.

### Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. Restaurants are generally open all day from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 or 10:00 p.m.

### Tipping

In many restaurants, five or ten percent service is added to the bill; an additional five percent of the total is appreciated. For taxi drivers, you can round up the fare. For luggage assistance, about 10,000 to 15,000 dong is appropriate.

## Personal safety

Vietnam requires the common sense and exercise of above-normal precautions for personal safety that apply in many countries and cities worldwide; in addition to being aware of your surroundings, keep your valuables close and hidden while in public (avoid dangling cameras or other “tourist bait”), and avoid walking alone at night. Please follow accommodation and/or tour representative guidelines about securing valuables.

## Dress Etiquette and Social Conduct

It is important to dress modestly in Vietnam. Shorts are generally fine as long as they are not too short.

Please note that when visiting temples or pagodas, shorts and tank tops are not acceptable. Your knees and shoulders must be covered. Footwear and socks must be removed in pagodas and also some temples. Shoes are usually removed when entering private homes. Public displays of affection between men and women are considered shocking. On the other hand, it is perfectly normal for a pair of men or women to link arms or hold hands. Upon meeting each other people may simply nod or may shake hands. Using both hands is a warm gesture of respect. When greeting someone, hands are put together in a prayer-like position at the chest and the head is slightly lowered. Avoid putting your feet up and inadvertently pointing them at someone, which can be interpreted as being disrespectful. Likewise, touching someone’s head is also considered improper in Vietnamese culture.

**Travel Tip:** We recommend that you do not acquiesce to the temptation of rewarding children who beg for sweets, pencils, or spare change. As difficult as this may be, you can make a more positive impact by giving donations of school supplies or books to your guide, who will ensure that they reach one of the villages visited on the tour, or by making a donation to a nongovernmental organization working in Vietnam.

## Travel Tip

**Bathroom facilities:** While all Country Walkers accommodations have Western-style flush toilets, it is common to find Eastern-style toilets in restaurants and tea houses. These facilities are not much more than a porcelain-lined hole in the ground and one must carry one’s own toilet paper. Please realize that while this type of toilet may seem awkward, it is not unsanitary

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Vietnamese tourist board official site  
[vietnamtourism.com](http://vietnamtourism.com)



### Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Vietnam tourist board's website for a list of public holidays and festivals:

[holiday-times.com/public-holidays-vietnam/](http://holiday-times.com/public-holidays-vietnam/).

### Travel in Vietnam

Outside of domestic flights, getting around via ground transportation is improving, although it's still less convenient than flying in Vietnam, due to the distances and the road and bus network. A railway system, Vietnam Railways ([vr.com.vn](http://vr.com.vn)), is extensive and also has received recent upgrades, although it is still slow and some security concerns exist. Renting a car is not recommended; however, taxis are available at airports and towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can provide assistance); and a car and driver can also be reserved for an entire day or part of a day. For more information, see the Vietnamese tourist board website at [vietnamtourism.com](http://vietnamtourism.com), or contact Country Walkers.

### Airports

Vietnam has three international airports: Hanoi (Noi Bai), Danang (Danang), and Saigon (Tan Son Nhat). A domestic air network connects these cities with smaller cities within the country as well.



# Cambodia at a Glance

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## VISITING CAMBODIA

Cambodia is a developing country. Infrastructure, including modern roads, is fairly good, but poverty is apparent. The Country Walkers tour has been designed to maximize exposure to the diversity, land, people, and culture of Cambodia.

The most important tools that a traveler can bring are a sense of humor, flexibility, and an open mind to cultural differences. While the itinerary in Cambodia has been established with the assistance of local expert guides and operators, each experience is unique and requires patience on the part of the traveler.

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS



U.S. citizens: Passports are required and must be valid for at least six months beyond the dates of travel. Visas are required and a 30-day single-entry tourist visa can either be obtained in advance from the Embassy of Cambodia

([embassyofcambodia.org/visa.html](http://embassyofcambodia.org/visa.html)) or upon arrival at Siem Reap International Airport.

### Important

- » If you choose to obtain the visa upon arrival, the cost is \$35 (as of April 2016). You must make the payment in cash (USD), and also provide two passport-sized photographs.
- » If you apply for a visa before you travel, you must have a passport that is valid for six months beyond your travel dates, as the actual visa will be stamped into your passport. To apply for a visa, visit the Embassy of Cambodia website and print out a form: [embassyofcambodia.org/visa.html](http://embassyofcambodia.org/visa.html). Complete and send it with the fee, passport photographs, and your passport to the address listed. Alternately, you can apply online by clicking on the E-Visa icon and then on the following listed website address: [evisa.gov.kh/evisa](http://evisa.gov.kh/evisa).

For more information, see [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov).

### Travel Tip

- Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), and some dollars to exchange.
- There are ATMs in Siem Reap.

### CURRENCY

Cambodia uses the Cambodian riel (KHR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see [oanda.com](http://oanda.com).

Always contact your bank or your credit-card company for details on fees and card use when traveling.

### TIME ZONE

Cambodia is 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. For more information on worldwide time zones see [worldtimezone.com](http://worldtimezone.com).

### PHONE & INTERNET



Cambodia country code: +855

Cell phone coverage throughout Cambodia is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American phone models or to work at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to [countrywalkers.com/phones](http://countrywalkers.com/phones).

Internet access is generally very good in towns and villages; however, it is not guaranteed at all of the hotels used on the tour. For more details regarding Wi-Fi availability, please refer to the Tour Itinerary Overview.

### LANGUAGE

The language of Cambodia—Khmer—belongs to the Mon-Khmer family of languages. Visually, the Khmer alphabet is similar to those of Thai and Lao, and many words in these three languages trace their origins to common Pali or Sanskrit roots.

While knowledge of the local language is not necessary, you may want to learn some fun and useful phrases; see the enclosed Reading Guide for a suggested phrase book.

### ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Cambodia. The most common plugs are the type with two round pins and two flat blades. For a full listing of electrical outlets worldwide, see [electricaloutlet.org](http://electricaloutlet.org).

## WEATHER

Cambodia has a tropical climate with a rainy season from May to October. From November to April, the weather is warm, sunny, and humid, although less humid than during the rainy season. Occasional short rain showers can occur year-round, although typically rain falls at night during the drier winter months. The average temperatures (high/low) in Siem Reap in November are 87/71° F and in March 93/74° F.

For up-to-date forecasts, see [qwikcast.com](http://qwikcast.com). For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see [weatherbase.com](http://weatherbase.com).

## HEALTH CONCERNS

No immunizations are required to enter Cambodia. Always consult a travel clinic at a local university, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) in Atlanta, and/or your personal physician for the most up-to-date recommendations and routine vaccinations. Malaria medication, hepatitis, tetanus, typhoid, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella vaccinations are generally recommended for all travelers. For the threat of malaria, you should consult the CDC or your physician for the most current information. Importantly, plan ahead for immunizations because some require administration several months prior to departure. The CDC provides the most current medical requirements and recommendations. Recommendations change frequently, so you must check directly with the CDC, a travelers' clinic, or other medical authority. See [cdc.gov/travel](http://cdc.gov/travel) or telephone 877.394.8747.

## FOOD & DRINK



Khmer cuisine, as it is known in Cambodia, is similar to the food of neighboring countries, but perhaps bears most similarity to Thai cuisine, with the major difference being that it is much less spicy. In fact, a red curry in Cambodia, although it may look hot, is mild and made with sweet potatoes. The staple of the diet is rice and freshwater fish, and tropical fruits are abundant and usually included at every meal for dessert. A central ingredient in Cambodian cuisine is *prabok*, a fermented fish paste, used either as a savory dipping sauce in its stronger form, or blended with other herbs and ingredients to add depth and the distinctive

### Travel Tip

- Bringing your own hair dryer or other electrical device? You'll need a travel converter, available at most hardware, travel, or consumer electronic stores
- For laptops or an electronic device with a dual voltage switch, you'll need the adapter plug but not a converter.

Khmer flavor of many dishes. A rice noodle soup or porridge is ubiquitous, and also, as in Vietnam, freshly baked baguettes, the legacy of France’s colonial period.

**Food tips:** Avoid eating foods sold by local street vendors, peeled fruit or unwashed vegetables (unless peeled or washed by your tour staff), as well as fresh salads. We recommend following the simple rule, “If you can’t peel it, don’t eat it.”

**Water:** We advise that you drink only bottled water, including for ice cubes in drinks and brushing your teeth. Bottled water is widely available.

## LIFE IN CAMBODIA

### Shopping and banking hours

Shops, stores, and open markets are generally open daily between 7:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Banks are open from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday and Saturday morning.



### Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. In restaurants, lunch is served from noon to 2:00 p.m. and dinner is usually served from 6:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

### Tipping

Cambodia does not have a tradition of tipping, therefore while it is greatly appreciated, it is entirely discretionary.

As a guideline, in restaurants, 10 percent of the total is appropriate. For taxi drivers, you can round up the fare. For luggage assistance, a small tip of perhaps one dollar total, at your discretion.

### Personal safety

Cambodia requires the common sense and exercise of above-normal precautions for personal safety that apply in many countries and cities worldwide; in addition to being aware of your surroundings, keep your valuables close and hidden while in public (avoid dangling cameras or other “tourist bait”), and avoid walking alone at night. Please follow accommodation and/or tour representative guidelines about securing valuables.

### Travel Tip

Cambodia, like neighboring countries, has a rich tradition of handcrafted articles and is especially known for its fine silks and other textiles, carvings, and silverwork

## Dress Etiquette and Social Conduct

It is important to dress modestly in Cambodia. Shorts are generally fine as long as they are not too short. Please note that when visiting temples or pagodas, shorts and tank tops are not acceptable. Your knees and shoulders must be covered. Footwear and socks must be removed in pagodas and also some temples. Shoes are usually removed when entering private homes. Public displays of affection between men and women are considered shocking. On the other hand, it is perfectly normal for a pair of men or women to link arms or hold hands. Upon meeting each other people may simply nod or shake hands. Using both hands is a warm gesture of respect. When greeting someone, hands are put together in a prayer-like position at the chest and the head is slightly lowered. Avoid putting your feet up and inadvertently pointing them at someone, which can be interpreted as being disrespectful. Likewise, touching someone's head is also considered improper in Cambodian culture.

## TRAVEL RESOURCES

**National Cambodian tourist board official site**  
[tourismcambodia.org](http://tourismcambodia.org)

### Public holidays

To assist in travel planning, it may be helpful to be aware of public holidays, festivals, or calendars of events. Visit the Cambodian tourist board's website [tourismcambodia.org/travel\\_info/index.php?view=public\\_holidays#comp](http://tourismcambodia.org/travel_info/index.php?view=public_holidays#comp) for a list of public holidays and festivals.

## TRAVEL IN CAMBODIA

Outside of domestic flights, getting around via ground transportation is improving, although it's still less convenient than flying in Cambodia, due to the road system. Renting a car is not recommended; however, taxis are available at airports and towns, and can be reserved in advance (your hotel can provide assistance); and a car and driver can also be reserved

## Travel Tip

**Bathroom facilities:** While all Country Walkers accommodations have Western-style flush toilets, it is common to find Eastern-style toilets in restaurants and tea houses. These facilities are not much more than a porcelain-lined hole in the ground and one must carry one's own toilet paper. Please realize that while this type of toilet may seem awkward, it is not unsanitary



for an entire day or part of a day. For more information, see the Cambodian tourist board website at [tourismcambodia.org](http://tourismcambodia.org) or contact Country Walkers.

### Travel Tip

We recommend that you do not acquiesce to the temptation of rewarding children who beg for sweets, pencils, or spare change. As difficult as this may be, you can make a more positive impact by giving donations of school supplies or books to your guide, who will ensure that they reach one of the villages visited on the tour, or by making a donation to a nongovernmental organization working in Cambodia.

### Airports

International flights arrive at Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh, and at the Siem Reap International Airport, which serves visitors to the temples of Angkor. A domestic air network connects the two airports. For both airports, see [cambodia-airports.aero](http://cambodia-airports.aero).

# Packing List

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## PACKING TIPS

Pack light! Keep in mind there will be times you may have to carry your own luggage short distances, especially before and after your Country Walkers tour. Due to space constraints, we require you to limit your luggage to one medium piece (approximately 18x15x29 inches or 8,000 cu. in.) and one small carry-on, per person. We recommend packing any personal necessities, medications, your hotel itinerary/emergency contact information, your hiking boots (or shoes), and extra clothes in your carry-on luggage in the event that your baggage is delayed. We suggest leaving valuable jewelry at home. A copy of your passport or other important documents should be kept in a separate area of your luggage. Always be alert when carrying a purse, camera, money belt, or backpack in busy cities, airports, and train stations.

## LUGGAGE REQUIREMENTS

Please note the following domestic airlines luggage guidelines:

Two pieces of checked baggage per passenger. Each passenger has a maximum weight of 20kg (or 44 lbs), the sum of three dimensions of the two pieces shall not exceed 273cm (107 in).

One piece of carry on luggage per passenger. Each piece has a maximum weight of 7kg (or 15.4 lbs) and the sum of three dimensions shall not exceed 115 cm (56 cm x 36 cm x 23 cm) or 45 inches (22 x 14 x 9 inches). Many domestic carriers may require the passenger to check baggage in cases where it exceeds the quantity, weight, and dimensions as specified above.

The overweight luggage will be charged at \$10 per kg (or approx. \$5 per pound).

## FOOTWEAR

» Hiking boots or shoes. There are many brands to choose from. Proper fit is crucial, so try on new boots or shoes while wearing socks you plan to use on tour. Be sure to break in new footwear well before your tour begins. By the time you're ready to join your walking tour, you should be able to complete 3-5 miles of walking without discomfort. We require lightweight boots with proper ankle support and good tread to ensure stability on all types of terrain. Waterproof footwear keeps feet dry in heavy rain and water resistant footwear

keeps feet dry in heavy dew. Country Walkers reserves the right to deny participation to any guest not wearing appropriate footwear.

- » Comfortable shoes for easy city walking
- » Water shoes or sandals (for use on some of the walks and on the private junk)
- » Synthetic, moisture-wicking socks (cotton socks are not recommended for walking as they will quickly cause blisters)
- » Blister remedy

## **CLOTHING**

- » Lightweight, wash-and-wear long pants (zip-off pants are ideal)
- » Long-sleeved, wash-and-wear shirt
- » T-shirts and shorts (moisture wicking shirts and shorts are ideal for the region's often humid climate)
- » Polar fleece or light wool pullover (it will keep you warm even when wet)
- » Dinner attire: dress is smart casual
- » Bathing suit (for hotel pools and swimming off the private junk)
- » Temple attire: exposed shoulders and knees are not permitted when visiting most temples. Convertible zip-off pants are a good option for both men and women on days that combine walking and temple visits.

## **OUTERWEAR**

- » Waterproof rain gear: jacket, pants, hat, or hood
- » Windbreaker with hood (your rain gear may be suitable)
- » Hat with a broad brim or visor

## **EQUIPMENT**

- » Pack (minimum size of 25L): large enough to carry water, extra clothing, rain gear, and personal items (camera, etc.)
- » Waterproof cover for pack
- » Water bottle, canteen, or CamelBak-type water reservoir or hydration pack to carry your own water while walking (equivalent of 1-2 liters)
- » Sunblock and lip balm
- » Insect repellent



- » Sunglasses
- » Toilet kit for when facilities are not available on the walks. Include zip-lock baggies, tissues, and moist towelettes, which can be disposed of upon return to the hotel
- » Personal first-aid kit including any medications you ordinarily take (in their original container)

### **OPTIONAL**

- » Telescopic walking sticks (Please note that telescopic walking sticks are not provided by Country Walkers. Therefore, please plan on bringing your own should you wish to use them.)
- » Binoculars
- » Camera and charger and/or extra batteries
- » Zip-lock bags (to keep camera and valuables dry)
- » Small notebook and pen
- » Field guides (see enclosed reading list)
- » Folding umbrella
- » Bandana
- » Hand sanitizer and/or moist towelettes