

VIETNAM, LAOS & 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 in to 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 **new optional Flight + Tour Combo** 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 moves on to the banks of Laos's massive Mekong River. 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 Laos and then 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, Luang Prabang 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, Laotian, and Cambodian hosts.





Daily Itinerary

DAY 1

Walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter; 1-2 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! You also 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.

Late this afternoon or 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.



Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake, Hanoi

A five-star hotel situated on lush grounds with an outdoor swimming pool, spa, and sauna facilities.

DAY 2

Transfer to Halong Bay. Visit Vung Vieng Fishing Village, optional swimming and kayaking

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. 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 National Park, Forest Trail; 6 or 10 miles, moderate

Sip coffee as the junk sets sail to Cat Ba Island. Your walk starts at the entrance to Cat Ba National Park and continues along a forest trail up to a Ranger Station, where you enjoy a trailside lunch of fresh, local produce. On this walk the views are hidden by the lush vegetation, but it feels good to stretch your legs after being on the junk, and at times you will also spot beautiful blossoms high in the trees. Once you reach the Ranger Station, you may choose to either head back down to the junk, or continue walking up the trail, which ends at a small but lovely pond. Those who do not wish to walk today may enjoy more time on the boat, swimming or kayaking. 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



After a light breakfast, you can choose to kayak or relax on board while the 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.

Alma Courtyard Hoi An, 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; 5 miles, easy to moderate.
Guided tour of Hoi An; 2 miles, easy

Begin your day with a winding walk through the villages of Cam Thanh and Cam Chau, where there may be a chance to stop at a local school and visit with

the children. 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 historical center are remarkably intact and have earned it UNESCO World Heritage site status. Particularly fascinating is the Japanese covered bridge, built by the 17th 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. Nearby you visit the cloth market, where fabric can be purchased and made into a garment in one day. Later, gather for dinner at Brothers Café Restaurant overlooking the Hoi An River.

Alma Courtyard Hoi An, Hoi An

DAY 6

Depart for Luang Prabang. Walking tour of Luang Prabang; 1-2 miles, easy

After breakfast, transfer to Danang airport for the flight to Luang Prabang via Hanoi. Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage site since 1995, is an ancient royal city surrounded by mountains and was founded at the sacred confluence of the Mekong River and its tributary, the Khan River. Here in Luang Prabang, time seems to stand still. The quiet streets lined with white-washed French colonial buildings lead to magnificent Buddhist temples with their fantastically sculpted roofs, painted in gold and vibrant colors, and their tranquil grounds. As part of the UNESCO plan, new buildings have been limited and development must be in keeping with the timelessness of these surroundings.

Upon arrival, you set out for a short walk to the base of Phousi Hill, Luang Prabang's most prominent landmark, set at the junction of the two rivers and considered a very sacred place. Climb the 328 steps leading to the summit for rewarding views over the entire town, and then continue on to Wat Visoun, a 16th-century temple housing a small museum of religious artifacts; and finally to Wat Xiengthong, another 16th-century temple, which epitomizes the elegance and grace of Luang Prabang's Buddhist architecture. After lunch in a local restaurant, there is free time either to relax at the hotel, or to further explore this beautiful, ancient town.

Before dinner you are welcomed with a traditional Lao Baci (pronounced "bahsee") ceremony, a lovely custom—both holy and joyful—to bless you and wish the group luck during your stay. By the end of the ceremony, as the pace of life in Laos takes hold, you will likely understand the Lao refrain "bo pen nyang," loosely translated by the combined sentiments of "don't worry, be happy" and "mañana." Your traditional dinner this evening is in a wonderful local restaurant

Villa Maly, Luang Prabang

A charming boutique hotel, this restored home of Laotian royalty is located amidst tranquil gardens in the heart of Luang Prabang, within walking distance of the main historical attractions.

DAY 7

Optional morning alms offering. Hmong Village: Ban Long Lao to Kuang Si Waterfall; 6 miles, moderate

Early risers may wish to join townspeople on the hushed streets giving morning offerings to monks en route to their temples. The orange-robed monks are participating in the Buddhist ritual of receiving alms, and locals lining the way fill their baskets with fruit, rice, and other small gifts as the monks walk past. Later, after breakfast, a short drive ascends a mountain dirt road to the village of Ban Long Lao. Laos is one of Southeast Asia's most diverse countries, with literally dozens of ethnic groups, each with their own language and customs. This small village is home to two distinct ethnic groups: Ban Long Loa 1 is Khmer—an agricultural society that also hunts, fishes, and traps. Ban Long Lao 2 is home to a Hmong community, known especially for their colorful weavings and elaborate jewelry. You walk through both centers, a low-key cultural exchange, before making your way into the countryside. Starting out along the green valley floor of open farmland, the trail then leads up a lush hillside with some steep and

rocky sections. The trail levels out and you descend to the Kuang Si waterfall where you enjoy a picnic lunch and may be tempted to swim in its refreshing pools.

Returning to your vehicle, you transfer back to Luang Prabang in the later afternoon. Dinner this evening is at the hotel, and afterward you may wish to venture out on your own for a walk through the night market, a colorful and diverse Luang Prabang highlight, replete with local handicrafts.

Villa Maly, Luang Prabang

DAY 8

Luang Prabang Market, Wat Chomphet and Wat Xieng Mene; 2.5 miles, easy to moderate. Optional visit to Ock Pop Tok textile co-op or the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center. Flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Angkor Thom; 1-2 miles, easy

After rising early and enjoying a wonderful buffet breakfast of muesli, traditional noodle soup, fresh fruits, eggs, and pastries, you walk from the hotel to the morning market, already bustling with activity as produce from the surrounding hills and small farms is set out. You continue down to the Mekong River where you are ferried by a local boat to the opposite bank. The walk traces country paths that wind through rice paddies, villages, and up many steps to the ancient pagodas of Wat Chomphet and Wat Xieng Mene. Small children from the villages may escort you along the trail.

After this morning's walk there are two optional activities. You have the chance to visit the wonderful textile co-op of Ock Pop Tok (Laotian for "East meets West"). This business provides sustainable employment to rural residents through the production and marketing of high-quality textiles. Meet the weavers and learn about these amazing contemporary and traditional designs. Alternatively you can visit the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Center. This is Laos's first exhibition space and fair-trade store dedicated to the collection, preservation, and presentation of traditional Laotian art and culture. The director of the center will speak about the interesting history of these Laotian tribes. Later, you return to the hotel, where you may freshen up and 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. After lunch 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 in a local restaurant, your first chance to enjoy Cambodia’s 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 9

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.

Later this 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.

Time permitting, you visit a center for local artisans to learn about how traditional practices are being passed on to the next generation. Dinner is at the hotel, which serves some of the best authentic Cambodian food in the area. Later you enjoy a performance by musicians from Cambodian Living Arts, a project of World Education which supports the revival of traditional Khmer performing arts.



Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa, Siem Reap

DAY 10

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 after a final lunch at the Paul De Brule Tourism School, which trains future chefs. 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.

Here's just one example that highlights our sustainable practices:

Vital Link: In the Old Quarter of Luang Prabang, Laos, you visit the textile gallery and weaving center of Ock Pop Tok (meaning “East meets West”). This establishment provides sustainable employment to rural residents through the production and marketing of high-quality textiles. It also offers a number of interactive learning experiences.

Tour Itinerary Overview

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.

NIGHT 1

Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel

Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel 011 84 462 708 888

Email hanoi@interconti.com

ihg.com/intercontinental/hotels/gb/en/hanoi/hanhb/hoteldetail

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

Hair dryers available. Wireless Internet and laundry service unavailable.

NIGHTS 4 & 5

Alma Courtyard Hoi An

326 Ly Thuong Kiet, Tan An Ward

Hoi An, Vietnam

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 6 & 7

Villa Maly

BP 78, Luang Prabang, Laos

Tel 011 856 71 253 902

Email info@villa-maly.com

villa-maly.com

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

NIGHTS 8 & 9

Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa

Siem Reap, Cambodia

Tel 011 855 63 760 350

Email resa.angkor@victoriahotels.asia

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

If communicating from within the US

Text 603.838.3169

Tel 800.555.9095

If calling from outside the US

Tel 800.555.9095 or 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.

Tour Facts at a Glance

TOUR LENGTH (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

10 days, 9 nights

DEPARTURE DATES (WITHOUT FLIGHT PACKAGE)

March 6-15, 2016

March 20-29, 2016

November 6-15, 2016

SCHEDULED GROUP PRICE, TOUR ONLY

March: \$6,348 (Single+\$798)

November: \$6,498 (Single +\$798)

If you are interested in reserving the optional Flight + Tour Combo and pre- or post-tour extensions **for our scheduled group departures**, please refer to the attached itinerary for tour length, dates, pricing, and inclusions.

PRIVATE TOUR-ONLY PRICE FROM

March:

4-5 guests: from \$6,548 (Single+\$798)

6+ guests: from \$6,348 (Single +\$798)

November:

4-5 guests: from \$6,698 (Single+\$798)

6+ guests: from \$6,498 (Single +\$798)

This private tour is available daily, on request, from January 1 through April 1 and October 1 through December 31.

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel (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. However the walk on Day 7 from Ban Long Lao to Kuang Si Waterfall is rated moderate. You walk on a variety of terrain including country dirt roads, cement paths, bustling city streets (Hanoi), and forest trails, some with rocks and exposed roots. Some days involve walking up many steps to access temples. Because this tour visits Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, there is limited walking on the travel days. On some other days you will only walk up to one mile, whereas on others you can walk up to 6 miles, depending on where you are located and what is planned for that day. 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 aboard the traditional junk, or in the laid-back Laotian town of Luang Prabang. This tour fully immerses you in the history and culture of three fascinating countries.

INCLUSIONS

- » Experienced, friendly and knowledgeable guides. On this tour there will be Vietnamese Country Walkers guide(s) with you on Days 1-6, Laotian Country Walkers guide(s) with you on Days 6-8, and Cambodian Country Walkers guides with you on Days 8-10
- » All meals included, except one lunch; 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 \$775
- » 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 Guest Acknowledgment of Risk 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 we will have one full-time tour guide who will accompany the entire tour and individual local guides to join in each area we visit.

Traveling To and From Your Tour

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

TOUR MEETING POINT AND TIME

Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel (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/

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 Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel, 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 deluxe room. Rates depend on the time of year you travel but start at approximately \$200 USD, not including breakfast or taxes.

Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake Hotel (lobby), Hanoi, Vietnam, 9:00 a.m.

Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel 011 84 462 708 888

Email hanoi@interconti.com

ihg.com/intercontinental/hotels/gb/en/hanoi/hanhb/hoteldetail

Wireless Internet, hair dryers, and laundry service available.

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), 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

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.*

TRAVEL INSURANCE

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

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Air or other travel arrangements to and from your tour are not included in the price of your trip. We encourage you to contact your local travel agent, or Better Travel, a Vermont-based agency (800.331.6996 or bettertravel@madriver.com), for any additional air, hotel, rail, or transfer arrangements you may need.

Vietnam at a Glance

VISITING VIETNAM—AN INTRODUCTION

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). As of June 2015, the fee for US citizens is \$45 (excluding handling fees).

Important

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

Destination Asia

143 Nguyen Van Troi
Phu Nhuan District, HCMC Vietnam
Tel 011 84 838 448 071
Fax 011 84 838 447 885

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Vietnam uses the Vietnamese dong (VND). For up-to-date exchange rates, see 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 78/62 ° F, and in central Vietnam, 79/69 ° F. For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see 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 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 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.

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.



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.

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

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 RESOURCES

National Vietnamese tourist board official site
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/.

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), 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, 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.

Laos at a Glance

VISITING LAOS—AN INTRODUCTION

Laos 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 Laos, 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 Laos has been established with the assistance of local expert guides and other 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. Visas are required and a 30-day single entry tourist visa can either be obtained in advance from the Laos Embassy (laoembassy.com) or upon arrival at Luang Prabang International Airport.



Important

- » If you choose to obtain the visa upon arrival, the cost is \$35 (as of June 2015). 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, complete and send a Visa Application Form (which can be found on the Laos Embassy website: laoembassy.com). If you apply for a visa before you travel, the fee is \$50 for U.S. citizens (as of June 2015).

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Laos uses the Laotian kip (LAK). For up-to-date exchange rates, see oanda.com.

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

TIME ZONE

Laos is 12 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. For more information on worldwide time zones, see worldtimezone.com.

PHONE & INTERNET

Laos country code: +856

Cell phone coverage throughout Laos is extensive, but cannot be guaranteed to be accessible on all American mobile carriers or to function at all times while on the trail or in remote areas. For more information regarding international phone use, please refer to 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 of Laos is Lao (or Laotian), which belongs to the Tai language family. This family of languages also includes Thai, Shan, and languages spoken by smaller, related ethnic groups in Laos, Thailand, Myanmar, southern China, and northern Vietnam. Lao is spoken not only in Laos but in northeastern Thailand, an area called “Isan.”

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.

Travel Tip

- Have a variety of options to start your trip: ATM card(s), credit card(s), and some dollars to exchange.
- USD and Thai baht are widely accepted throughout Laos.
- If you do want to obtain some Laotian kips, there are two ATMs in the town center of Luang Prabang



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.

ELECTRICITY

Alternating current of 220V and 50Hz is used in Laos. 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.

WEATHER

Laos 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 Luang Prabang in November are: 85/64 ° F.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see weatherbase.com.

HEALTH CONCERNS

No immunizations are required to enter Laos. 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 or telephone 877.394.8747.

FOOD & DRINK



Laotian cuisine is based on the fresh tropical fruit, vegetables, and rice that grow in its fertile plains and hillsides. Flavorful salads, such as papaya salad with thinly sliced green papaya, cucumber, and onion, are a mixture of savory and sweet. The

national dish of *laap* is a mixture of ground meat (usually pork), vegetables, and herbs. Many stir-fried dishes with vegetables and/or meat (typically chicken) are also available, as is grilled chicken. Rice is served in a variety of ways, such as steamed, fried, or, characteristically, “sticky” rice, which is rolled in a ball and dipped in the sauces of the main dish. Spring rolls made with thin rice paper are filled with vegetables and meat and flavored by dipping in a savory sauce. Steaming hot soup (*pho* in Vietnamese) with rice noodles and chicken, duck, or beef is served throughout the day.

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 ice cubes in drinks and brushing your teeth. Bottled water is widely available.

LIFE IN LAOS

Shopping and banking hours

Shops, stores, and open markets are generally open daily between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

Banks are open from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday to Friday.



Mealtimes

Breakfast is served at hotels from 7:00 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 to 10:00 p.m.

Tipping

In restaurants it is customary to leave 10 percent of the total. For taxi drivers, you can round up the fare. For luggage assistance, give a small tip at your discretion.

Personal safety

Laos 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

Travel Tip

Laos has a wonderful tradition of handicrafts—fabrics, wood carving, and jewelry, among others. Weaving in Laos is an especially important part of the culture, with women working on looms in the shade under their houses, which are perched on stilts. Beautiful fabrics in traditional styles and in contemporary fashions can be found in markets, shops, and craft cooperatives.

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

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

Dress Etiquette and Social Conduct

It is important to dress modestly in Laos. 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 Lao 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 Laos.

TRAVEL RESOURCES

National Laos tourist board official site
tourismlaos.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 Laos tourist board's website for a list of public holidays and festivals:

tourismlaos.org/show.php?Cont_ID=32.

TRAVEL IN LAOS

Train service is available between Vientiane and Bangkok. Outside of domestic flights, getting around via ground transportation is improving, although it's still less convenient than flying in Laos, 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 for an entire day or part of a day. For more information, see the Laos tourist board website, at tourismlaos.org, or contact Country Walkers.

Airports

International flights arrive at both Luang Prabang International Airport and the international airport of the capital, Vientiane. A domestic air network connects to Laos's smaller cities from both Vientiane and Luang Prabang.

Cambodia at a Glance

VISITING CAMBODIA—AN INTRODUCTION

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, 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 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) or upon arrival at Siem Reap International Airport.

Important

- » If you choose to obtain the visa upon arrival, the cost is \$30 (as of June 2015). 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. 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.

For more information, see travel.state.gov.

CURRENCY

Cambodia uses the Cambodian riel (KHR). For up-to-date exchange rates, see 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.

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

For up-to-date forecasts, see qwikcast.com. For historical average temperatures and rainfall, see 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 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

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

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

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

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 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



for an entire day or part of a day. For more information, see the Cambodian tourist board website at tourismcambodia.org or contact Country Walkers.

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.

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.

Packing List

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 that domestic airlines only allow a total of 44 pounds per person (not per bag) with a limit of two check-in bags per person. Individual airlines may have their own luggage restrictions for your international flight.

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)
- » Small fold-away bag (This will be useful when going on the private junk as you will need to pack enough clothing for one overnight stay.)

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