

Full Itinerary

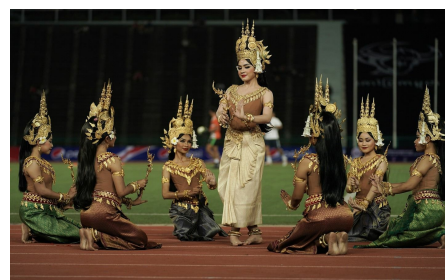
CULTURAL CAMBODIA - EXTENSION TO HIGHLIGHTS OF VIETNAM



TALK TO OUR WELL
TRAVELLED TEAM OF
EXPERTS

0844 3350 197

Monday - Thursday 9:00am -
8:00pm, Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm
(London time)



JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Cultural Cambodia

- Extension to Highlights of Vietnam

DURATION:

5 days / 4 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Please arrange your flights to Ho Chi Minh City
Airport [SGN] for the main Vietnam tour and
from Siem Reap, Cambodia [SAI] at the end of
the extension

PICKUP LOCATION:

Hanoi, Vietnam

OVERVIEW

16 - 20 Nov, 2024

16 - 20 Nov 2025

Extend your stay to Cambodia and immerse yourself in the fascinating history of the spectacular Angkor Wat, the world famous UNESCO Heritage site.

Travel to neighbouring Cambodia on this Cultural Cambodia extension after your Highlights of Vietnam escorted journey. Visit Cambodia's most recognisable landmark - the ancient city of Angkor Thom and its temple complexes - and explore the incredible amount of history and culture, accompanied by expert guides, interesting company and good food. An Indochinese experience not to be missed!

ITINERARY SUMMARY

PRE-JOURNEY – You may need to arrange your flights to depart one day before the tour to arrive at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [SGN] on Day 1.

Day 1 - Welcome to Vietnam

Day 2 - Cu Chi Tunnels, Ho Chi Minh City Tour and an Evening River cruise

Day 3 - Mekong Delta, Danang and Hoi An

Day 4 - Hoi An and My Son

Day 5 - Hue and the Tombs of the Emperors

Day 6 - Dragon Boat on the Perfume River, Hue's Royal Citadel and Hanoi

Day 7 - Hanoi City Tour and Water Puppets

Day 8 - Halong Bay Cruise

Day 9 - Halong Bay Cruise and Laos

Day 10 - Luang Prabang Tour and River Boat Cruise

Day 11 - Tak Bat and City Tour

Day 12 - Siem Reap, Cambodia

Day 13 - Angkor Thom and Apsara Dance Show

Day 14 - , Cambodia

Day 15 - Goodbye to Cambodia and Home

FULL ITINERARY

DAY 1 – WELCOME TO VIETNAM

Upon arrival, you will be met at Tan Son Nhat airport and transferred to the hotel for check in and refreshment. There will be the opportunity to meet your Tour Director and local guide and the rest of the group this evening at a Welcome dinner at the hotel.

Included Meals: Dinner

Accommodation: Novotel Saigon Center Hotel

DAY 2 - CU CHI TUNNELS, HO CHI MINH CITY TOUR AND EVENING RIVER CRUISE

Today we will visit the famous Cu Chi tunnels. This is the infamous site where Viet Cong guerrillas built a labyrinth of narrow tunnels during the Vietnam War, to be able to hide during bombings and which also enabled them to be able to stage surprise attacks. The determination, ingenuity and resilience of the people who built and used the tunnels is evident here. The site visit includes a short talk and video about the history of the area, a tour of the tunnels and the opportunity to go underground yourself.

After lunch, we explore Ho Chi Minh City's major sights with a half-day tour of the "must see" sites. This tour will include the French-inspired and aptly named Notre Dame Cathedral, City Hall and the War Remnants Museum. This museum houses fascinating remnants in its outside courtyard, including US armoured vehicles, artillery pieces, bombs and infantry weapons. You will be able to spend time quietly contemplating the history represented in the propaganda and photography galleries, both of which are a stark representation of the history of the Vietnam War.

Dinner this evening will be as part of an evening river cruise on Saigon River, giving us a great view of the city by night.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Novotel Saigon Center Hotel

DAY 3 - THE MEKONG DELTA, DANANG AND HOI AN

Today, we depart from Ho Chi Minh City by luxury speed boat, cruising through canals and along the Saigon River to the Mekong Delta. Enjoy a light breakfast on board, taking in the fresh air and observing the daily life of local citizens living along the river banks.

When we arrive at My Tho, we will enjoy a short concert of the traditional music of Southwest Vietnam before riding to the Cong Doan rowing boat dock by horse cart. We will experience the peaceful atmosphere of this water region by rowing a small boat through small nipa canals, stopping off along the way to call in at a coconut candy factory and the local bee farm. Then we cruise to Diem Phuong restaurant and enjoy a traditional Vietnamese lunch with delicious 7-courses: Elephant-Ear fish (one very special dish in Mekong Delta) served in rice-paper with fish sauce and side dishes.

After lunch, we head back to Ho Chi Minh City to take an evening flight to Danang. After check in at the hotel in Hoi An, enjoy an evening at leisure to explore this ancient World Heritage Site. Exploring and experiencing this town is often cited as one of the highlights of the tour.

Included Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Hoi An Silk Marina Resort

DAY 4 - HOI AN AND MY SON

Today we will enjoy a fascinating walking tour, discovering the ancient town of Hoi An. Hoi An is an ancient port and trading town on the Silk Route and was frequented by merchants from as far afield as China, India, Portugal and Holland. In the 16th century, Hoi An was one of the major trading centres of Southeast Asia. It's distinctive Chinese atmosphere with low, tiled-roof houses and narrow streets comes from this time. The original structure of some of these streets is still virtually intact and we will explore them today. Many of the houses were constructed of rare timbers and decorated with lacquer panels engraved with Chinese characters and pillars carved with ornamental design. We visit a traditional house, the famous and much-photographed Japanese covered bridge and the Hoi An central market.

After lunch, we depart to My Son to visit the former capital of the Kingdom of Champa and the site of Vietnam's most important Cham ruins. The towers here date from the 9th to the 13th century. There were over 70 classic Cham monuments at My Son. Most of the temples in My Son were dedicated to Cham Kings and also served as a burial place for Cham monarchs.

Dinner this evening will be together at a local restaurant.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Hoi An Silk Marina Resort

DAY 5 - HUE AND THE TOMBS OF THE EMPERORS

We say a fond farewell to the town of Hoi An today and head north along one of the most scenic hillside roads in Vietnam, to the city of Hue. We wind our way up the spectacular Hai Van Pass where we will see some of the military installations left from times of war, now almost hidden in amongst the lush forest. On the way, we also stop at the Marble Mountain and the Cham Museum.

In Hue we visit to the tomb of Khai Dinh, one of the last emperors of Vietnam who died in 1925. The spectacular entryway with dragon pillars is the highlight of the Tomb. The architecture is in a modern style with a blend of European and Eastern design. Then we move on to explore the imperial architecture and atmosphere of Tu Duc's Tomb; a peaceful resting place featuring pine woods and a lakeside pavilion with lotus blossoms. The tomb was more of a pleasure garden than a final resting place - this is the emperor's second home where he once fished, listened to music, and wrote poetry. He also indulged in extravagant 50-course meals of incredible delicacies. This evening you're free to explore Hue and seek out some of the local delicacies - and as many courses as you'd like to enjoy...

Included Meals: Breakfast and Lunch

Accommodation: Indochine Palace Hue Hotel

DAY 6 - DRAGON BOAT ON THE PERFUME RIVER, HUE'S ROYAL CITADEL AND HANOI

After breakfast, we board a Dragon Boat to Thien Mu Pagoda on the banks of the Perfume River. This Buddhist temple is the oldest monastery in Hue, dating back to the 17th century. Then, we take a guided tour to learn more about the Royal Citadel and the Imperial City, where Emperor Gia Long modelled this Royal Citadel on the Forbidden City in Beijing, China. The Royal Citadel is composed of three walled enclosures, one inside another. This afternoon we fly to Hanoi. We will be met upon arrival at Noi Bai Airport and transferred to our hotel. Dinner is provided at the hotel. The rest of this evening will be spent at leisure, giving you the opportunity to step out into the 40 streets of Hanoi's central district and explore for yourself.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: The Ann Hotel, Hanoi

DAY 7 - HANOI CITY TOUR AND WATER PUPPET SHOW

A wonderful morning tour encompasses the important attractions of Hanoi. We will view the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. This final resting place of Ho Chi Minh is a glass sarcophagus set deep in the bowels of a monumental edifice and has become a site of pilgrimage for the Vietnamese people. The tour continues by exploring Ho Chi Minh's official residences, walking through the beautiful botanical garden of the Presidential Palace and on to visit Uncle Ho's humble house. This modest dwelling was built based on a rural Vietnamese stilt house and is where Ho Chi Minh lived for the last years of his life. We also visit the famous One Pillar Pagoda, built of wood on a single stone pillar and designed to resemble a lotus blossom, the symbol of purity. The final stop on the tour will be at the Temple of Literature, the first university of Vietnam founded in 1070. This temple constitutes a rare example of well-preserved traditional Vietnamese architecture and is still a bustling place today. After lunch at local restaurant and then we have a truly Vietnamese experience in store, exploring the small streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter by cyclo rickshaw.

This evening, we will enjoy a traditional Vietnamese water puppet show followed by dinner at a local restaurant.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: The Ann Hotel, Hanoi

DAY 8 - HALONG BAY CRUISE

Today we drive through spectacular scenery to Halong Bay. Enjoy the seemingly endless green paddy fields where women in conical hats work in the rice fields with their water buffalo. We will pass through farmland, local villages and busy markets, giving you plenty of opportunity to observe how Vietnamese people go about their daily lives. Halong Bay, or 'The Bay of the Descending Dragon' in Vietnamese, is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site. With 3,000 islands rising from the clear, emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, it is one of the natural marvels of

Vietnam and we will experience this for ourselves, with an overnight cruise through the tiny islands dotted with innumerable beaches and grottoes created by the wind and the waves.

We will be welcomed aboard and set sail through the bay whilst lunch is served. After lunch, there will be opportunities to take a short trek to a nearby summit for a panoramic view of the bay, to swim or stroll on a quiet beach or for sunbathing on the sundeck. Enjoy evening cocktails on board while watching the sun set and unwind in time for our evening dinner.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Indochina Sails

DAY 9 - HALONG BAY CRUISE AND LAOS

Wake up on board and greet the day with a morning Tai Chi exercise, where you will view the sunrise over the bay. After breakfast, we will go ashore on one of the islands to explore one of the areas beautiful limestone caves. Enjoy a final glimpse of the Halong Bay while cruising back to the dock.

Disembark the boat and we transfer straight to the airport for our flights to Luang Prabang, Laos. We will have time at the airport to find dinner. We will meet with our local tour guide on arrival and transfer to the hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Le Palais Juliana Hotel, Luang Prabang

DAY 10 - LUANG PRABANG TOUR AND RIVER BOAT CRUISE

This morning, we wake up to the distinctly different culture of Laos and enjoy a local tour to gain an understanding of this area. We visit Vat Xieng Thong, considered to be the most beautiful temple of Luang Prabang with roofs that sweep low to the ground. Then we will take a traditional riverboat cruise up the Mekong River and towards Pak Ou. Where the two rivers meet, we will visit the sacred caves of Tham Ting and Tham Phum, home to hundreds of Buddha statues. There will be a stop at Ban Xang Hai village and sticky rice wine distillation can be witnessed. This potent local spirit is not for the faint hearted! Lao Bong Ya, as this potion is actually named, is traditionally reputed to have the power to ward off evil spirits and cure the sick and often comes with a snake or scorpion added to the bottle for good measure.

Later in the afternoon, we visit Phou Si Hill. From the top, there are magnificent views over the town, the Mekong River and surrounding mountain ranges. There will also be the opportunity to stroll through the market of the local indigenous people, the H'Mong for shopping. The Hmong Story Cloths which tell creation stories, myths and folk tales, in particular, are pretty special.

Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Accommodation: Le Palais Juliana Hotel, Luang Prabang

DAY 11 - TAK BAT AND CITY TOUR

We rise before dawn to visit Tak Bat by Tuk-Tuk, the three-wheeled transport seen everywhere in South East Asia. Observing the early-morning serenity of Tak Bat, the ritual of Buddhist monks collecting offerings of food made to them by the devout, is full of gentle beauty and not to be missed. Try to remain unobtrusive with your camera and soak in the spirituality of the scene as it unfolds before you. We will also visit the Heritage House at Vat Xieng Muane and the open air fresh food market before returning to the hotel for breakfast.

After breakfast, we visit the National Museum. The museum is housed in the former royal palaces of King Sisavang Vong and his family, which were built during the French colonial era. After the revolution in 1975 the building was taken over by the government and converted into a national museum. We also visit the nearby shrine of Wat Mai and the impressive stupa of Wat Visoun, That Makmo, and Vat Aham.

Next a visit to the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre, will give us a fascinating insight into the extensive range of differing cultures here in Laos. Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Le Palais Juliana Hotel, Luang Prabang

DAY 12 - SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

This morning will be spent at leisure for you to follow your own interests until it is time to check out and transfer to the airport for our flights to Siem Reap, Cambodia.

We will be met at Siem Reap International Airport by our local guide and transferred to the hotel. This evening will be spent at leisure for you to be able to orientate yourself with the local area and get an early night as we will be up well before dawn tomorrow.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Sokha Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap

DAY 13 - ANGKOR THOM AND APSARA DANCE SHOW

We wake up very early today to experience the spectacular sunrise over Angkor Wat. Angkor Thom is the largest religious site in the world, a city complex with many different temples and complexes and Angkor Wat is perhaps its most famous temple. We drive travel through the South Gate of Angkor Thom and begin to imagine the manpower and ingenuity required to construct this city in the late 12th century. At Bayon Temple we will explore the 54 towers and the 200 enigmatic smiling faces, hearing some of the history and legends behind them from our local guide. Visit the 11th century 3-tiered temple mountain of Baphuon, walk along the Terrace of the Leper Kings with its exceptionally well conserved early carvings can be seen and the see the Terrace of Elephants, supported by sculpted stone elephants. This terrace served as the giant viewing platform for royal ceremonies. The royal family were usually accompanied by parasol holders as it does get very hot here and you may want to think about bringing along your own umbrella to provide some shade.

After lunch in a local restaurant we will visit another temple before heading back to the hotel for an afternoon at leisure.

We will enjoy dinner this evening at a traditional Apsara Dance Show at the Angkor Theatre.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Sokha Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap

DAY 14- SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

This morning we visit the Artisan D'Angkor; a training centre set up to preserve and develop traditional Khmer crafts and to train the local people in the skills they need to alleviate rural poverty. This is the place to see master craftsmen at work, producing local lacquerware, silks, silver items and much more.

Next on the itinerary is Banteay Srei, a 10th century temple located outside the main Angkor complex. Unique to Banteay Srei is the rare pink sandstone which is exquisite ornamental carvings of gods, demons, coiling serpents and floral garlands. Most of the bas-reliefs found on the walls depict scenes of Hindu episodes - the Ramayana. Next stop will be Ta Prohm where the jungle once reclaimed the monuments and giant tree trunks still reach through the ancient stone. Here you can get a feeling of how the first European Explorers would have found the ruins. This temple is dedicated to the mother of Jayavarman VII, constructed as a Buddhist monastery and enormously wealthy in its time.

Dinner this evening will be at the hotel.

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

Accommodation: Sokha Angkor Hotel, Siem Reap

DAY 15- GOODBYE TO CAMBODIA AND HOME

Today we will say farewell to Indochina and the friends we've made along the way. You will be transferred back to Siem Reap International Airport for the flights home that you have arranged.

Included Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: none

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- One way international flight; Hanoi, Vietnam [HAN] - Siem Reap, Cambodia [SAI]
- Meet & Greet at Siem Reap Airport on arrival
- Transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- Transportation in air-conditioned vehicle
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- Experienced English speaking tour guides
- Tour Director from The Big Journey Company as well as the local tour guide (subject to minimum group size of 15 being reached)
- ATOL Protection

WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- ATOL protection
- Flights to Ho Chi Minh City Airport [SGN] for the main Vietnam tour and from Siem Reap, Cambodia [SAI] at the end of the extension - flight quotations available on request
- Transfers on arrival or departure, to/from the airports, outside of the journey dates
- Drinks
- Gratuities
- Visas, travel or medical insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Any optional activities offered
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please note, flights to/from Cambodia are not included in this package. The Big Journey Company would be happy to provide a quotation for your flights - please contact us for further details
- Vaccinations are recommended for this tour. Please consult your doctor for advice.
- British and US Passport holders require a visa to visit Cambodia
- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.

BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

Choose from the list of dates below

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