

# Overseas Adventure Travel<sup>®</sup>

THE LEADER IN CUSTOMIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide<sup>®</sup>



New! Mekong River Cruise: Vietnam,  
Cambodia & Angkor Wat

2026

# Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

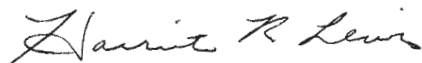
When you join us, you will slip seamlessly into local life as you explore off the beaten path in your small group. Like all our itineraries, this one is designed to give you an intimate understanding of your destination, not just a superficial view. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation. And if you choose to travel solo, you will enjoy all these cultural experiences at an unmatched value, with our FREE Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the **87% of our travelers who customize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis  
Chair  
Overseas Adventure Travel

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Ta Prohm Temple, Angkor Wat, Cambodia

## New! Mekong River Cruise: Vietnam, Cambodia & Angkor Wat Small Ship Adventure

**Vietnam:** Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Cai Be, Sa Dec, Chau Doc | **Cambodia:**  
Phnom Penh, Siem Reap

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

**15 days starting from \$6,495**

including international airfare

Single Supplement: \$995

For departure dates & prices, visit [www.oattravel.com/mek2026pricing](http://www.oattravel.com/mek2026pricing)

Winding its way from the foothills of Tibet to the South China Sea, the Mekong River is the lifeblood of Southeast Asia. And with colorful floating markets, traditional villages, and remnants of a French Colonial past dotting its banks, a cruise along the mighty Mekong is the ideal way to uncover the cultural splendors of Vietnam and Cambodia. At the heart of our O.A.T. adventure is a eight-night cruise aboard the *RV Indochine II*, a 62-passenger small ship that we have chartered exclusively for our small groups.

### IT'S INCLUDED

- 13 nights accommodation, including 8 nights aboard the privately chartered 62-passenger *RV Indochine II*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 37 meals: 13 breakfasts, 12 lunches, 12 dinners—including 1 Home-Hosted Lunch—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 22 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

*Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.*

**Mekong River Cruise: Vietnam, Cambodia & Angkor Wat**



## ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1-2	Depart U.S.
3-5	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam • Embark ship
6	Cai Be
7	Sa Dec
8-9	Phnom Penh, Cambodia
10	Koh Chen
11	Kampong Chhnang
12-14	Siem Reap • Disembark ship
15	Return to U.S.

## WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

**Pacing:** 13 days with 8 nights aboard the privately chartered RV *Indochine II*, a one-night hotel stay in Ho Chi Minh City, and a three-night hotel stay in Siem Reap.

**Physical requirements:** You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 5-7 hours of physical activities each day. Travel over some bumpy, unpaved roads; climb uneven stairways at ancient ruins; and walk over uneven ground.

**Flight Time:** Travel time will be 25-30 hours and will most likely have one or two connections.

View all physical requirements at [www.oattravel.com/mek](http://www.oattravel.com/mek)

## SOUTHEAST ASIA: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

**Unbeatable Value:** Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

**People-to-People Experiences:** Spend *A Day in the Life* of a rural Cambodian village in the countryside outside Siem Reap, where you'll participate in traditional village tasks, share a meal with the locals, and visit a school, supported in part by **Grand Circle Foundation**.

**O.A.T. Exclusives:** Enjoy a **Home-Hosted Lunch** with a local family in a village near Angkor Wat for a taste of traditional home-cooked Cambodian cuisine and hospitality. And learn about a **Controversial Topic** when you meet a survivor of the Cambodian genocide of the 1970s for a firsthand perspective of these brutal years, and the dark legacy left behind by Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge.

## CUSTOMIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

### OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Vietnam's Scenic North: Hanoi, Ninh Binh & Halong Bay Cruise  
**PRE-TRIP:** 4 nights from **\$1,195**

Singapore's Cultures & Garden City  
**POST-TRIP:** 4 nights from **\$1,995**

### ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Hanoi** before your Northern Vietnam: Hanoi, Ninh Binh & Halong Bay pre-trip extension from **\$130** per room, per night
- Arrive early in **Ho Chi Minh City** before your main adventure from **\$150** per room, per night

# Mekong River Cruise: Vietnam, Cambodia & Angkor Wat

## YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

### BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

#### 4 nights in *Vietnam's Scenic North: Hanoi, Ninh Binh & Halong Bay Cruise*

**Day 1** Depart U.S.

**Day 2** Overnight flight to Hanoi, Vietnam

**Day 3** Arrive in Hanoi

**Day 4** Explore Hanoi • Visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum • Discover the “Hanoi Hilton” • Exclusive water puppet demonstration

**Day 5** Explore Ninh Binh • Visit Tam Coc & Bich Dong Pagoda • Discover Thai Vi temple

**Day 6** Cruise Halong Bay • Explore Sung Sot Cave

**Day 7** Halong Bay • Fly to Ho Chi Minh City

### **Day 1** Depart U.S.

Depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Check your air itinerary for the personalized details of your flight schedule, including connecting flights.

### **Day 2** Overnight flight to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Continue your air journey to Ho Chi Minh City.

### **Day 3** Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City

- Destination: Ho Chi Minh City
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City

**Morning:** Touch down in Ho Chi Minh City today, where an O.A.T. representative will meet us at the airport and escort us to our hotel. Here we'll be joined by travelers who arrived early

in Ho Chi Minh City, as well as those who took our optional *Vietnam's Scenic North: Hanoi, Ninh Binh & Halong Bay Cruise* pre-trip extension.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend options.

**Afternoon:** After you've checked in, you'll have some free time to rest or wander independently. Later, just before dinner, we'll gather together with our Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk of the neighborhood surrounding our hotel.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** The rest of the night is free to relax in your room or continue exploring independently.

## Day 4 Explore Ho Chi Minh City • Embark ship

- Destination: Ho Chi Minh City
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Begin the day with a Welcome Briefing at the hotel. Together with our Trip Experience Leader, we'll introduce ourselves, and get a preview of the adventure that awaits us over the coming days. Afterward, we'll have some free time before lunch.

**Lunch:** At the hotel.

**Afternoon:** We'll begin our Southeast Asian adventure today with a tour of Ho Chi Minh City—formerly Saigon, renamed in 1976 following the end of the Vietnam War. Modern Ho Chi Minh City has an exhilarating energy, with a seemingly nonstop parade of motorcycles, mopeds, and cars flowing through the city streets. Evidence of French and American influence can still be seen in the city's cuisine and architecture, though it has an identity all its own.

Acquaint yourself with the city's history and culture as we drive through the city on a panoramic tour. We'll see some of the most prominent landmarks, including Independence Palace, once the residence and seat of the president of South Vietnam. After the city fell in 1975, and government functions were officially transferred to Vietnam in 1976, the palace became a government convention center, as well as a museum and tourist attraction—the building has not undergone a major renovation since the city fell, and its architecture is a time frozen artifact from a different era.

Our tour will also take us past the Catholic Cathedral of Notre Dame, completed in 1880 and said to stand on the site of an old pagoda.

We'll continue on to witness the majestic Post Office—also built in the late 19th century, it features a pair of enormous murals with maps of Vietnam as it was years ago.

Then, drive by the former U.S. embassy, where Americans were famously evacuated by helicopter from the roof as communist forces closed in on the city during the final days of the war, as well as the opera house—built by the French in 1900—and city hall. We'll end our tour with a drive through the city's Chinatown neighborhood, home to Ba Thien Hau Temple, a beloved place of worship for the local Chinese community, built and furnished largely with materials imported from China.

After our tour, we'll drive to where our privately chartered ship is docked and step aboard. We'll be shown to our cabins and then meet the crew over a welcome cocktail, where we'll get to know each other a little better.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** The evening is free to unpack and settle into your cabin, and get acquainted with the ship's amenities.

## Day 5 Discover the Cu Chi Tunnels • Visit Ho Chi Minh City Museum of History

- Destination: Ho Chi Minh City
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Activity Note:** Today's exploration of the Cu Chi Tunnels can be a powerful, emotional experience for many travelers, as it addresses a raw and complex period of history. Agility is required to navigate the tunnels' small, narrow passageways.

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll drive northwest to the village of Cu Chi—the namesake for a vast network of tunnels that stretch for more than 125 miles. During the Vietnam War, these tunnels allowed the Viet Cong to control a large area near the former Saigon. But they were so much more than a means of transport: Soldiers and local civilians alike took to the tunnels as aerial bombing raged overhead, and there they lived, with homes, kitchens, medical facilities, and more.

In the years since the war ended, the Vietnamese government has preserved the tunnels as a historic attraction, and we'll explore them on a guided tour. We'll be exploring the Ben Duoc section of the tunnels, which have been closely preserved in their authentic wartime state, offering a more immersive glimpse into the lives of the guerillas and civilians that sheltered here. As we explore the rough-hewn passageways and see the community spaces, we'll gain invaluable insight into the Vietnamese perspective of the war.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We return to Ho Chi Minh City after lunch, where we'll delve deeper into the region's past with a visit to the Ho Chi Minh City Museum of History. Built in 1929 during the French colonial period, the museum details the long history of human civilization in the area, from the prehistoric era through the modern day. In addition to fascinating historical artifacts and exhibits, the museum features a well-manicured garden, ideal for strolling or idle contemplation.

After exploring the museum, we'll return to the ship, where, after a safety drill led by the crew, we'll weigh anchor and begin our cruise along the Mekong River. For the next seven nights, the RV *Indochine II* will cruise along the Mekong and transport us through scenes of life virtually

unchanged for centuries. We'll pass by colorful floating markets, riverside hamlets, and quaint fishing villages on an upstream cruise along the Mekong River through Vietnam and into Cambodia.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship as we sail.

**Evening:** The evening is free to rest or enjoy the ship's amenities after dinner. Throughout your cruise, you can periodically enjoy films in the lounge or on your cabin's television that are relevant to our adventure.

## **Day 6 Visit Thoi Son Island • Discover Cai Be • Explore Vinh Long**

- Destination: Cai Be
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Early Morning:** Our ship navigates the Cho Gao Canal before breakfast, built by the French in the late 19th century in an attempt to connect Ho Chi Minh City to the Mekong Delta by water.

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll begin our Mekong River discoveries this morning with a visit to picturesque Thoi Son Island, a village located on a fertile islet. We'll approach by water, rowing *sampans* (small, flat-bottomed wooden boats) through narrow waterways covered by a canopy of thick green foliage. Once we arrive on the island, we'll acquaint ourselves with its traditions as we sip honey tea at a local apiary, one of Thoi Son's agricultural mainstays. Thoi Son's climate also means that a rotating selection of tropical fruit thrives in the soil throughout the year; we'll enjoy a taste during our visit, accompanied by traditional music.

After our tour concludes, we'll return to the ship and continue our journey up the Mekong.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.



**Afternoon:** We'll stop at the market town of Cai Be, where we'll once again board *sampans* to weave past myriad local boats from the delta provinces along with larger boats selling their goods. We'll also take note of the characteristic stilted houses that line the shore of Cai Be.

Continuing into the narrower canals of Cai Be, our *sampans* will make a stop at Ba Duc House, a historic Vietnamese home and garden. We'll learn about the house's history, from its roots in the 19th century, to its role as a sanctuary for Vietnamese soldiers during the war with the United States.

Back onboard the ship, we continue our Mekong cruise, stopping again at the riverside city of Vinh Long, where we'll get acquainted with daily life during a visit to a brick kiln, where we'll see how locals craft the bricks, tiles, and ceramics that are made here for use in local construction projects. We'll also visit a sugar factory, and observe the production of rice wine, as well as the thin rice paper used to wrap delectable Vietnamese spring rolls.

We'll then return to the ship and continue sailing toward Sa Dec, our next destination.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** The evening is free to rest or enjoy the ship's amenities after dinner. Perhaps you'll watch another film in the lounge or on your cabin's television that will enhance your adventure.

## **Day 7 Discover Sa Dec • Cruise to Chau Doc**

- Destination: Sa Dec
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** Explore Sa Dec this morning. Lovingly known as the "Flower Capital" in the Mekong region, this city boasts beautiful blooms that blossom year-round. First, we'll visit the Huynh Thuy Le Ancient House, built by a wealthy Chinese merchant family in the 19th century. The home is most closely associated with its namesake family member, Huynh Thuy Le, who had a controversial relationship with the French novelist Marguerite Duras, immortalized in her book (and subsequent film adaptation), *The Lover*. The home's architecture seemingly echoes this relationship, as Chinese and French influence can be found in its design.

Afterward, we'll visit a local market where we'll browse the colorful wares. With the help of our Trip Experience Leader, we might mingle with the shoppers and merchants conducting their daily business among the bustling stalls.

We'll then return to the ship and set a course for Chau Doc, a river city that sits on the border with Cambodia.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** As we make our way to Chau Doc, we'll learn more about Vietnamese history and culture during a rousing discussion led by our Trip Experience Leader

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** Free to rest or enjoy the ship's amenities.

## **Day 8 Visit Chau Doc • Cruise to Phnom Penh, Cambodia**

- Destination: Phnom Penh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll conclude the Vietnam leg of our journey this morning as we step ashore in Chau Doc, where we'll visit Ba Chua Xu Temple, a religious site dedicated to Ba Chua Xu, a goddess from a local folk religion said to bring prosperity and protection to those who seek her blessing (or harsh retribution to those who do her wrong). The temple attracts scores of pilgrims from within and beyond Vietnam's borders, and is the setting of an annual three-day festival held at the onset of the region's rainy season.

Then, we'll visit Tay An Pagoda, a domed Buddhist temple built in the 19th century, employing a blend of Hindu, Islamic, and traditional Vietnamese architectural and religious influences. Statues of elephants, lions, and representations of Buddhist religious figures adorn the exterior and interior of the pagoda.

After exploring Chau Doc, we'll return to the ship to prepare for our border crossing.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** We'll cruise across the border after lunch as we make our way up the Mekong toward Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital city. As we cruise, we'll get a taste of local flavor as we sample local fruits, and join our Trip Experience Leader for a discussion about Cambodian history to set down some context for the discoveries we are about to make over the days to come. We'll arrive in the city around dinnertime.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** The ship will remain docked in Phnom Penh overnight, and you are free to spend the evening onboard as you prefer. You may even want to watch the 1984 film, *The Killing Fields*, about Cambodia's Khmer Rouge regime, in the lounge or the television in your cabin.

## **Day 9 Explore Phnom Penh • Visit Tuol Sleng Prison Museum • Controversial Topic: Meet Cambodian genocide survivor**

- Destination: Phnom Penh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Activity Note:** Today's visit to the Tuol Sleng Prison Museum and meeting with a Khmer Rouge survivor covers particularly difficult subject matter. While it may be hard to hear the harrowing details of the Cambodian genocide, it is important to learn about to better understand the country's current political landscape.

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll explore Cambodia's resplendent capital city today by way of a unique mode of transportation: we'll split into smaller groups to board *remorks*, small motorcycle-drawn carriages akin to *tuk-tuks* or motorized rickshaws that are a common sight on the streets of Phnom Penh.

As we zip through the streets on our panoramic tour, we'll see local landmarks such as Wat Phnom, a Buddhist temple that is one of the most spiritually significant in Cambodia. Legend has it that in the 14th century, a wealthy widow known as Daun Penh rescued four bronze statues of Buddha (and one Vishnu) floating in a tree after a storm. The widow ordered a hill to be built on her estate, and a temple built upon the hill to house the statues. The temple became known as Wat Phnom ("hill temple"), and the city became Phnom Penh. Wat Phnom has been renovated multiple times since its construction, and we'll have a chance to admire it as we drive by its exterior.

Our tour will also take us by the United States Embassy, and the Independence Monument, a 120-foot tall pillar constructed in 1958 to celebrate Cambodia's break from French colonial rule in 1953. The monument is adorned

in crushed red marble, and decorated with seven tiers of naga statues, with a pedestal at its center, lit aflame annually by a prominent member of the Cambodian government to herald independence celebrations.

We'll also drive past the Central Market, a collection of stalls housed within a bright yellow Art Deco dome that, when it was originally built by the French in 1937, was the largest market in Asia. The landmark market is still beloved by a now-independent Cambodia, and was renovated in the early 2000s with aid from the French Development Agency. Another architectural marvel awaits us when we visit Cambodia's gilded Royal Palace—the residence of the country's king—and adjacent Silver Pagoda. Located within the palace compound, the Silver Pagoda is one of Buddhism's more opulent displays, with its Italian marble steps, gleaming silver floor, and bejeweled sculptures and fixtures.

Our tour concludes at the National Museum of Cambodia. The museum houses one of the world's largest collections of Khmer art, history, and culture, and provides valuable insight into the legacy of this empire that dominated the region for more than 600 years.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll acquaint ourselves with the darker side of Cambodia's modern history during a visit to Tuol Sleng Prison Museum. Also known as S-21, Tuol Sleng is a former school that was converted to the main prison and torture headquarters during the reign of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge—which left some 1.7 million victims of the 1975-79 genocide in its wake. During our visit, our Trip Experience Leader will tell us about the atrocities committed here, where more than 10,000 prisoners were held before

they were led to the Killing Fields. Out of the thousands of victims that were imprisoned in Tuol Sleng, there were only seven survivors.

After your visit, you'll have some free time before we return to the ship. Back onboard, we'll get a firsthand perspective of the **Controversial Topic** of the Cambodian genocide when we meet a local person who survived it. These dark years were marked by brutal violence and paranoia, as any perceived enemy was subject to persecution, torture, and summary execution by order of Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge. This fanatical communist dictatorship did not hesitate to employ lethal violence against anyone who stood in the way of their vision for the country's future—a vision which would come to be defined by poverty and starvation. Experts estimate that by the time the killing was over, up to 25% of Cambodia's population had been murdered. During our conversation, we'll hear for ourselves what life was like during these fearful days, and about the mark that it has left on society today.

We'll have a lot to think about at the end of our long day; before we retire to the dining room for dinner, we'll lighten the mood as a group of dancers come aboard to show us some traditional Cambodian routines.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** Free to spend onboard as you please.

### **Day 10 Visit Koh Chen Island • Discover Wat Kampong Tralach Leu pagoda**

- Destination: Kampong Tralach
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll cruise this morning to visit the idyllic island of Koh Chen, remarkable for its pristine natural beauty and traditional culture.

As we approach the island, we'll be greeted by a statue of Buddha sitting by the riverbank in the shade of an ornate Khmer temple. Stepping ashore, we'll wander into the village and meet the people who live here, and witness the silver and coppersmithing craft traditions that have been employed here for centuries, and are still practiced to this day, despite the threats of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s.

After saying farewell to the villagers, we'll board our ship and set sail once again.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

We'll call ashore again at the village of Kampong Tralach on the banks of the Tonlé Sap River. We'll ride by *remork* across the rice fields as we make our way to Wat Kampong Tralach Leu pagoda, a remote Buddhist *vihara* (monastery) and temple in the Cambodian countryside. This off-the-beaten-path temple is typically overlooked by tourists, and its authentically-preserved sculptures and artwork are a sight that few American travelers get to see.

After our tour, we'll return to the ship and resume our cruise.

**Dinner:** Onboard the ship.

**Evening:** Free to rest or enjoy the ship's amenities. We'll drop anchor in the Tonlé Sap River overnight.

### **Day 11 Discover Kampong Chhnang**

- Destination: Kampong Chhnang
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: RV *Indochine II*

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll make our way up the Tonlé Sap River to call ashore in Kampong Chhnang, one of the area's largest fishing ports. Fishing is only one of the region's industries though—the

Khmer name "Kampong Chhnang" translates roughly to "Port of Pottery", owing to the fine traditional pots, ceramics, and cookware that has been crafted and sold here for hundreds of years, constituting a significant portion of Cambodia's economic output.

After our explorations here conclude, we'll return to the ship and continue sailing toward Siem Reap.

**Lunch:** Onboard the ship.

**Afternoon:** Continue cruising this afternoon, enjoying scenes of daily life along the riverbank as we glide across the water.

**Dinner:** As tonight is our final night onboard the ship, we'll enjoy a special cocktail and gala dinner to commemorate the occasion.

**Evening:** Spend your final night onboard as you wish.

### **Day 12 Disembark ship • Explore Siem Reap**

- Destination: Siem Reap
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Siem Reap

**Breakfast:** Onboard the ship.

**Morning:** We'll bid our ship's crew farewell for the final time as we disembark the ship and drive by motorcoach to Siem Reap, the second largest city in Cambodia, and your base of exploration for discovery in Angkor Wat and other locales over the next few days. We'll check in to our hotel after we arrive.

**Lunch:** At the hotel restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Enjoy some free time after lunch to explore Siem Reap independently or settle into your room. Later this afternoon, join your Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk, then

board *remarks* to see more of the city on a short panoramic tour as we make our way to our restaurant for dinner.

**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Return to the hotel where you can spend the evening as you please.

### **Day 13 Grand Circle Foundation-supported school visit • A Day in the Life of a Cambodian village**

- Destination: Siem Reap
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Siem Reap

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we'll enjoy an exclusive O.A.T. cultural experience as we spend *A Day in the Life* of a local village. First, we'll stop at the village's market to pick out some ingredients that we'll use as we prepare lunch together later. As we navigate the market, our Trip Experience Leader can help us connect with the locals, and to go with the flow of rural Cambodian commerce.

Next, we'll visit a local school (when in session)—supported in part by **Grand Circle Foundation**. Here, we'll meet with teachers to get an idea of the education system in Cambodia and have an opportunity to interact with some of the children.

Then, our *A Day in the Life* experience continues as we join the village's chief for a walk around the community, enjoying a glimpse into the people's daily routines. We'll have the opportunity to watch the locals at work, producing goods such as rice wine and handwoven baskets, and perhaps even have the opportunity to roll up our sleeves and participate ourselves.

Our visit ends as we make use of the ingredients we picked up from the market this morning, and join a few villagers to begin preparing the day's lunch.

**Lunch:** Share an included lunch with a few residents of the village, for a taste of authentic home-cooked cuisine, and friendly conversation about village life in Cambodia.

**Afternoon:** We'll return to the hotel in Siem Reap, where the rest the day is yours to spend as you like. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest options for discovery.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can offer restaurant recommendations.

**Evening:** The evening is free to rest or explore independently.

### **Day 14 Discover Angkor Wat • Home-Hosted Lunch • Visit Ta Prohm temple**

- Destination: Siem Reap
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Siem Reap

**Activity Note:** Visiting Angkor Wat involves walking outside in over 90-100 degree Fahrenheit heat for 2 miles on unpaved and uneven surfaces. It will also involve climbing 3 levels with 100 steps, partly without handrail, though participation in the entire climb is not mandatory. There is also the choice for travelers to hire private transport and a local guide for an additional cost. Additionally, Angkor Wat has a strict dress code. Men and women should wear pants or knee-length shorts, and cover their shoulders.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we will encounter a true highlight of our adventure—Angkor Wat. This architectural wonder forms just a part

of Angkor, a holy city that took centuries to build and sprawls across an area of roughly 96 square miles. The Khmer Empire aristocrats who constructed the temples and monuments here (between AD 800–1200) were motivated by their Hindu and Buddhist beliefs. Of all the beauty to be found here, Angkor Wat is considered the true masterpiece of Khmer architecture—and it's also the largest religious monument in the world. The large pyramid temple was built between 1113 and 1150, and is surrounded by a great moat 570 feet wide.

During our visit led by our Trip Experience Leader, we'll be sure to note the bas-relief carvings throughout the temple representing many gods in Hindu and Buddhist mythologies. And unlike many of the other temples in Angkor, Angkor Wat was never abandoned to the elements. It has been in virtually continuous use since the 12th century.

After we finish exploring the site, we'll split into smaller groups and drive to the homes of several different local families who live in a village within the grounds of the archaeological park.

**Lunch:** Enjoy a **Home-Hosted Lunch** with a local family. This is an excellent opportunity to get to know our generous host families while enjoying a home-cooked meal of typical Cambodian dishes.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll return to the hotel, where you'll have a few hours free to freshen up or relax. Then, we'll gather together again and return to the Angkor archaeological site—this time to explore Ta Prohm. Unlike Angkor Wat, Ta Prohm has been left the way it was found, completely covered by a dense jungle of trees and roots, allowing you to discover this archaeological treasure just as it was found by the French in the mid-1800s. The site is most famous for its strangler fig

trees whose roots seemingly drip down over Ta Prohm's temple. After exploring Ta Prohm for about an hour, we return to our hotel.

**Dinner:** We'll toast to an unforgettable adventure over an included Farewell Dinner at the hotel restaurant.

**Evening:** You may spend the night preparing for tomorrow's journey, resting, or exploring independently.

### **Day 15 Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Transfer to the airport for your return flight home, or begin your *Singapore's Cultures & Garden City* post-trip extension.

**END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION**

**4 nights in *Singapore's Cultures & Garden City***

**Day 1** Arrive in Singapore

**Day 2** Explore Singapore • Visit Botanic Gardens • Discover Chinatown

**Day 3** Discover Singapore • Cruise Singapore River • Visit Kampong Glam Muslim Quarter

**Day 4** Visit Singapore's Gardens by the Bay

**Day 5** Return to U.S.

## PRE-TRIP

# Vietnam's Scenic North: Hanoi, Ninh Binh & Halong Bay Cruise

## INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » All internal transportation
- » 4 nights accommodation
- » 10 meals: 4 breakfasts, 3 lunch, and 3 dinners
- » 8 small group activities
- » Services of a local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

## PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Immerse yourself in the culture and beauty of northern Vietnam, from French-infused Hanoi, to the limestone peaks and tranquil temples of neon-green Ninh Binh, whose limestone peaks, and the emerald waters and hidden grottoes of Halong Bay during an overnight cruise on a traditional Vietnamese junk.*

### Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart today on your overnight flight from the U.S. to Hanoi, Vietnam. Check your air itinerary for the personalized details of your flight schedule, including connecting flights.

### Day 2 Overnight flight to Hanoi, Vietnam

Continue your air journey to Hanoi, Vietnam.

### Day 3 Arrive in Hanoi

- Destination: Hanoi
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Hanoi

**Morning:** Touch down in Hanoi this morning, where an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and escort you to your hotel. After you've checked in, you'll have a few hours free to get settled or start exploring Hanoi independently.

**Lunch:** On your own today. You are free to dine at the hotel restaurant, or ask your Trip Experience Leader for their recommended local eateries.

**Afternoon:** You'll have a free afternoon to refresh in your hotel room, or scout out the city on your own. We'll meet as a group before dinner for an orientation walk around the city. As we wander through the bustling streets, we'll engage in some favorite local leisure activities, including a stop at a beer garden for a sip of *bia hoi* ("fresh beer"), a cheap, light beer that is brewed fresh daily and typically delivered to bars and restaurants in steel kegs hauled by motorbikes. Whatever doesn't get drunk is usually dumped at the end of the day. Due to the ephemeral and improvised nature of the drink, no two batches of *Bia Hoi* taste quite the same. Consider pairing your drink with a local snack, like *banh phong tom* (prawn crackers) or fried tofu to whet your appetite for dinner.



**Dinner:** At a local restaurant.

**Evening:** On your own—you are free to rest in your room after your flight to prepare for tomorrow’s discoveries, or ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations on things to do in Vietnam’s capital (and second-largest) city.

**Day 4 Explore Hanoi • Visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum • Discover the “Hanoi Hilton” • Exclusive water puppet demonstration**

- Destination: Hanoi
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Hanoi

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today we will get a more in-depth introduction to Hanoi, a pulsing city of about seven million people. From 1883 to 1945, Hanoi was the heart of French Indochina; although Hanoi now enjoys a hard-fought independence, much of the French influence is still clearly visible today in the city’s architecture and cuisine.

Our discoveries begin in Ba Dinh Square, a pivotal site in 20th-century Vietnamese history. It was here in September 1945 that Ho Chi Minh read Vietnam’s Declaration of Independence, and it’s here today that the national leader’s body rests within a massive granite mausoleum, which we’ll discover on an included tour.

Next, we’ll visit a notorious location closely associated with Vietnam War: Hoa Lo Prison, also referred to as the “Hanoi Hilton.” Hoa Lo was constructed during the French occupation of Vietnam in the 19th century and it was active until the late 20th century—including, infamously, as a brutal POW camp for captured American soldiers. Now the majority of the prison serves as a museum, which gives insight into its controversial history. During a tour of

the prison, we’ll learn about the POWs that were held here and the overcrowding and unsanitary living conditions that they were subjected to.

After touring the prison, we’ll drive to a local restaurant for lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** We’ll return to the hotel after lunch, where we’ll have a few hours to rest or explore independently before our next activity. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend ways to pass the time if you’re looking for ideas.

Later this afternoon, we’ll gather back together and set off to the home of a local water puppet master for an O.A.T.-exclusive demonstration of this beloved art form, conceptualized around 1,000 years ago by the peasants of the Red River Delta of the north. Puppets are suspended over water and directed by puppet masters who must sit, semi-submerged, for hours at a time. The French used to call these puppets “the souls of the Vietnamese rice fields”—made of lacquered, water-resistant fig wood, they depict villagers, farm animals, dragons, and more.

We’ll get a demonstration as we watch traditional water puppets in action during a private show, followed by an opportunity to talk with the artist and his family about the craft, and their roots in it. We’ll also enjoy a hands-on demonstration on how to manipulate the puppets to make them move.

After our visit, we’ll drive back to the hotel, where the rest of the evening is free to spend as you please.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a restaurant.

**Evening:** Free to rest or explore Hanoi’s nightlife independently.

## Day 5 Explore Ninh Binh • Visit Tam Coc & Bich Dong Pagoda • Discover Thai Vi temple

- Destination: Ninh Binh
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Ninh Binh

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll check out of our hotel this morning and drive into the countryside of Ninh Binh, a rich green landscape in the hinterlands of Halong Bay where vibrant rice fields hug craggy cliffs covered in velvety vegetation.

Our discoveries begin with a *sampan* ride through the landscape of Tam Coc, which is part of Vietnam's Trang An Landscape Complex, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. As we float gently down the stream, we'll be surrounded by a psychedelic panorama of dramatic limestone mountains, caves, and rice paddies. This region of Vietnam is sometimes called "Halong Bay on Land" (a comparison we'll have the opportunity to judge for ourselves when we visit the iconic bay tomorrow).

We'll also visit Bich Dong Pagoda, an ancient Buddhist temple tucked into the foliage at the base of a limestone hill. Originally built in the 15th century, and added to over the ensuing centuries, this three-tiered pagoda's architects sought to build it in harmony with the natural environment. We'll cross the narrow stone bridge over the lotus pond that leads to the temple's gate, for a closer look at this iconic temple that has drawn the attention of visitors from around the world: including makers of the Academy award-winning 1992 French film *Indochine*, which used the pagoda as part of its setting.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Our discoveries in Ninh Binh continue as we drive to Thai Vi temple, built in the 13th century to honor the victories of Vietnam's Tran dynasty against Kublai Khan's Yuan dynasty, keeping them at bay across the border and safeguarding Vietnam's independence for a time. This squat stone temple's location was chosen for its *feng shui* (the spiritual practice of harmonizing structures with the flow of natural energy from the surrounding environment), owing to its location surrounded by lush green mountains and a pure blue sky. Inside the temple, we'll observe the intricate carvings and sculptures that have stood for hundreds of years.

We'll return to the hotel after exploring the temple, where you'll have a few hours free before dinner.

**Dinner:** At the hotel.

**Evening:** Free to rest or explore independently.

## Day 6 Cruise Halong Bay • Explore Sung Sot Cave

- Destination: Halong Bay
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Bien Ngoc *Junk*

**Activity Note:** Our transfer to Halong Bay will involve a 4-hour bus ride (including stops along the way) over roads that may be bumpy or uneven at times. We'll be spending the rest of the day—and the night—aboard a wooden sailboat, except for a visit into a cave, which features uneven surfaces.

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll check out of our hotel and drive east to Halong Bay, the "emerald bay of Vietnam" and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With clear waters and mountains draped in velvety cloaks of vegetation, it's little wonder that the bay has served as inspiration

for generations of Vietnamese poets. Along the way, we'll stop to visit a cemetery where Vietnamese soldiers have been laid to rest.

Upon our arrival in Halong Bay, we'll embark a traditional *junk*, or wooden sailboat. Thanks to our small group size, this *junk* will serve not only as our vessel for the day, but also our accommodations for the night.

**Lunch:** Onboard the boat.

**Afternoon:** While relaxing on our boat's sun deck, we are free to marvel at daily life on Halong Bay—whose name translates to “the bay of the descending dragon.” Resting peacefully across the Gulf of Tonkin near the Chinese border, the bay is dotted with more than 1,600 mountain islands, whose jagged profiles seem to rise out of nowhere. Against the backdrop of innumerable caves, beaches, soaring cliffs, and grottoes, the Vietnamese go about their daily lives: Harvesting and fishing, they reap the riches of the land and sea. Vietnamese fishermen nimbly navigate in lacquered and woven-wood *coracles*, lozenge-shaped and rudderless vessels that resemble oversized tubs. Flat-bottomed and oar-propelled fishing boats, or *sampans*, abound as well—many occupied by entire families.

Later this afternoon, we'll stop to explore Sung Sot cave, one of the most interesting examples of the grottoes that can be found along the shores of Halong Bay. Also called the “Cave of Surprises,” Sung Sot features an especially unusual collection of strange-looking rock formations, including a rather famous one shaped like a phallus. We'll step off the boat to explore the area with our Trip Experience Leader, taking in the strange stalactites and two cavernous chambers of Sung Sot.

After exploring the cave, we'll return to our *junk*. Later, gather in the boat's kitchen for a hands-on lesson in the creative art of food decorating with our onboard chef.

**Dinner:** Onboard the boat.

**Evening:** The evening is free to enjoy the boat's amenities.

## Day 7 Halong Bay • Fly to Ho Chi Minh City

• Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Enjoy some final sights of Halong Bay as our ship cruises toward the dock, where we'll disembark and transfer to the airport in Hanoi for our flight to Ho Chi Minh City, where we'll begin our *Mekong River Cruise: Vietnam, Cambodia & Angkor Wat* adventure.

## POST-TRIP

# Singapore's Cultures & Garden City

## INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

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- » All internal transportation
- » 4 nights accommodation
- » 9 meals—5 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 2 dinners
- » 7 small group activities
- » Services of a local O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters
- » All transfers

## POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

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*Experience the melting pot of cultures that make up the Republic of Singapore, one of the world's few remaining sovereign city-states, from the lush greenery of its botanical gardens, to the colorful lanes of Kampong Glam, the city's historic Muslim Quarter.*

### Day 1 Arrive in Singapore

- Destination: Singapore
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Singapore

**Afternoon:** Arrive in Singapore this afternoon, where an O.A.T. representative will meet you at the airport and assist with your transfer to your hotel.

You'll have a short time to unpack and settle in to your room after checking in, and then join your Trip Experience Leader for an orientation walk of the neighborhood surrounding your hotel.

**Dinner:** Enjoy an included Welcome Dinner at a local restaurant this evening.

**Evening:** Return to the hotel, where you may rest or explore Singapore's nightlife independently.

### Day 2 Explore Singapore • Visit Botanic Gardens • Discover Chinatown

- Destination: Singapore
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Singapore

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll start the day with a Welcome Briefing, in which our Trip Experience Leader will give us a preview of what we can expect over the days ahead, and apprise us of any changes we may need to make to our planned itinerary.

Then, We'll spend the day exploring the Republic of Singapore, an island country and city-state. Our first stop will be to visit its magnificent Botanic Gardens. This 164-year-old tropical garden is the only tropical garden to be listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. From orchids to gingers and even native fruits and vegetables, admire this lush sanctuary nestled in the heart of the city.

After admiring the gardens, we'll head towards Chinatown, where we'll set off on a tour after lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant near Chinatown.

**Afternoon:** Next, we'll walk through Chinatown, where we'll have a chance to admire the 19th-century, colonial architecture and taste local delicacies. Chinese Singaporeans constitute nearly 80% of the local population, making them the largest ethnic group in Singapore.

We'll head back to the hotel after our tour, where the rest of the day is free to explore independently.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend restaurant options.

**Evening:** The night is yours to rest or spend as you please.

### **Day 3 Discover Singapore • Cruise Singapore River • Visit Kampong Glam Muslim Quarter**

- Destination: Singapore
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Hotel in Singapore

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** We'll see more of Singapore today, beginning with a panoramic drive that will take us along Orchard Road, one of the major arteries of the city's heart, featuring upscale shops, fine dining, and the hustle and bustle of daily life. During our drive, we'll also stop to take in the view from atop the peak of Mount Faber, where the full splendor of Singapore will unfold before us.

Next, we'll drive to a local jetty where we'll board a wooden boat to see the city from a different point of view: the Singapore River. Float along the water and relax as the city

skyline glides by, with your Trip Experience Leader on hand to provide context for Singapore's many landmarks.

After our tour, we'll step off the boat and head to a local restaurant for lunch.

**Lunch:** At a local restaurant.

**Afternoon:** After lunch, we'll head to our final destination of the day: Kampong Glam, Singapore's historic Muslim Quarter. Modern Kampong Glam is an eclectic and colorful mix of traditional textile shops and modern cafés, boutiques, and art galleries, with a blend of cuisine that's hard to find anywhere else. We'll mingle with the diverse locals who live, work, and shop here, and take in a few of the sights, such as the golden dome of Sultan Mosque, and the Malay Heritage Center, which offers more insights into the district's fascinating history.

Following the conclusion of our tour, we'll return to the hotel, and have the rest of the day free to explore independently.

**Dinner:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a restaurant.

**Evening:** Tonight is free to spend as you wish.

### **Day 4 Visit Singapore's Gardens by the Bay**

- Destination: Singapore
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hotel in Singapore

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Today, we will visit perhaps the most iconic landmark in the city: Gardens by the Bay. Spanning nearly 250 acres, this expansive, award-winning nature park consists of three waterfront gardens: Bay South Garden, Bay East Garden and Bay Central Garden. All

together, the gardens house more than 1.5 million plants that are native to every continent except Antarctica.

We'll return to the hotel after our visit, and have the rest of the day free to explore independently.

**Lunch:** On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can recommend a café or restaurant.

**Afternoon:** Your final afternoon in Singapore is free to spend as you please. Your Trip Experience Leader can direct you toward activities that suit your preferences.

**Dinner:** Gather back together to toast the end of your adventure during an included Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant.

**Evening:** Free to rest or explore independently.

## **Day 5 Return to U.S.**

- Included Meals: Breakfast

**Breakfast:** At the hotel.

**Morning:** Transfer to the airport to begin your journey home.

## RV INDOCHINE II

### Cruise the Mekong River aboard our privately chartered 62-passenger R/V *Indochine II* ship

Designed to evoke the French colonial era, the 62-passenger *RV Indochine II* has been exclusively chartered for our small group of 20-25 travelers. The Main Deck includes large picture windows, as well as the reception area, a massage salon, and spacious dining room. A swimming pool, lounge, and bar are located on the Sun Deck, the perfect spot to relax and admire the passing scenery. Cabins are spread out across all three decks, and each includes a private balcony, all modern amenities, and private bath with hair dryer.

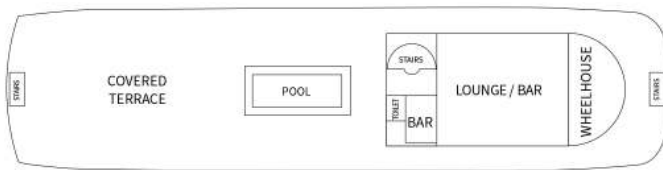


### SHIPBOARD FEATURES

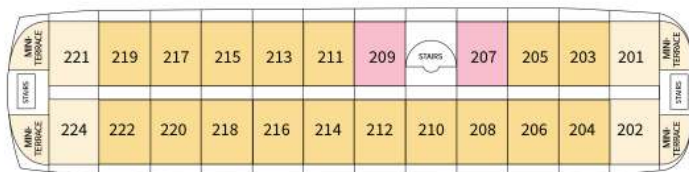
- **Dining area with single, open seating:** Savor regionally inspired dishes or American favorites during all buffets and table-service meals in the ship's dining room.
  - **Comfortable lounge:** Recount the day's activities with friends and fellow travelers in the spacious bar and lounge area
  - **Salon:** Indulge in a massage or spa treatment.
  - **Complimentary beverages:** Complimentary house wine and local beer, coffee, tea, and soft-drinks are available during lunch and dinner.
  - **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas.
- Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*
- **Outdoor common areas:** Take in the passing scenery along the Mekong on a spacious Sun Deck with swimming pool and shaded terrace.
  - **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.
  - **Sampan:** Embark on these small traditional boats to go ashore on islands in the Mekong and take excursions along the river's smaller canals.

## RV INDOCHINE II

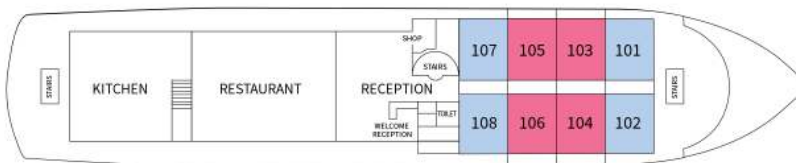
### Sun Deck








### Upper Deck



### Main Deck



### CABIN CATEGORIES

	<b>A</b>	Cabin w/ terrace – 194 sq. ft.
	<b>B</b>	Cabin w/ balcony – 194 sq. ft.
	<b>C</b>	Cabin w/ balcony – 194 sq. ft.
	<b>D</b>	Cabin w/ balcony – 194 sq. ft.
	<b>E</b>	Cabin w/ balcony – 194 sq. ft.

Registry: Vietnam

Length: 213 ft.

Beam: 43 ft.

Cabin Size: 194 sq. ft.

Number of Cabins: 31

Passenger Capacity: 62

Entered Service: 2017

International crew: 31

Passenger Decks: 3

Group Size: 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader

Stairs, no elevator

## CABIN FEATURES

- 31 double-occupancy cabins approximately 194 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with a balcony or small terrace
- Two twin-sized beds
- Complimentary wireless Internet access, closet, desk, flat-screen TV, and safe
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries





# TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

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## Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

## Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

## Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** If you are taking only the main trip, you will need 2 blank passport pages.
- **Pre-trip extension to Vietnam:** No additional pages needed.
- **Post-trip extension to Singapore:** You will need 2 additional blank passport pages.

## Visas Required

**We’ll be sending you a detailed Visa Packet with instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure.** In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This information is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Vietnam: Visa required. Can only be obtained in advance.** You must obtain your visa for Vietnam before you leave home; it cannot be obtained on arrival.
- **Cambodia: Visa required.** We recommend you obtain this in advance.
- **Singapore: No visa required.** A visa is not required for U.S. citizens for stays of up to 90 days. You will be required to fill out a Traveler Declaration Form within 72 hours prior to your arrival.

## **Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **[www.pvsinternational.org](http://www.pvsinternational.org)**.

## **Traveling With a Minor?**

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

## **Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents**

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

## **Overseas Taxes & Fees**

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency).

## RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

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### Is This Adventure Right for You?

**Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure.** We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

#### GROUP SIZE

- Travel in three small groups, each no more than 25 travelers aboard the privately-chartered 62-passenger RV *Indochine II*, each with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

#### PACING

- 13 days, with 8 nights aboard the RV *Indochine II*, a one-night hotel stay in Ho Chi Minh City, and a three-night hotel stay in Siem Reap
- International flights from the U.S. to Ho Chi Minh City depart around midnight, crossing the International Date Line
- Airport transfers in Ho Chi Minh City take approximately 1 hour

#### PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Not appropriate for travelers using wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility aids
- You must be able to walk 3 miles unassisted and participate in 5-7 hours of physical activities each day
- Agility and balance are required for embarking the ship and *sampans* we will use on included tours
- Our tour of Angkor Wat includes a 4-hour walk through 3 miles of ruins on uneven surfaces
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

#### CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 80-90°F
- April-June are the hottest months, with high levels of humidity and heavy rains likely

#### TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Travel over some bumpy unpaved roads, walk along city streets and ancient ruins, and visit monuments, often with uneven paths and walkways with no handrails
- Travel by 35-passenger coach, privately-chartered ship, and *sampan*

## **FLIGHT INFORMATION**

- Travel time will be 25–30 hours and will most likely have two connections

## **ACCOMMODATIONS & FACILITIES**

- Main trip: All accommodations feature private baths and Western-style toilet facilities
- Asian squat-style toilets must be used in some locations without other facilities

## **Steps to Take Before Your Trip**

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel) or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.
- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

## **No Vaccines Required**

### **Recommended Vaccines**

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

### **Medication Suggestions**

- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Prescription pain medication in the unlikely event of an injury in a remote location
- Anti-malaria medication—At time of writing, the CDC reported that the risk of malaria was low in Vietnam and Singapore, but was moderate in Cambodia. For this reason, the CDC suggested that travelers discuss an anti-malarial medication with their doctor. Anti-malarial medication can have strong side effects, so be certain to ask your doctor first.

### **Traveling with Medications**

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

## Staying Healthy on Your Trip

### Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

### Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

### Water

- Tap water on this adventure is not safe to drink in Vietnam or Cambodia, so we recommend you use only bottled water for drinking and brushing your teeth.
- Avoid drinks with ice or salads/fruits unless you first confirm that the ice is made with safe water or the salad/fruit has been washed in safe water. (Fruit you peel yourself should be fine.)
- Hot drinks made with water are safe if they have been boiled.
- Bottled water is readily available for purchase; just be sure to check that the cap is sealed properly before buying.

- Some previous travelers on this adventure have suggested bringing sachets of powdered electrolytes or powdered sports drink with you. If you feel dehydrated, you can mix them with bottled water, and this should help you re-hydrate quickly.

## Food

- We've carefully chosen the restaurants for your group meals. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest restaurants for meals you take on your own.
- When dining on your own, keep in mind that meats sold by street vendors may not have had proper refrigeration.
- Be cautious with non-pasteurized milk products—they may or may not upset your stomach.

## Electricity Supply

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** Travelers dependent on electricity supply for health reasons (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) may want to consider a different O.A.T. adventure.

# MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

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## Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as U.S. dollars, local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card. Traveler's checks are not accepted in the countries you will be visiting.
- **U.S. dollars should be in excellent condition and dated 2016 or later.** Torn, worn, dirty, or taped U.S. bills may not be accepted.

## Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like [www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter), your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

**Vietnam:** Vietnamese dong (₫)

**Cambodia:** Cambodian Riel (KHR)

**Singapore:** Singapore dollar (SDG)

## How to Exchange Money

You can change money when you arrive at banks, most hotels, and money exchange offices. In some countries you do not even need to exchange money at all—you can use U.S. dollars. For information on what type of currency can be used on this trip, see the “Currency” section.

You can also obtain local currency from an ATM. Using a local ATM on an international network will allow you to withdraw money from your U.S. account in local currency; your bank at home will calculate the conversion rate and charge you in U.S. dollars.

Throughout the trip, your Trip Experience Leader can advise you of ATM availability and warn you before you enter areas where there are no ATMs, but will not be able to guarantee which ATM will take your card.

## ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card. Many banks will charge a set fee or a percentage fee each time you use a foreign ATM. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart. Don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM. If you are visiting a country that has different expectation for ATMs, they will be listed below.

**Vietnam:** ATMs are fairly common in Vietnam. Occasionally travelers report having to try more than one bank to find an ATM that works with their U.S.-based card.

**Cambodia:** ATMs are only somewhat available in Cambodia. You'll find them in large cities, but not out in rural areas or at archeological sites. Because U.S. dollars are in widespread use in Cambodia, most ATMs will give you dollars and not local currency.

## Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. We suggest that you bring one or two, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, as not all are accepted around the world. If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

**Vietnam:** Credit cards are commonly accepted. However, some businesses in Vietnam do not accept them, so you should carry some cash on you.

**Cambodia:** Credit cards are somewhat accepted—you'll be able to use them in nicer hotels, shops, and restaurants but not at small businesses.

## Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

## Shipboard Account

This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks) and is calculated in local currency. This bill is payable at the front desk by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or local currency. For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, local currency, Discover, and American Express, are not accepted. If you pay by credit or debit card, the Amazon boat does not have WiFi, so you will pay once you return to Manaus, where somebody from land will come on board with the Postnet to settle your account.

**Please note:** *Your bill for any optional tours taken during the trip will be paid with your Trip Experience Leader, who will have you fill out a form onsite with your credit card information. (You can only pay for optional tours by credit/debit card.) For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.*



## Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$8-\$12 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Housekeeping staff at hotels:** \$1-2 per room, per night
- **Waiters:** Tipping waiters is not common practice, but if the service is excellent you may leave about 10% of the bill in appreciation. Your Trip Experience Leader will handle any tips, if appropriate, for included meals.
- **Taxi drivers:** If you are taking a taxi by yourself, keep in mind that tipping is not common practice, but many people simply let the driver keep the change by rounding up the fare to the next whole number.
- **Your Trip Price Includes:** Gratuities are included for local guides, drivers, and luggage porters on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

*Please note: For your convenience, tips to O.A.T. staff can be paid in U.S. dollars or local currency. Please do not use personal or traveler’s checks for tips.*

## AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

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### Land Only Travelers & Customized Air

#### Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Customization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Customization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our customization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Customization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner) under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

### Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

### Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: [www.rome2rio.com](http://www.rome2rio.com)

### **Optional Tours**

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

### **What You Need to Know**

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)
- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as "OPT Boston".
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you're on the trip. But if you'd like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner)).

### **Communicating with Home from Abroad**

To ensure you are available during your trip to friends and relatives at home, you will receive two copies of your hotel list, including phone numbers, with your Final Documents. One copy is for you to bring, and one to leave behind with friends or relatives in case they need to contact you during the trip.

## Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone can accept one.

## Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like FaceTime or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan's data allowance. Many smartphones- and some tablets or laptops- come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

## Calling Cards and 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.).

One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

## How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

**Vietnam:** +84

**Singapore:** +65

**Cambodia:** +855

## PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

### Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on per person.
Weight restrictions	Checked bag is limited to <b>44 lbs total</b> . Carry-on is limited to <b>15 lbs total</b> .
Size Restrictions	Standard airline size: checked luggage should not exceed 62 linear inches (length+ width + depth) and carry-on should not exceed 45 linear inches
Luggage Type	Duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Please do not bring a hard-sided (clamshell) suitcase.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p><b>Luggage rules:</b> Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

#### Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.
- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.
- The luggage limits above are based on your regional flights, which may be less than your international flights. Even if your international airline offers a larger weight limit, you will need to pack according to the lower restrictions.

## Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** One duffel bag or suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Please do not bring a rigid (plastic shell) suitcase.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

## Clothing Suggestions: Functional Tips

As you will experience a wide range of temperatures and weather conditions, we suggest several layers of clothing. If you like to hand-wash your clothes, look for fabrics that will dry out overnight. You can buy clothing designed especially for travel, with features like wrinkle-resistant fabric or built-in sun protection.

- **Footwear:** You'll be on your feet and walking a lot, sometimes over rough and slippery surfaces, so choose your footwear carefully. The soles of your shoes should offer good traction. You can find especially supportive shoes designed for walking. Light hiking boots might be useful for the ankle support, but they are optional.
- **Walking sticks:** Many past travelers have recommended bringing a folding walking stick, sold in most camping stores. An alternative is a folding ski pole. This is very useful when exploring ruins and trails that have no handrails.

## Style Hints and Dress Codes

- **Dress on our trip is functional and casual.** The most formal you might need for a city evening would be a sport jacket with no tie for men, a dress and dressy sandals for women—but this is not necessary on this trip—the decision is yours.
- **Wearing shorts is acceptable in most places, except at some religious sites.** Specifically, shorts, knee-baring skirts, sleeveless shirts, and tank tops, are often forbidden in temples, so we suggest that you stick to trousers or a long skirt for temple visits. If you forget and wear shorts on a day that includes a temple visit, all is not lost—temples will generally loan cover-ups to visitors who are perceived as “too bare”—but you must cover up to go inside.
- **TIP:** *Both our regional staff and previous travelers on this adventure have recommended that you bring enough long trousers and sleeved shirts for at least 4-6 temple visits.*
- **It is common practice to remove your shoes inside the temple,** so consider a pair that you can get on/off easily and perhaps a couple extra pairs of socks. (Use these to replace the ones that will get extra dirty in the temples. Or you could designate a couple pairs as your “temple socks” and wear them more than once.)

## Recommended Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. Each travelers packing list may be different depending on the climate you are used to. We recommend using [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com) and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

## Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts in a breathable fabric, like cotton or cotton-blend. Polo shirts are more versatile than T-shirts. For temple visits, you’ll want tops with sleeves (bare shoulders are considered inappropriate for religious sites).
- Trousers and/or jeans: Comfortable and loose fitting. No matter the time of year, you’ll want a few long trousers or jeans for temple visits. See “Style Hints and Dress Codes” for details.
- Walking shorts: A longer cut shows the more sensitivity to the local culture, which tends to be modest. Shorts are viewed as inappropriate for visiting a temple, so we suggest you stick to trousers or a long skirt (below the knee or longer) for temple visits. In a pinch you could wear one of the temple’s cover-ups.
- Shoes and socks: Shoes should be comfortable walking/ running shoes or low-cut hiking shoes, with arch support. A pair of sport sandals with secure ankle strap (such as Tevas) are recommended; flip-flops are not. Because it is common to remove your shoes inside the temples and local homes, bring at least one pair of shoes that you can get on/off easily. You might want a couple extra pairs of socks.
- Light cotton or wool sweater: Because motor coach air conditioning can be cold.
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Wide-brim sun hat
- Underwear and sleepwear
- Swimsuit

## Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, etc. Our hotels will provide the basics like soap and shampoo, but if you are sensitive to fragrances or new products, you may wish to bring your preferred brands.

- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses
- Sunglasses, 100% UV block
- Sunscreen, SPF 30 or stronger
- Insect repellent with DEET (30-35% strength)
- Cold-water hand-wash laundry soap such as Woolite, plastic clothespins, sink stopper
- Light folding umbrella
- Packets of pocket-size tissues or small roll of toilet paper
- Moisturizer and sun-blocking lip balm
- Moist towelettes (not individual packets) and/or anti-bacterial “water-free” hand cleanser
- Flashlight or headlamp, extra batteries/bulb
- Electrical converter & plug adapter: see “A Word about Electricity” for details
- Camera gear with extra batteries or battery charger

### Medicines & First Aid

- Your own prescription medicines
- Travel first aid kit: Band-Aids, headache and pain relief, laxatives and anti-diarrhea tablets, something for upset stomach. Maybe a cold remedy, moleskin foot pads, antibiotic cream, or allergy medication.
- Sachets of powdered electrolytes or powdered sports drink. If you feel dehydrated, you can mix them with bottled water, and this should help you rehydrate quickly.
- An antibiotic medication for gastrointestinal illness
- Optional: Prescription medicine to prevent malaria
- Optional: A strong prescription pain medication for rare emergency purposes
- Optional: Motion sickness medicine if you are susceptible



## Home-Hosted Visits

Many of our adventures feature a visit with a local family, often as part of the *A Day in the Life* experience. It is customary, though not necessary, to return your hosts' generosity with a small gift. If you do bring a gift, we recommend that you bring something the whole family can enjoy, or something that represents your region, state, or hometown. Get creative and keep it small—peach jelly from Georgia, maple sugar candy from New England, orange blossom soap from California; something that can be used or used up is best. When choosing a gift, be certain to consider the local culture as well. For example, we do not recommend alcohol in Muslim countries because it is forbidden in Islam, and your hosts may be religious. Not all O.A.T. adventures include a Home-Hosted Visit; please check your final itinerary before you depart.

## Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

### Voltage

Electricity in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Singapore is 220–230 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner's guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

### Plugs

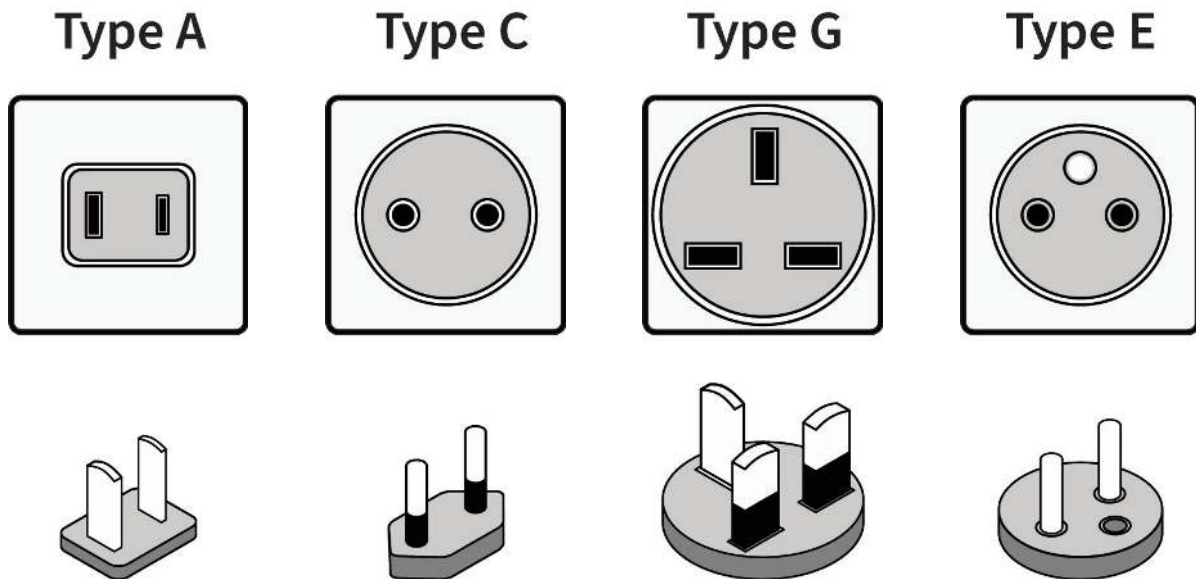
The shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you'll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because there are many different types of plugs in this region, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

**Vietnam:** A (same as the U.S.), C, or G

**Cambodia:** A (same as the U.S.), C, or G

Singapore: G



### Availability

**A constant electricity supply cannot be guaranteed during overnight stays.** In some places, the electricity may be supplied by a generator, and lighting may not be as bright as you are used to. Travelers dependent on electricity supply (as in the case of those with sleep apnea) should consider a different adventure or ensure their apparatus has back-up battery power.

## CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

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**Vietnam:** Vietnam lies entirely within the tropics. It has wet and dry seasons, which vary from north to south and with elevation changes. In the south, temperatures are fairly constant throughout the year, ranging between 75° and 85° F. The dry season runs from November to April and the wet season from May to October. The hottest period is during April to August, before the rains have broken. In the north, there's also a short "winter" season, which runs from December to February. At this time, temperatures can drop to the 50s, with some drizzle. Typhoons are quite common in coastal areas between September and January.

**Cambodia:** Cambodia's climate can generally be described as tropical with seasonal monsoons. There are two distinct seasons, the rainy and dry. Temperatures during the rainy season, between June and October, average 80-95°F. The dry season is characterized by cool months, November to February, with temperatures averaging 80-95°F and hot months, from March till May, which sees temperature range between 84-100°F.

**Northern Vietnam:** The climate in this region is cooler than the rest of the country. Summertime highs are usually in the 70s, although it can get hotter. But it's winter that surprises most travelers. From December-March the low temperatures can be in the 40s and the daytime high might only be in the 50s. So if you're traveling during these months, be sure to bring some warm clothing and/or clothing you can layer.

**Singapore:** Singapore is situated near the equator and enjoys a tropical climate, with high temperatures year-round, an abundance of rainfall, and high humidity. Singapore also has two monsoon seasons, the first from December to March, and the second from June to September. The temperature year-round hovers between 77 and 91 degrees, with May and June being the hottest months and February being the coldest.

**NOTE:** If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- [www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)
- [www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)
- [www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

## Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM			SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	90-71	87 to 51	0.6	88 to 67	71	0.1
<b>FEB</b>	92-73	85 to 50	0.1	90 to 70	70	0.5
<b>MAR</b>	94-76	83 to 52	0.4	93 to 74	69	1.0
<b>APR</b>	95-79	83 to 56	2.0	94 to 76	68	2.5
<b>MAY</b>	94-78	86 to 65	8.4	93 to 76	75	5.9
<b>JUN</b>	91-77	89 to 71	12.2	91 to 76	79	7.0
<b>JUL</b>	90-76	90 to 70	11.6	89 to 75	81	7.9
<b>AUG</b>	90-76	91 to 71	10.7	89 to 75	82	7.9
<b>SEP</b>	89-76	92 to 72	13.5	87 to 75	84	10.6
<b>OCT</b>	89-75	92 to 73	10.3	87 to 73	84	9.3
<b>NOV</b>	87 to 74	89-74	4.7	87 to 71	80	3.4
<b>DEC</b>	89-72	87 to 58	1.8	86 to 67	75	0.6

MONTH	HANOI, VIETNAM			SINGAPORE, SINGAPORE		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (avg)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
<b>JAN</b>	69-59	85	0.8	85 to 75	92 to 74	9.4
<b>FEB</b>	71-62	85	1.1	88 to 76	92 to 69	6.5
<b>MAR</b>	76-67	90	1.8	88 to 77	92 to 72	6.9
<b>APR</b>	83-72	90	3.6	89 to 77	93 to 74	6.5
<b>MAY</b>	91-77	85	7.2	88 to 78	92 to 76	6.7
<b>JUN</b>	94-81	85	9.0	88 to 78	90 to 72	6.4
<b>JUL</b>	93-80	85	10.1	87 to 78	90 to 73	5.9
<b>AUG</b>	91-79	90	11.7	87 to 78	89 to 73	6.7
<b>SEP</b>	90-78	85	9.9	87 to 76	92 to 75	6.4
<b>OCT</b>	85-73	80	5.8	87 to 77	92 to 73	7.5
<b>NOV</b>	80-68	80	1.8	87 to 76	92 to 77	9.8
<b>DEC</b>	71-59	80	0.5	85 to 75	93 to 80	10.6

# ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

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## RV Indochine II

Designed to evoke the French colonial era, the 62-passenger *RV Indochine II* has been exclusively chartered for our small group of 20-25 travelers. The Main Deck includes large picture windows, as well as the reception area, a massage salon, and spacious dining room. A swimming pool, lounge/bar, and covered terrace are located on the Sun Deck, the perfect spot to relax and admire the passing scenery. Air-conditioned cabins are located on the Upper and Main decks, and include a safe, private balcony, TV, and private bath with hair dryer.

## Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at [www.oattravel.com/myplanner](http://www.oattravel.com/myplanner). However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many river ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

## Dining

All meals are taken in a window-lined dining room. The food onboard includes home-style typical local dishes. If you require a special diet, such as gluten-free, low-cholesterol, or vegetarian, please request this in advance, you may do so by contacting one of our Travel Counselors. There is no room service on board. Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities. Water will be served with all meals, any alcoholic beverages will be charged separately. No outside alcohol is allowed on board.

## Embarkation/Disembarkation

On the day of disembarkation, your cabin will no longer be available after breakfast. You may sit in the ship's lounge or on the deck until disembarkation.

## Headsets

During your trip, complimentary headsets, or Whispers receivers, are provided on our guided tours through the places we visit. These receivers and headsets allow you to hear your Trip Experience Leader and our local guides better. If use a hearing aid or have strong preferences for headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headsets/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc.

## Medical Care

Should you need medical assistance, please contact the ship's 24 hour reception deck. They will arrange for a doctor to come onboard or for transport to the nearest medical facility against charge.

## Onboard Activities

During your cruise you'll enjoy exclusive Discovery Series events, including group activities that relate to the Mekong.

## Recreational Facilities

These include the covered deck, lounge bar, and pool. A word about the bar: filter coffee, standard breakfast tea and water will be complimentary throughout the day. A selection of alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and wines is available for purchase at the bar. Prices are in local currency.

## Telephone Services

To make telephone calls from the ship, you will be charged on your shipboard account on the last day of the cruise. Phone calls from the ship are placed via Reception. We advise you to use them only for an emergency, as this is a very expensive service (for example, a call to New York City would cost about \$3.75 per minute). Calling Cards cannot be used over the ship's phone system.

## Smoking/Non-Smoking Policy

All cabins are non-smoking. Smoking is permitted only outside on the sun deck. Smoking is not allowed anywhere else on the ship.

## Elevator/Chairlift

The ship does **not** have an elevator or chairlift onboard.

## Ship Specifications

### RV Indochine II

- **History:** Built in 2017
- **Size:** 213x42 ft
- **Capacity:** 62 passengers, 31 crew members
- **Layout:** 31 cabins, 3 decks; Elevator-no

## **ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE**

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### **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference**

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

### **The Culture of Southeast Asia**

Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the two countries visited on your main Itinerary—Vietnam and Cambodia -- is the cultural diversity. The two differ greatly in regards to ethnicity, religion, culture, and traditions. The entire Southeast Asia region is also home to hundreds of indigenous minorities, speaking unrelated languages employing many different alphabets. French influences from the colonial period are still evident in Vietnam and Cambodia, -- once known as French Indochina with Laos -- especially in the architecture and cuisine.

If there is one cultural element that is shared by all countries in Southeast Asia, it may be the concept of “face.” One’s reputation and honor are keystones of Southeast Asian society and is far removed from many in Western society who value people who are “brutally honest.” Causing someone to “lose face” —even unintentionally—can lead to awkward interactions. Face-saving often perplexes foreign visitors—especially when people tell you yes when they mean no. Or if you ask someone for directions, you discover they have pointed you somewhere wrong because, for them, this is preferable to admitting they don’t know, which would be “losing face.” Or if you see the thoughtfully-chosen gift you brought appear to be brushed aside—what’s really happening is the recipient wishes to open it in private in case it is not useful, too expensive, or any number of reasons that may cause him or her to lose face.

But generally, the people of Southeast Asia are very tolerant and understanding of foreign visitors who aren’t aware of local cultural norms. As a traveler in any country, however, one should always be aware of the potential impact one’s actions might have on how others feel. Just an awareness of such a simple notion can lead to deeper and more enjoyable insights into local culture.

### **Religion and Religious Observances**

Buddhism is the primary religion in Vietnam and Cambodia. The more conservative tradition called Theravada Buddhism is followed in Cambodia; while Confucian-influenced Mahayana Buddhism is the dominant form followed in Vietnam.

Festivals and religious celebrations vary widely across Southeast Asia and could be anything from a celebration rooted in Buddhism or the worshipping of ancestors to the major Christian holidays.

## Points to Know

For the adventurous soul, the challenges of traveling in Southeast Asia—in addition to the region’s renowned hospitality—make it a uniquely rewarding destination. You should be prepared for dust, pollution, traffic and large crowds in cities. Poverty can be distressing for some travelers, as can the history we’ll revisit at the Cu Chi tunnels and the Killing Fields of Choeng Ek.

## Meals

Our meals will be based on the local cuisine. Western foods will be available at breakfast, but otherwise we will experience the foods of Southeast Asia—many of them containing ingredients that are new and different to us. Some dishes are vegetarian, but please note that no special accommodations can be guaranteed for dietary restrictions. Your Trip Experience Leader can suggest restaurants for meals that are not included on your adventure.

## Toilets

All of our hotels feature Western-style seated toilets. However, public restrooms outside of our hotels may be limited to Asian-style squat toilets. It is also common for the public restrooms in this region to run low on toilet paper and/or soap, so we suggest that you carry a small packet of tissues and something to clean your hands (wipes, hand sanitizer) when you are out and about.

## Your International Flight: A Reminder

The “rule of thumb” is to check in for your international flights about three hours before departure.

If any of your flights leave just after midnight or in the early morning hours, you may need to check in before midnight, which is technically the day before. For example: If your flight leaves at 12:05 a.m. on May 2nd, you would want to arrive for check-in at 9 p.m. on May 1st. You can confirm the date and time of your international flight by referring to your preliminary air itinerary.

## Taking Photographs

When taking photos of people in most countries, be polite and ask permission to take a close-up. In many countries, you should not be taking photos of children or older women without permission. Do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

Please obey any signs regarding photos at museum or sites; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.



## Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room – use a room safe as needed. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt.

## Vietnamese Cuisine

Vietnam cuisine was shaped by myriad influences including France, China, India and Thailand, all of which combined to make a truly unique food scene. One of the key building blocks of Vietnamese cuisine—and of Vietnamese culture in general—is rice. Many kinds of meat, most commonly pork and fish, are also heavily featured. Dishes are flavored with basil, parsley, coriander, chilies, lemon grass, lime, and laksa leaf, meaning they can range from mild to very spicy. Peanuts are a common topping. Some typical dishes are:

- **Pho:** Pronounced “fuh,” this iconic soup is typically made with rice noodles and thinly sliced beef in a bone broth
- **Banh mi:** Vietnam's version of the sub sandwich, with meat (usually pork) and veggies served on crusty French-style bread. They are popular all over the country, but many say the best ones are found in Ho Chi Minh City and Hoi An.
- **Bun bo hue:** Similar to pho, but with flat vermicelli-like noodles instead of cylindrical noodles.
- **Vietnamese coffee:** Vietnam is also the second-largest producer of coffee beans worldwide, with as many coffee shops as that suggests. Try the *ca phe nau* (also called *ca phe sua*) which is a strong dark brew cut with sweet condensed milk.
- **Nuoc mam:** Vietnam's national condiment is a fermented fish sauce that is served with every meal.
- **Snacks:** Rice cakes and spring rolls are typical snacks, as is fruit. The Vietnamese grow and consume a variety of tropical fruits, including coconuts, bananas, melons, pineapples, lychees, mandarin oranges, and exotic items such as the green dragon fruit and the three-seeded cherry. Remember to stick to fruit with a peel or rind and avoid fruit washed in local tap water.

To get the most enjoyment from your trip, be open-minded about sampling different dishes and even using chopsticks. While we will make every effort to accommodate dietary restrictions, please note that choices may be limited and that special requests are not guaranteed.

## Cambodian Cuisine

Cambodian or Khmer cuisine features a lot of pickled and tangy flavors. Rice is served with most meals, as with many other Asian countries. However, it is less spicy than the cuisines of nearby Asian countries like Thailand. The typical Cambodian meal often features several small dishes alongside the main dish, served with rice and soup. **Hot chili** is usually served on the side, so the added spiciness is at the discretion of the diner. Here are some other dishes to try:

- **Fish amok:** This is one of the most popular dishes in Cambodia. It is fresh fish cooked in a rich, creamy curry-like sauce that mixes lemongrass, turmeric and coconut milk. It's often served wrapped in a banana leaf.
- **Banana blossom salad:** This light refreshing meal is made with stir-fried banana blossom with garlic, fried shallots, nuts, and herbs.
- **Red tree ants with beef:** This dish is just as it sounds—actual ants mixed with beef and served on a bowl of white rice topped with chili.
- **Nom banh chok:** This is a popular street food often eaten at breakfast consisting of thin rice noodles bathed in a green fish gravy, mixed with various fresh vegetables.
- **Bai sach chrouk:** This street food is grilled pork marinated in coconut milk and garlic.
- **Num kachay:** A snack made with rice flour and chopped chives and served with a sweet and spicy fish sauce.

## Etiquette

Don't let the fine points of local customs worry you; locals know that visitors can't be expected to know every detail. Much of what is considered polite in this region is similar to what's polite in the U.S. But as a matter of interest, here are a few "finer points" that might surprise you:

- Body posture is important. Sprawling, resting your feet on furniture or chairs, or pointing your feet at someone are seen as impolite.
- In temples you may notice locals sitting on the floor with their feet tucked under them or in a cross-legged position. This is to avoid pointing their feet at the Buddha, which is rude.
- A woman may speak to a Buddhist monk, and a man may speak with a Buddhist nun, but generally the correct thing is to let them approach you.
- You may see people greeting one another with a bow of the head, and in some countries this will be accompanied with hands pressed together as in prayer. Traditionally, the deeper the bow, the more respect one is showing, with the greatest respect being towards elders and clergy. For you, a gentle western-style handshake is an acceptable greeting, but if you wish to try the more traditional head bow, that's OK too.
- Avoid wearing clothing imprinted with a Buddha logo or image as this may offend some of the locals.

## Language Barrier

You can have some great ‘conversations’ with local people who do not speak English, even if you don’t speak a word of the local language. Indeed, this non-verbal communication can be a highly rewarding part of travel. To break the ice, bring along some family photographs, or a few postcards of your hometown. If you want to meet kids, bring a puppet or other interactive toy. Your Trip Experience Leader can help get the ball rolling.

## Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor’s terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

## Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop’s contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don’t assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

## Crafts & Souvenirs

### Vietnam

Vietnam offers many fine craft items at good prices. Traditional souvenirs include silk, precious stones, hilltribe handicrafts, including elaborate jewelry, colorful textiles, and opium pipes, bronzeware cutlery, nielloware silver inlaid items, and lacquerware. Local products include hand-woven cottons, decorative items made of silver, teakwood carvings, and gems. The best bargains in gems are jade, rubies, and sapphires, but buy from reputable dealers only.

Merchants enjoy negotiating prices almost everywhere but if you make an offer you should be prepared to buy at that price. It is not unusual for the clerks in some stores in Vietnam to follow, assist, and advise you throughout the store—much as a personal shopper would do in the U.S. This is meant to be polite rather than pestering.

*Note about antiquities:* Think carefully before purchasing an expensive “antiquity.” It is illegal to remove antique furniture or ceramics from Vietnam. To complicate matters further, any item that looks old can only be exported with the written permission of the Antique Art Business Division of the government Fine Arts Department. Some stores will offer to arrange this for you, but this may be unreliable.

## Cambodia

In popular tourist locations (like Siem Reap and Phnom Penh), and particular towns with handicraft specialties, handmade crafts such as silk clothing, stone or wood carvings, and silver jewelry are considered to be high-quality, traditional souvenirs. Many shops in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh are connected with organizations invested in reviving traditional Cambodian crafts and supporting disadvantaged or disabled locals. Other notable traditional souvenirs include hand-woven cotton, batik fabrics, woven mats, Mekong quilts, rice-paper prints, and betel nut boxes. For the food-lovers, Kampot pepper, pepper grown in Kampot and used by top chefs around the world, is a must have, available near everywhere in Cambodia. With the risk of fake Kampot pepper high due to its popularity, we recommend buying this souvenir straight from the source, at one of the many local farms.

## Singapore

When traveling through Singapore, you may want to keep an eye out for some local souvenirs, such as: peranakan porcelain, colorful batik textiles, merlion statues, Risis orchid jewelry, traditional beadwork, custom-made perfume, and *kaya* (coconut jam).

## U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, [www.cbp.gov](http://www.cbp.gov) has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

# DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

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## Vietnam

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 127,800 square miles
- **Capital:** Hanoi
- **Languages:** Vietnamese (official), English (increasingly favored as a second language), some French, Chinese, and Khmer; mountain area languages (Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian)
- **Ethnicities:** Kinh (Viet) 85.7%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.8%, Muong 1.5%, Khmer 1.5%, Mong 1.2%, Nung 1.1%, other 5.3%
- **Location:** Vietnam is bordered by the South China Sea (“the East Sea”), China, Laos, and Cambodia.
- **Geography:** It is about a thousand miles long and ranges in width from 30 miles in the central region to 400 miles in the north. There are five principle geographic areas. There are two mountainous areas, covered largely by forests or jungles: the Northern Highlands, located in the northwest, and the Annamite Range that extends from it down the western portion of the country towards Ho Chi Minh City. The two delta areas—the Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong Delta in the south—hold most of the country’s population and also provide the majority of the country’s farmland. The Coastal Lowlands, which lie between the delta areas, are also heavily populated.
- **Population:** 97,205,000 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Buddhist 9.3%, Catholic 6.7%, Hoa Hao 1.5%, Cao Dai 1.1%, Protestant 0.5%, Muslim 0.1%, none 80.8%. (Although Communists have discouraged the practice of religion, those who do practice are generally Buddhists.)
- **Time zone:** Vietnam is twelve hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 6pm in Hanoi.

## National Holidays: Vietnam

In addition to the holidays listed below, Vietnam celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

February Tet Lunar New Year (moves each year; see note above)

April Hung Kings Commemoration Day (moves each year; see note above)

04/30 Reunification Day

05/01 Labor Day

09/02 Independence Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/31 New Year's Eve

## Vietnam: A Brief History

Vietnam's earliest known residents were hunters and farmers who migrated into the area from the north and south. In 111 B.C., armies of China's Han dynasty conquered the region of present-day Vietnam and would go on to rule the region for more than a thousand years. It was not until A.D. 939 when the Vietnamese were finally able to oust the Chinese to begin self-rule while renaming the country Dai Co Viet. Powerful family dynasties went on to rule Vietnam for the next 900 years. Power struggles among feuding families in the north and south persisted until 1802, when Nguyen Anh unified the country and named it Vietnam, giving himself the title Emperor Gia Long.

After stiff resistance, Vietnam would finally fall to French colonial rule in 1884. Now part of French Indochina, Vietnam remained under French domination until 1940, when Germany occupied France during World War II and Germany's ally Japan took control of Vietnam. After Japan's defeat, in September 1945, the communist Vietminh led by Ho Chi Minh gained control of many regions of the country. Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam an independent nation—the Democratic Republic of Vietnam. France re-asserted its claim on the region, and French forces regained control in the south. However, resistance from the Vietminh continued, and the Communists still controlled the north. By late 1946, the Indochina War was in full progress, continuing until 1954, when the French were defeated at Dien Bien Phu. In 1954, delegates to an international conference in Geneva agreed to a temporary division of Vietnam into two separate countries—North and South Vietnam. In 1955, elections were held in South Vietnam, and Ngo Dinh Diem was chosen leader. By 1957, the Vietminh in the south, now called the Viet Cong, had begun an armed revolt against Diem's government, supported by North Vietnam. More countries were drawn in as the fighting continued, including the U.S., which became deeply embroiled in the conflict by the late 1960s. The U.S.S.R. and China supported North Vietnam. In South Vietnam, a series of coups eventually brought army general Nguyen Van Thieu to power; he was then elected president in 1967. In North Vietnam, the Communist Party Politburo took over following Ho Chi Minh's death in 1969. The war ended in 1975 with the withdrawal of American troops. In 1976, the country was unified under the Communists as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, and Saigon was renamed Ho Chi Minh City.

More than three million Vietnamese had been killed in the decades of war, and the country's economy had been devastated. Many Vietnamese emigrated to the U.S. and other countries. In 1978, Vietnam severed its ties with China and aligned itself more closely with the Soviet Union. That same year, Vietnam drew China's wrath by invading Cambodia, an incursion that lasted into the 1980s. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the loss of its economic support, Vietnam began to liberalize its trade policies, allow private enterprise, and encourage foreign trade. From 1990 to 1997, Vietnam's economy grew rapidly. In 1994, the U.S. lifted its trade embargo, and in 1995, full diplomatic relations were restored.

## Cambodia

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 69,898 square miles
- **Capital:** Phnom Penh
- **Languages:** Khmer is the official language; English and French are also spoken.
- **Location:** Cambodia is bordered by Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- **Geography:** The ancient Khmer kingdom we now call Cambodia is a nation of 16.2 million people in a country about the size of Missouri. This is a country of geographical contrasts—the borders of Cambodia are mountainous and rugged, but a rich, alluvial plain dominates the center of the country. Here the Mekong River, the Tonle Sap River, and the Tonle Sap Lake create a prosperous farming and fishing region full of rice fields and fishing villages.
- **Population:** 16,915,269 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Buddhist 96.9%, Muslim 1.9%, other 0.4%, unspecified 0.8%
- **Time Zone:** Cambodia is on Indochina Time, twelve hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 6pm in Phnom Penh.

## National Holidays: Cambodia

In addition to the holidays listed below, Cambodia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

01/07 Victory over Genocide Day

February (moves each year; see note above)  
Meak Bochea

03/08 International Women Day

04/14–04/16 Khmer New Year

05/01 Labor Day

5/20 Day of Remembrance

09/24 Constitutional Day

10/15 Commemoration Day of King's Father

10/29 King's Coronation Day

November Water Festival (moves each year)

11/09 Independence Day

12/10 International Human Rights Day

## Cambodia: A Brief History

Cambodia's historic roots were established between the 1st to the 6th centuries, when an India-influenced state called Funan ruled the landscapes. With the rise of King Jayavarman at the beginning of the 9th century, Funan gave way to the Angkor Empire, whose kings would dominate much of present-day Southeast Asia for the next 600 years.

Jayavarman and a succession of Khmer kings were responsible for building the Angkor temple complex, the most extensive concentration of religious temples in the world. Through the centuries, the almost constant state of war with Thailand and Vietnam would see the mighty Khmer empire slip into a steady decline. And by the mid-1800s, Cambodia, like most of Southeast Asia, came under the thumb of European colonial powers.

In 1863, Cambodia's King Norodom signed a Protectorate Treaty with France, who would go on to rule Cambodia until 1941 when the Japanese army expelled the French and instilled their own brand of terror to the populace. With the defeat of Japan and the end of World War II, the French returned to Cambodia. But by 1953 a strong local leader, King Sihanouk, had risen to power with the Khmer and sought independence for his country. King Sihanouk, who also established the People's Socialist Party, became the country's first prime minister. Sihanouk kept Cambodia neutral in the Vietnam War until 1965, when he broke with the U.S. and allowed North Vietnam and the Vietcong to use Cambodian territory.

In 1970, Sihanouk was deposed by one of his generals, Lon Nol, who established a government in exile in China that supported the Cambodian revolutionary movement known as the Khmer Rouge—just as U.S. and South Vietnamese forces entered Cambodia to flush out Vietcong forces hiding there. For the next five years, as savage fighting spread throughout Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge gained land and power. In 1975 the capital at Phnom Penh fell to the Khmer Rouge, and their leader, Pol Pot, became the leader of Cambodia.



Three years of horror ensued as Pol Pot and his followers began a campaign of systematic genocide against the Cambodian people, with the aim of returning the country to the agrarian society of centuries before. In 1979, the Khmer Rouge were overthrown, and the Vietnamese-backed People's Republic of Kampuchea was established. The Vietnamese withdrew the last of their troops by 1989. Entering the 1990s U.N. peacekeeping efforts helped stabilize Cambodia, and in 1993 a constitution was adopted, general elections were held, and King Norodom Sihanouk returned to the throne. In 2004, ill health forced him to abdicate in favor of his son, Norodom Sihamoni, who currently reigns as a constitutional monarch not very different from the parliamentary system of Great Britain.

## Singapore

### Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 269 square miles
- **Capital:** Singapore
- **Languages:** Mandarin Chinese, English, Malay, and Tamil are all official languages.
- **Ethnicities:** Chinese 74.2%, Malay 13.3%, Indian 9.2%, other 3.3%
- **Location:** On islands at the southernmost tip of the Malay Peninsula in Southeast Asia, south of Malaysia and north of Indonesia.
- **Geography:** Although Singapore is technically spread across a collection of 63 islands, most of the city lies on the main island, Pulau Ujong. The city-state is relatively small (about the same as Washington D.C.), so most of the land has been developed, with very little natural geography remaining.
- **Population:** 5,781,728
- **Religions:** Buddhist 33.9%, Muslim 14.3%, Taoist 11.3%, Catholic 7.1%, Hindu 5.2%, other Christian 11%, other 0.7%, none 16.4%
- **Time zone:** Singapore is thirteen hours ahead of U.S. EST. So when it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 7pm in Singapore.

### National Holidays: Singapore

In addition to the holidays listed below, Singapore celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Lunar New Year and Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit [www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays).

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 Labor Day

08/09 National Day

12/25 Christmas Day

## RESOURCES

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### Suggested Reading

#### General Southeast Asia

***A Traveller's History of Southeast Asia*** by J.M. Barwise and Nicholas J. White (2015, History) As compact history of a diverse region, this book packs a wealth of information into its well-written and well-organized pages. (And yes, the title has two "L"s; the series is British).

***The River's Tale, A Year on the Mekong*** by Edward Gargan (2003, Travel Narrative) Describes in beautiful detail a year spend on the Mekong River during a 3,000-mile journey from its source in China through Tibet, Burma, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

***What the Buddha Taught*** by Walpola Sri Rahula (1974, Religion) A succinct and accessible overview of Buddhism as it is practiced in Southeast Asia by an internationally recognized authority who just happens to also be a Buddhist monk.

#### Vietnam

***The Sympathizer*** by Viet Thanh Nguyen (2016, Fiction) The taut story of a double agent who secretly sympathizes with the Communist forces during the fall of the South Vietnamese government in 1975. A brilliant page-turner of a novel that won numerous awards including the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

***Communion: A Culinary Journey Through Vietnam*** by Kim Fay (2012, Food). Part cookbook and part travelogue, this book follows Seattle native Kim Fay, who had lived in Vietnam for four years in the '90s, as she returns to Vietnam for a 5-week culinary safari from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. Beautiful, bold photographs and stories about the chefs accompany authentic recipes.

***Last Night I Dreamed of Peace: The Diary of Dang Thuy Tram*** by Dang Thuy Tram (2008, Diary) As a young doctor working for the North Vietnamese Army, Dang Thuy Tram kept a diary of her experiences between the years 1968 and 1970 until she was killed by American forces near where she worked. Found by an American soldier, the diary was returned to her family and published for the first time almost 30 years later.

***When Heaven and Earth Changed Places: A Vietnamese Woman's Journey from War to Peace*** by Le Ly Hayslip (1989, Memoir) The true-life story of a Vietnamese girl forced into the war (on both sides), where she faced constant danger, near starvation, and torture. A riveting, emotional, and brutally honest look at what it takes to survive a war. The sequel, ***Child of War, Woman of Peace*** describes the author's life in America after the war's end.

***The Quiet American*** by Graham Greene (1956, Literature) Quite possibly the most famous novel set in Vietnam, and a classic love triangle too. A knowing British war correspondent and a hopeful American are caught up in both revolutionary politics and whirlwind romance in 1950s Saigon. Unfortunately, they both fall for the same Vietnamese woman.

## Cambodia

***A History of Cambodia*** by David Chandler (2018 4th Ed., History) A bit dry perhaps, but this acclaimed work is considered one of the best accounts of Cambodia's modern history, beginning in 1953 to the rise and fall of the Khmer Rouge, the death of the noxious Pol Pot in the late 1990s, and the return of peace to this lovely land.

***Golden Bones, An Extraordinary Journey from Hell in Cambodia to a New Life in America*** by Sichan Siv (2009, Memoir) Deputy Ambassador to the UN during the Bush administration, Siv looks back on a remarkable life, from his privileged childhood in Pochentong to the murderous reign of Pol Pot, his escape from a work camp to freedom and, eventually, life in America.

***First They Killed My Father: A Daughter of Cambodia Remembers*** by Loung Ung (2000, Memoir) A personal account of Ung's experiences throughout the Khmer Rouge years as a survivor of the Pol Pot regime. At times an uncomfortable read, but very worthwhile and her story will stay with you for a long time. Ung's award-winning memoir was followed up by two more: *Lucky Child: A Daughter of Cambodia Reunites with the Sister She Left Behind* and *Lulu in the Sky: A Daughter of Cambodia Finds Love, Healing, and Double Happiness*.

***Angkor, Cambodia's Wondrous Khmer Temples*** by Dawn Rooney (first published 1994 by Odyssey Books & Guides) This beautifully illustrated volume is considered by many as the indispensable guide to Khmer culture and history.

## Singapore

The ***Auntie Lee*** series by Ovidia Yu (2013, Mysteries). Meet Auntie Lee, Singapore's answer to Miss Marple or Jessica Fletcher.

***King Rat*** by James Clavell (1962, Historical Fiction). An English POW and a ruthless American corporeal struggle to survive in a World War II prison camp. The dramatic story is made even more harrowing and vivid by the author's real-life experiences—he was held at this same camp in real life.

## Suggested Films & Videos

### Vietnam

***Anthony Bordain: No Reservations—Vietnam*** (2009, Travel/Food) Three episodes of the popular series were filmed in Vietnam and offer rich insights about life in modern-day Vietnam and regional cuisine from bustling Saigon to the countryside of Da Lat. Also worth viewing is Bordain's ***Parts Unknown: Hanoi*** (2016) the classic episode featuring former U.S. President Barack Obama and Bordain sitting down together at a small restaurant in Hanoi enjoying beers and bun cha, a local specialty.

***Good Morning Vietnam*** (1987, Comedy) While the irreverent humor of Armed Forces Radio Service host Adrian Cronauer (played by Robin Williams) amuses the troops stuck in 1965-era Vietnam, he clashes with the Army brass who try to censor his show.

***Hearts and Minds*** (1974, Documentary) This landmark documentary offers an unflinching portrait of America's involvement in the Vietnam War using newsreel footage and interviews. Many consider it the most important film ever made about this period.

***Apocalypse Now*** (1979, Drama) Francis Ford Coppola's surreal Vietnam War epic was inspired by Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and stars Martin Sheen as an Army captain on a secret mission to track down a renegade Special Services colonel played by Marlon Brando.

***The Quiet American*** (1958, Classic) A love triangle between a British journalist, a young Vietnamese woman, and a U.S. official, based on the Graham Greene novel—although Greene would disavow the film for flipping the book's message. Instead of a cautionary tale about foreign intervention, the film's focus is anticommunist advocacy of American power (Audie Murphy, the film's star, reportedly said he wouldn't have done the movie if it stuck to Greene's anti-American message). The 2002 remake starring Michael Caine and Brendan Fraser sticks much closer to Greene's novel and received widespread acclaim. It suffered bad timing though—Its "unpatriotic" message did not go over well with audiences after 9/11.

## Cambodia

***Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*** (2001, Action/Adventure) This fanciful romp was filmed at several locations around the temple complex of Siem Reap, including Angkor Wat. Angelina Jolie was good in the role, but the real star of the film was the jungle temple of Ta Prohm, which tuk-tuk drivers and guidebooks alike just call it "Tomb Raider temple." Significant parts of *Lord Jim*, the 1995 film starring Peter O'Toole, were also shot at Angkor Wat.

***The Killing Fields*** (1984, Drama) Based on the work of New York Times reporter Sydney Schanberg (played by Sam Waterston) and his translator Dith Pran (played by Haing Ngor), this war drama explores the tragic rise of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia. Ngor, who won Best Supporting Actor for his performance (the first and only Asian man thus far) and managed to survive three terms in Cambodian prison camps, was fatally shot in Los Angeles in 1996.

## Singapore

***Crazy Rich Asians*** (2018, Romantic Comedy). Rachel, an Asian-American woman, visits Singapore with her boyfriend, Nick, to meet his family for a wedding, unaware his family is the richest family in the country. Rachel struggles with the expectations of Nick's wealthy family and their relationship.

***Ramen Shop*** (2018, Drama). Masato, a young Japanese-Singaporean ramen chef, travels to Singapore to meet his maternal family after his father's death. Masato cooks with his grandmother at the family food stall as he tries to understand his parents' love story and his early childhood in Singapore.

***Ilo Ilo*** (2013, Family/Drama). The first Singaporean movie to win an award at the Cannes movie film festival in 2013, *Ilo Ilo* literally translates to “Mom and Dad Are Not Home”. Set in 1997, *Ilo Ilo* focuses on the Lim family and their Filipina nanny, Teresa. While the father loses his job, the son, Jiale, develops a strong emotional bond with Teresa, only to be forced to say good-bye when the family can no longer afford to pay her.

***Singapore Dreaming*** (2006, Drama). *Singapore Dreaming* follows the working-class Loh family through their daily struggles as they dream of a more affluent life. *Singapore Dreaming* was the first Singaporean movie to win the Best Asian/Middle-Eastern Film Award at the 20th Tokyo International Film Festival.

***I Not Stupid*** (2002, Comedy/Drama). *I Not Stupid* follows three school students through their personal and academic problems, and serves as a satirical look at the Singaporean education system. *I Not Stupid* was the second-highest grossing Singaporean film, and started public discussions that led to reforms in the education system.

## Useful Websites

### **Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions**

[www.oattravel.com/faq](http://www.oattravel.com/faq)

### **International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)**

[www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)

### **Electricity & Plugs**

[www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets](http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets)

### **Foreign Exchange Rates**

[www.xe.com/currencyconverter](http://www.xe.com/currencyconverter)  
[www.oanda.com/converter/classic](http://www.oanda.com/converter/classic)

### **ATM Locators**

[www.mastercard.com/atm](http://www.mastercard.com/atm)  
[www.visa.com/atmlocator](http://www.visa.com/atmlocator)

### **World Weather**

[www.intellicast.com](http://www.intellicast.com)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)  
[www.wunderground.com](http://www.wunderground.com)

### **Basic Travel Phrases** (80 languages)

[www.travlang.com/languages](http://www.travlang.com/languages)

### **Packing Tips**

[www.travelite.org](http://www.travelite.org)

### **U.S. Customs & Border Protection**

[www.cbp.gov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/travel)

### **Transportation Security Administration (TSA)**

[www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov)

### **National Passport Information Center**

[www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)

### **Holidays Worldwide**

[www.timeanddate.com/holidays](http://www.timeanddate.com/holidays)

## Useful Apps

### **Flight Stats**

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

### **LoungeBuddy**

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

### **Timeshifter**

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

### **GoogleMaps or Maps.me**

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

### **Triposo**

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

### **Rome2rio**

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

### **Flush or Sit or Squat**

Find a clean toilet anywhere

### **Uber or Bolt or Grab**

Ride sharing around the world

### **Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus**

#### **ATM locations**

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

### **TunnelBear**

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

### **What's App or Skype or Signal**

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

### **Duolingo or FLuentU or Babbel**

Learn dozens of foreign languages

### **Google Translate**

Fast and simple translations

### **XE**

Currency conversions

### **SizeGuide**

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

### **Best Units Converter**

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

### **Tourlina**

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

### **Happy Cow**

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

### **Eatwith**

Dine with locals all over the world

### **Meetup**

Connects you with locals who share your interests

### **Skyview**

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

### **Travello**

Find travel friends on the road

### **ALIX for One**

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

### **TripWhistle**

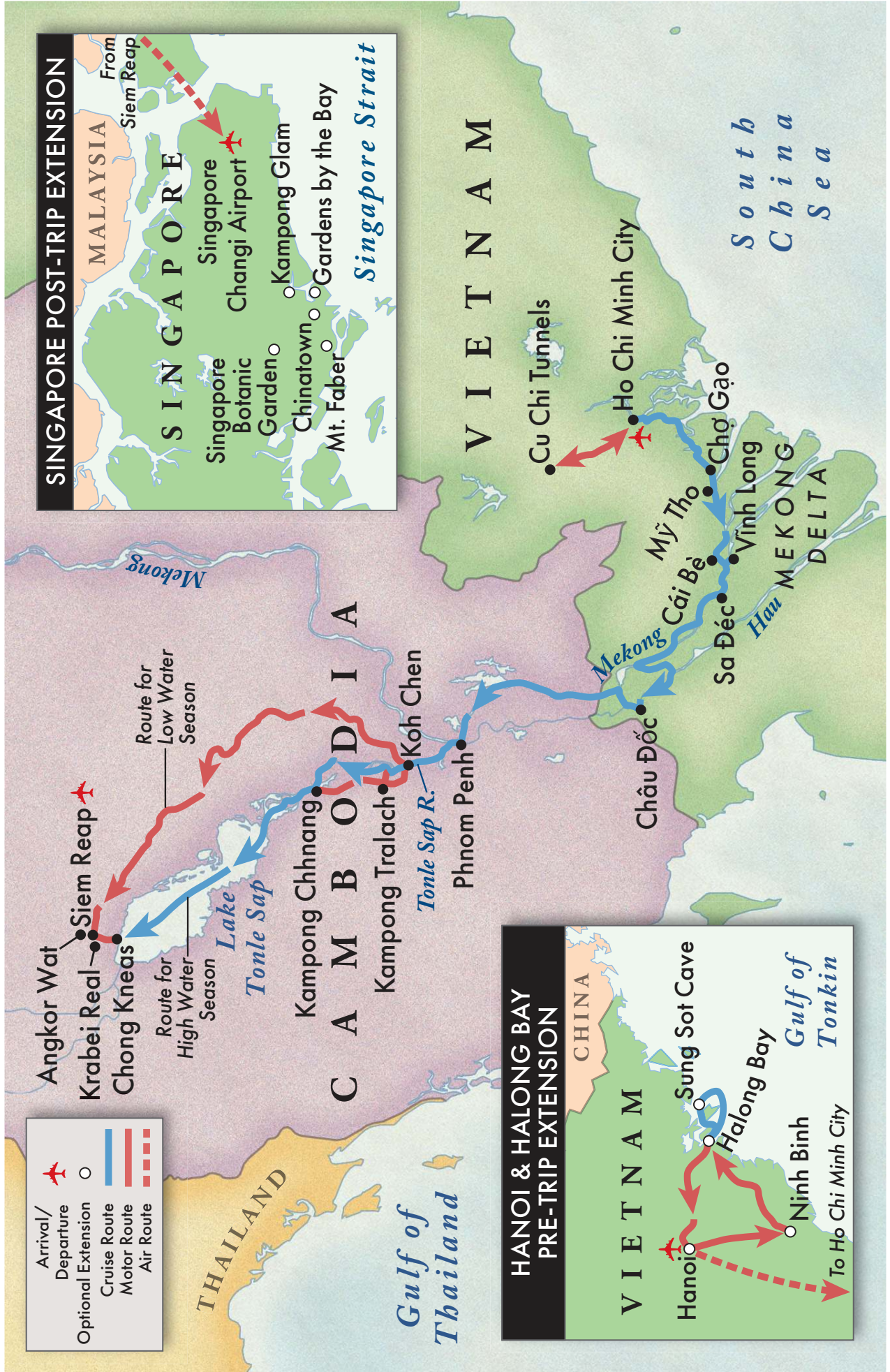
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

### **GeoSure**

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

### **Chirpey**

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from Foster City, CA



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23-time traveler from Oakland, CA



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