

The challenge of a lifetime...
...for Merlin MS Centre

Vietnam to Cambodia

Cycle



**One magnificent adventure, two exotic jewels in the
crown of south east Asia...**

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**Merlin
MS Centre**

UK Charity Reg No: 1093691

Ancient temples & enchanting smiles - an unforgettable adventure!

Your cycle challenge...

...is to cycle over 400km from the frenzy of Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam to the tranquility of Angkor Wat in Cambodia. Intrigued locals will greet you with delight as you pedal through the bustling coconut groves and thriving river communities at the heart of the Mekong Delta and the stilted villages and mysterious temples of Angkor - ancient Khmer relics of a vanished culture nestled in amongst the sugar palm trees.

Your itinerary...

Day 1

We depart the UK for our overnight flight to Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 2

Arrive Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to our hotel. After our bike fitting the rest of the day is at leisure to rest or explore the sights and sounds of this fantastic city. We will meet for dinner and a briefing in the evening.

Day 3

Saigon to Tra Vinh

After breakfast, we transfer for a couple of hours out of Ho Chi Minh City to My Tho - the gateway to the Mekong Delta. Today's ride will lead us right into the heart of the rural Mekong. We pedal along narrow paths and lanes, past banana plantations and fields of sugar cane, through the lush green landscape of the Delta until we reach Tra Vinh - a small town off the tourist trail, with a large population of ethnic Khmer.

Cycling distance - approx. 62km

Day 4

Tra Vinh to Can Tho

Following breakfast at our hotel, we push on with our cycling adventure - the roads are peaceful, narrow and very pretty all the way to Can Tho. Along the way we cross numerous rivers and streams via bridges and local ferries. There is plenty to see on our journey, including colourful Khmer temples and the pond of Ba Om, where we'll hear the story of how it was dug and subsequently got its name according to local legend. We cycle along riverbank paths and through busy villages until we join the main road to Can Tho. Can Tho is a popular town on the banks of the Mekong with a night market and waterfront bars and restaurants.

Cycling distance - approx. 90km

Day 5

Can Tho to Chau Doc

After a very early breakfast, we catch the boat to Cai Rang floating market to see the local farmers selling their produce from their boats on the busy river. Once we're back on dry land we cycle along narrow roads weaving through the morning market hustle and bustle on the banks of the river, whilst absorbing the sights of endless cottage industries, timber merchants and coconut shredders. Once we finish cycling for the day, we will transfer for approximately one and a half hours to the border town of Chau Doc, where we spend our last night in Vietnam.

Cycling distance - approx. 75km





**Day 6
Chau Doc to Phnom Penh**

Today we will say goodbye to our Vietnamese crew and bikes, as we continue our journey by boat up the Mekong and then the Bassac River to Phnom Penh. We stop off en route to officially exit Vietnam and then again to obtain our visas into Cambodia. We arrive in the Cambodian capital for lunch. In the afternoon we may have time to visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum or one of the killing fields of Cambodia at Choeung Ek - sad but important reminders of this beautiful country's troubled past.

**Day 7
Phnom Penh to Kompong Thom**

Following breakfast we transfer across the Japanese bridge and start cycling alongside the Mekong River on a mixture of tarmac and dirt roads on one of the most scenic rides in the country. We meet and see many friendly locals as we pass through orchards and villages. After lunch we set off on good tarmac roads as the route takes us west once again until we meet up with the main national road. We continue on to our finishing point of today's cycling - Totoeng Village. We then transfer to Kompong Thom.

**Day 9
Exploring Angkor Wat**

Following breakfast, we cycle on to the finish line at the famous Angkor Wat. After lunch we explore the incredible city of Angkor - the overgrown Ta Prohm, embraced by tree roots and gigantic creepers, the tranquil Bayon with its multitude of serene stone faces, the impressive 350m long Terrace of the Elephants and the magnificent piece de résistance, Angkor Wat! After exploring this fascinating world heritage site, we celebrate our achievements in Siem Reap.

Day 10

Enjoy a free morning in Siem Reap before we catch our flight back to the UK.

Day 11

Arrive UK.

(Please note, this is a complex itinerary and subject to change)

Cycling distance – approx. 28km

Cycling distance – approx. 89km

**Day 8
Kompong Thom to Angkor**

This morning's transfer is approximately one and half hours to an ancient bridge at Kompong Kdei, one of the best examples of the remaining 800 year old bridges in Cambodia. From the bridge we transfer another 31km to Damdek village where our bikes are waiting for us to start our ride. We have lunch along the way and then will continue cycling directly to our hotel in the colonial city of Siem Reap – a fantastic town with markets, bars and restaurants to suit everyone!

Cycling distance – approx. 66km



Your questions answered...

Is this trip for me?

ABSOLUTELY! This cycle challenge is suitable for people of all ages (minimum 18 years old). The one thing everyone will have in common is a great sense of adventure and the desire to help the Merlin MS Centre. Most people will sign up as individuals meaning you will all be in the same situation!

How fit do I need to be?

This cycle ride has been designed to be challenging, but achievable by anyone as long as you fitness train beforehand. Remember, you are cycling for 6 days and in very hot temperatures – the fitter you are the more you will enjoy this challenge. Cycling training tips can be found on the Global Adventure Challenges website to point you in the right direction and why not sign up for one of our training weekends - it's a great opportunity for you to meet our team and fellow participants!

Where will we stay?

We will stay in local hotels enroute, which range from 2* and 3* to the more basic lodge – remember, this is a challenge! All accommodation will have washing facilities available.

Do I need specialist kit?

We will supply you with a kit list of what to take once you register to take part. Apart from some cycling shorts, a cycling helmet and maybe some cycling gloves, you do not need any specialist kit. Participants can bring their own pedals, bar-ends and any other personal cycling equipment they see fit to modify the bikes supplied, although it is not compulsory.

Do I have to carry my own luggage?

No. All luggage will be transported from accommodation to accommodation by our support vehicles. You will need a small saddle bag/bum bag/'camel bak' while cycling, to carry items such as camera, sunscreen, etc. Some people find wearing a back pack uncomfortable due to the heat and humidity, but it's your choice.

Food matters...

All meals will be provided. While cycling, we will either stop at local cafes/restaurants or be supplied with a packed lunch. We cater for all dietary requirements so long as we know in advance – just fill in the appropriate section on your registration form enclosed. Vietnamese and Khmer food is very varied and nutritious with plenty of vegetables, noodles, rice and fish.

What's included?

Flights from a London airport to Ho Chi Minh City, then return from Siem Reap to a London airport, all accommodation (twin share), all meals throughout itinerary starting with dinner on day 2 to breakfast on day 10, bottled drinking water for all cycling days, snacks and fruit for cycling days, private air-conditioned vehicles for back up, support and transfers, local English speaking cycling guides, local English speaking guide for Phnom Penh and Siem Reap visit, local bike hire with spares, local boat trip to visit floating Cai Rang Market, Vietnam (day 5), speed boat ticket – Chau Doc to Phnom Penh (day 6), all local ferry tickets, entrance fee into Angkor Wat Temple Complex, Global Adventure Challenges leader from the UK and full, comprehensive first aid kits.

What's not included?

Airport taxes and fuel surcharge – these are approximately £250 per person, visa for Vietnam, tips, alcoholic drinks and drinks during meals, personal travel insurance – it is strongly advised to take this through Global Adventure Challenges, visa for Cambodia – this is obtained at the border – participants need to take US \$25 and a passport sized photo.

Can I stay in Cambodia after the challenge?

All extensions are strictly limited, subject to availability and are given on a first come, first served basis. Those wanting to request an extension should contact Global Adventure Challenges at customer.care@globaladventurechallenges.com. There is a minimum charge of £60 + VAT for having your return airline ticket extended. Please note, the final decision always rests with the airline.

What sort of back-up is there?

There will be a strong support team with a professional Global Adventure Challenges leader from the UK, as well as local guides. Full, comprehensive first aid kits will be taken and we are never too far away from hospitals. An air-conditioned vehicle will follow the group providing support if needed.

What happens if I get tired?

There will be regular rest stops for drinks and snacks – there is no problem if you need to take more rest stops. A guide will be bringing up the rear of the group on the cycle ride ensuring no-one is left alone – remember though, this is not a race!

How do I go about raising the sponsorship?

Once you have signed up you will receive a fundraising pack from the Merlin MS Centre in order to make your fundraising as easy as possible. You will also receive a few tips and ideas from Global Adventure Challenges to help you on your way.

I'm interested... what do I do now?

Places are limited and go on a first come, first served basis, so try to register as soon as you can! You can register online at www.globaladventurechallenges.com or fill in the enclosed registration form and medical questionnaire and post it back to Global Adventure Challenges along with the registration fee – all payment options and costs are explained on the enclosed information sheet. Once your registration is received, Global Adventure Challenges will write to you sending you further information on what to expect from this awesome adventure! The Merlin MS Centre will also be in touch with you to discuss your fundraising.

Have you got what it takes to pedal over 400km from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap?

Register online today!

www.globaladventurechallenges.com



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