

**Day 1 (9 November): Depart Wellington at 6:40 am**

Arrive at Hanoi airport at 16:15 same day and be transported to Hanoi City.

**Day 2: Arrival Hanoi - Explore Hanoi**

Explore the Vietnamese capital on a half-day guided tour. With a millennium-long history, Hanoi is a city of lakes, shaded boulevards and public parks dotted with French-style buildings and historical monuments. During the half-day city tour, we will see cultural and historical highlights, comprising Ba Dinh Square, Ho Chi Minh's former residence, Presidential Palace (for outside photo taken), One-pillar Pagoda, Temple of Literature, Hoan Kiem Lake, and Ngoc Son Temple. The tour gives us time for shopping and socializing with the locals.

In the evening:

You'll enjoy the water puppet show, created during the Ly Dynasty (1009-1224), in which the artists controlling the puppets stand in water behind the stage door. This became a uniquely Vietnamese artistic endeavor. Performances can be seen throughout Vietnam, but Hanoi is the best place to see one.

Overnight in Hanoi. (B,-,-)

**Day 3: Transfer to Halong Bay – Excursion**

In the morning, transfer to Ha Long (170km / 3 hours and a half), a World Heritage site recognized by UNESCO in 1994. Upon arrival, board a traditional Vietnamese junk at midday and enjoy a welcome drink. A sumptuous lunch is served on board as the cruise commences. The afternoon tour of this world-renowned bay takes you past towering limestone karsts and several islands. In late afternoon relax and enjoy the sunset and then tuck into dinner on board.

Overnight on board. (B, L, D)

**Day 4: Halong Bay – Excursion – Hanoi**

In the morning, after breakfast, we head back to Halong wharf for the trip's conclusion. In the late morning, get out of the junk. Drive back to Hanoi.

Overnight in Hanoi (B, L or Brunch depending on cruise)

**Day 5: Transfer to Mai Chau**

Drive overland from Hanoi to Mai Chau. Here we stay for overnight, before we cross the border the next morning.

Overnight in Mai Chau (B, L,-)

**Day 6: Mai Chau - Arrival in Laos – Muang Khoua**

Early start to drive to the border, approx 5-6 hrs.

Meet the Lao guide at the border. Transfer by private Minivan to Muang Khoua.

Overnight in Muang Khua(B)

**Day 7: Muang Khoua- Boat trip to Muang Ngoy**

Today we board a longtail-boat for the journey on the Nam Ou to Muang Ngoy.

Overnight in local GH(B)

**Day 8: Kayak Trip Muang Ngoy to Nong Khiaw**

From Muang Ngoy take the kayak on a trip downriver to Nong Khiaw; stop for picnic lunch on the riverbank, enjoy the spectacular scenery and views of northern Laos.

Overnight in Nong Khiaw(B,L)

**Day 9: Nong Khiaw – 100 Waterfall Trek (optional Mountain View Trek)**

The 100 waterfalls, a natural hike in north Laos 'Wow,wow,wow...' is what the first travelers said after coming back from this simply amazing waterfall hike and river trip!!! Starting the day with a peaceful boat ride on the Nam Ou you will be able to explore a small Lao village along the river side before heading into the waterfalls. Learn about their way of life along this river! Walking through small streams and rice paddies you arrive at the bottom of the 100 waterfalls which have been first explored in October 2008! The next few hours you will see only water and jungle and hear the sound of clear waterfall



cascades. The pools around you are very inviting for a refreshing splash. Your guide will lead you through the cascades and prepare a local style lunch on the falls in the middle of amazingly green nature... A small villagers trail on the top of the 100 waterfalls will lead us back down into the valley offering wide views over the landscapes of the Nam Ou valley... Hiking back to the village we will have more time to see the daily life here on the Nam OU riverside village and then head back with a small boat which will bring us back to Nong Kiao/Nong Khiaw.

You should bring normal fitness clothing and be ready to stay wet for a few hours. Surprisingly the rocks and stones along the falls are not slippery at all, though you need to watch your step while looking into the jungle. This adventure walk is rated to be the best value adventure hike in Luang Prabang province!

Trekking sandals are perfect for this trip out of Nong Khiaw. A jacket for the way back is essential as it can get very chilly in the evening. We provide water, food and guiding on tour. Village donations are paid per client according to the "Fair Trek" mission we follow. We support villages along our trails with donations on each tour. Thank you for helping our good cause!

Overnight in Nong Khiaw(B,L)

#### **Day 10: Nong Khiaw – Luang Prabang by private boat**

The boat ride from Nong Khiaw to Luang Prabang offers spectacular views and a unique look into traditional daily village life along the river. As we cruise down the Nam Ou and approach the Mekong we will arrive at the famous Pak Ou caves. These two caves are filled with hundreds of Buddha images of all styles and sizes. Both caves are accessed by stairs. The lower cave, known as Tham Ting, is naturally lit; the upper cave, Tham Phum, is deeper and darker, so watch your step. Overall, the boat trip back journey to Luang Prabang is relaxing, with some light activity. We will arrive back at Luang Prabang in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Luang Prabang(B,L)

#### **Day 11: Kuang Si Waterfall Trek**

Discover beautiful nature and landscapes outside of Luang Prabang on this one day Fair Trek hiking tour. You will see rice paddies and locally cultivated land as well as dense forests on your way to the amazing Kuang Si waterfalls: Laos' most famous waterfall.

Starting from Luang Prabang we drive out into the close by valley south east of Luang Prabang. Arriving at the Long Lao village we start our hiking tour. We start this tour with exploring the life and culture of the village where Khamu and Hmong people live. The trail leads then passing some fields and vegetable gardens before reaching the forested mountains with quite wild sceneries and steeper climbs. After a stretch of forest hiking (slippery in wet season) we will explore an interesting cave. During the Second Indochina War people say it helped the local people as a bomb shelter! The early afternoon we then arrive at the crystal clear water of just one of the springs that feed the famous Kuang Si waterfall. The last short walk brings us down the steep waterfall where we have time for a relaxing swim.

In the Kuang Si waterfall sanctuary you can see bears living in their project area. An NGO helps to set up proper care and areas to keep the animals.

In the afternoon we return to Luang Prabang

2 hours driving / and approximately 4 hours of trekking.

Overnight in Luang Prabang(B,L)

#### **Day 12: Luang Prabang Free day**

Overnight in Luang Prabang(B)

#### **Day 13: Flight LPQ-PKZ - to Don Det / Don Khone**

Transfer to the airport for flight to Pakse. From Pakse we take the Minivan to go to Wat Phou, where we visit the ancient Khmer Temple ruins on the west bank of the Mekong, approx. 45km south of Pakse. From there we continue southwards until we reach the island of Don Det. Here you will stay with a local family in a village for overnight(B,L)



#### **Day 14: Don Khone – Cycling, walking, Dolphins & Waterfalls**

We'll explore the **4000 islands** area (Si Pan Don) by boat, bicycle and on foot. Here, the Mekong River is at its widest. During the rainy season it stretches up to 12 km across. When the waters recede, many small islands emerge. It is from this phenomenon that the region takes its name. From the distance you can hear the unmistakable roar of the **Khone Phapheng** and **Li Phi falls**, which we will visit. These falls are famous for the Irrawaddy freshwater dolphins that swim nearby. **Ban Hang Khon** is one of the rare places on earth to spot these endangered mammals. We'll also see the old locomotive and a railway and colonial bridge built by the French in order to avoid navigating the rapids and waterfalls that abound on this section of the Mekong.

Overnight on Don Det(B,L)

#### **Day 15: Don Det - Veun Kham/Dong Kralor - Kratie (-)**

After meeting with your guide at the border to Cambodia, you will drive to Kratie, a small colonial style town. Visit Wat Phnom Sambok to see the Buddhist monasteries and to enjoy the magnificent views of the surrounding countryside from the hilltop. On the way stop at the best riverside vantage point from which to view the rare fresh water Irrawady River Dolphins. Take a small ferry boat to the Island Koh Trong, situated in the middle of the Mekong River opposite Kratie town.

If time permits, you can discover the Island by bicycle.

Overnight at the island

#### **Day 16: Kratie – Phnom Penh (B)**

Early morning drive to Phnom Penh around 5 hours. You will arrive at around 13:00h.

In the afternoon, visit to the S21 prison and The Killing Fields, where you will learn more about the painful suffering of the Khmer people during Pol Pot's regime.

Overnight in Phnom Penh

#### **Day 17: Phnom Penh - Siem Reap (B)**

After breakfast, transfer to the airport and flight to Siem Reap.

Visit Angkor Thom: Temples of King Jayavarman VII (1181-1220): Southern Gate of Angkor Thom, Bayon, Terrace of Elephants, Terrace of Leper King, the 12 Prasat Suor Prat,

Temples of 11<sup>th</sup> century: Baphuon, Phimeanakas, North Khleang & South Khleang

We begin the day with a visit to one of the jewels of Cambodia: the awe-inspiring Angkor Thom or 'Great City'. This will include many of the finest Temples of King Jayavarman VII, who ruled from 1181 to 1220. At the southern gate of Angkor Thom, you will marvel at the imposing 23m (75-foot) high stone faces of Avalokiteshvara, featured in the Tomb Raider movie. These astonishing carvings inspire awe and wonder in all who view them. At the centre of this citadel lies the state temple of Bayon, which we will also visit. This temple-mountain, built at the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, is adorned with hundreds of gigantic stone faces. This tour also includes the Terrace of Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper King and the 12 identical towers of Prasat Suor Prat. Later in the day you will discover the most famous temples from the 11<sup>th</sup> century: Baphuon, Phimeanakas, North Khleang and South Khleang.

Overnight in Siem Reap

#### **Day 18: Siem Reap (B)**

Visit Angkor Wat by Tuk Tuk, Cambodia's unique transportation. The crowning jewel of Khmer architecture, Angkor Wat is the national symbol and the highlight of any visit to Cambodia. The largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples, Angkor impresses visitors both by its sheer scale and beautifully proportioned layout, as well as the delicate artistry of its carvings. To approach the temple, first cross the vast moat, continuing along a broad causeway lined with naga balustrades. As you enter the main building, ascend through a series of galleries and courtyard before reaching the central sanctuary, which offers beautiful views back over the causeway and across the surrounding countryside. On the way, stop to enjoy the intricate stone carvings that adorn nearly every surface, with some 1,700 Apsaras, or celestial dancers, sculpted into the walls. Along the outer gallery walls run the longest continuous bas-relief in the world, which narrates stories from Hindu mythology, including the famous Churning of the Ocean of Milk. Angkor Wat is stunning at any time of the day, but sunrise and sunset are especially beautiful times to watch the play of light on the stones.



Continue to see the Silk Farm outside Siem Reap, where a guided tour shows you the process from the mulberry bushes cultivation to the production of Silk fabrics and accessories.

Late afternoon enjoy a cooking class nearby the river in a nice garden area, where you will learn more about traditional Khmer cuisine, followed by dinner.

Overnight in Siem Reap

**Day 19: Siem Reap – Kbal Spean - Banteay Srei - Landmine Museum (B)**

We journey north to Kbal Spean, the original ‘River of a Thousand Lingas. Kbal Spean is an intricately carved riverbed deep in the foothills of the Cambodian jungle only discovered in 1969. The Khmers venerated its limestone bed with a riot of carvings, including thousands of lingams. A trip to Kbal Spean is one of the easiest ways to experience a short jungle trek in the Angkor area, as it is a steady but scenic climb to reach the river carvings.

We head to Banteay Srei, Angkor’s ultimate art gallery. This petite pink temple is the jewel in the crown of Angkor-era sculpture. The elaborate carvings here are the finest found in Cambodia and the name translates as ‘Fortress of the Women’, thanks to the intricate detail here, considered too fine for the hands of a man. On the way back to Siem Reap, we visit the Cambodia Landmine Museum to learn more about the scourge of landmines and the shadow they cast over rural communities in Cambodia with a visit to this flagship museum promoting mine awareness and education.

Overnight in Siem Reap

**Day 20: Siem Reap – departure (B)**

Transfer to the airport for departure flight to Saigon(Ho-Chi-Minh City)

Flights by Vietnam Airlines / Cambodia Angkor Air codesharing.

Fly to Sydney arriving morning of day 21

**Day 21(29 November): Sydney – NZ**

After a day in Sydney we fly home (for Wellingtonians we arrive at 23:20, Aucklanders can skip the Sydney day and get home earlier.

- end of services-

**Hotels Vietnam:\***

City	Standard
Hanoi	First Eden Hotel (3*)
Halong Bay	Halong Phoenix Cruise (private cabin)
Mai Chau	Mai Chau Lodge / Deluxe Pool View

\*subject to availability

**Hotels Laos:\***

City	Standard
Muang Khoua	Sernaly Hotel
Muang Ngoy	Lattanavongsa GH
Nong Khiau	Riverside Bungalow <a href="http://www.nongkhiau.com">www.nongkhiau.com</a>
Luang Prabang	Maison Dalabua Classic



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	<a href="http://maison-dalabua.com/">http://maison-dalabua.com/</a>
Don Det	Homestay / GH
Alt. Don Khone	Sala Ban Khone Ban Lao <a href="http://www.salalao.com/">http://www.salalao.com/</a>

\*subject to availability

**Hotels Cambodia:\***

City	Standard
Kratie	<b>Sala Koh Trong</b> Standard Room
cityPhom Penh	<b>Frangipani Royal Palace</b> Deluxe Room
Siem Reap	<b>The Frangipani Villa</b> Deluxe Balcony Pool View

\*subject to availability

<p><b><u>Included:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All sightseeing as described in program above</li> <li>- Transportation in private vehicles</li> <li>- Accommodation in hotels (twin shared)</li> <li>- New Zealand Guide (Ross Bidmead)</li> <li>- English speaking local guide ( except the travel to &amp; from Halong Bay and the trip Hanoi-Mai Chau, Mai Chau-Border)</li> <li>- Admission fees to sights described above</li> <li>- Boat fee from BBM - REP</li> <li>- Meals: B= breakfast, L= lunch, D= dinner</li> <li>- Lao PDR governmental tax and service charge</li> <li>- Luggage handing</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Not included:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- International air tickets</li> <li>- Visa fees (approximately US\$60/pax, depending on nationality)</li> <li>- Travel insurance of any kind</li> <li>- Meals not mentioned in itinerary</li> <li>- Tips, drinks, personal expenses and other expenses not described in the program above</li> <li>- Single room surcharge on request</li> <li>- Early Check In and Late Check Out</li> <li>- <b>Compulsory meals, surcharge for peak, Tet, holidays (VN)</b></li> </ul>
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**Price:**

The land portion of the trip as described above is \$NZ4,530. This includes a food fund for team dinners not included in the above itinerary.

A flight from Wellington or Auckland is an additional \$NZ1,700.