

Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia



TRIP OVERVIEW

Journey into 3 unique landscapes to explore a kaleidoscope of cultural treasures within Southeast Asia's peninsula. Voyage into Vietnam's principal cities to experience distinctive urban gems steeped in a rich historical tapestry. Travel west to the enchanting Laos for a cruise along the magnificent Mekong River and discover Cambodia's ancient realm of the gods, at the awe-inspiring Angkor Wat.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Indochina. Please take the time to read this dossier and to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of your tour. It includes important information such as visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Saigon

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Ho Chi Minh City Airport.

DAY 2: Saigon D

Today, begin your journey by exploring Vietnam's biggest city at leisure. A fury of sights and sounds, the striking contrast of ancient pagodas and imposing skyscrapers form Saigon's dizzying backdrop. At street level, parades of motorbikes flow passed mammoth malls, tucked away temples and wooden spice shacks that fill the air with an aromatic balance of sweet and spicy aromas.

DAY 3: Saigon B/L/D

This morning explore the extraordinary Cu Chi Tunnels, a hand-dug underground network used by Viet Cong soldiers during the 'American War'. The afternoon city tour of Saigon includes a visit to the Reunification Palace where the Vietnam War ultimately concluded, the charming neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and the fascinating War Remnants Museum that presents retired artillery pieces alongside harrowing exhibitions.

DAY 4: Saigon to Hoi An B/L/D

After breakfast, catch a flight north to the cosmopolitan coastal city of Danang. This afternoon, visit the dramatic Marble Mountains, five outcrops shrouded by jungle and decorated with towering Buddhist pagodas. Discover grottos that enshrine religious icons as you ascend the tallest mountain - Thuy Son - to marvel at spectacular views of the idyllic Non Nuoc Beach. Late afternoon, journey to the neighbouring Hoi An, one of Vietnam's most atmospheric and delightful towns.

DAY 5: Hoi An B/L/D

Today, embark on a walking tour through the narrow streets of this essential Vietnamese highlight, radiating a charming character brimming with intriguing sights to discover. Stroll across the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge to admire its magnificent wooden pagoda roof, explore the Sa Huynh Museum to inspect terracotta pieces sculpted by Hoi An's first settlers and visit the Lantern Workshop to learn how the flickering beacons which illuminate the town are crafted.

DAY 6: Hoi An to Hue B/L/D

Leave Hoi An this morning for a scenic coastline drive to the northern capital of Hue, a cultural and spiritual highlight of Vietnam. Tour the imposing UNESCO Imperial Citadel complex, an impressive 19th century royal residence whose grandeur and beauty mask the scars of war.

Later that afternoon meander through the bustling Dong Ba Market, alive with the rich scent of freshly prepared seafood and a flurry of colourful handicrafts including traditional pointed conical hats. This evening sample Vietnamese cuisine at a local restaurant.

DAY 7: Hue to Hanoi B/L/D

This morning, embark on a traditional dragon longboat for a tranquil cruise along Hue's Perfume River. Stop at Ha Khe Hill, home to the striking tower of Thien Mu Pagoda and once a focal point for anti-government protests during the 1960s. Continue to the Tu Doc Tomb and the Khai Dinh Tomb. Later in the afternoon, fly north to Vietnam's elegant capital - Hanoi.

DAY 8: Hanoi B/L/D

Awake in the enchanting metropolis of Hanoi, a city accentuated by traditional Vietnamese architecture coupled with a graceful transition into modernisation. Your full day tour starts with a visit to the triumphalist monument, Ho Chin Minh Mausoleum. Later you'll visit the Temple of Literature and the Museum of Ethnology that displays diverse artistic pieces from the country's northern hill tribes. Visit the intricate Ngoc Son Temple that resides on Hoan Kiem Lake, alleged home of an infamous 200kg turtle named Cu Rua. Later in the day experience a charming water puppet show; originally developed by rice farmers, wooden puppets are manipulated to the tune of traditional Vietnamese instruments.

DAY 9: Hanoi to Halong Bay* B/L/D

After breakfast, travel through the Red River Delta's expansive rural landscape to the awe-inspiring UNESCO Site of Halong Bay, undoubtedly one of your tour highlights. Over two thousand limestone karsts protrude through the azure waters of the Gulf of Tonkin; begin your overnight cruise by joining smaller 'junk' boats within this mystical seascape, disembarking at Thien Canh Son Cave to explore an ethereal wonderland of Buddhist carvings and drooping stalactites which hang beneath a canopy of sparkling gems. Enjoy an authentic cooking demonstration before sampling mouth-watering traditional dishes. After dinner retire to your cabin for the evening.

DAY 10: Halong Bay to Hanoi* Br/D

Awake to the rising sun's glistening reflection from the centre of Halong Bay and begin your day with some calming Tai Chi. Later, embark on a small rowing boat on a tour of Vung Vieng, a scenic floating village in the heart Halong Bay's spellbinding emerald waters, before sailing back towards the Harbour as you dine on an international buffet brunch.

DAY 11: Hanoi to Luang Prabang (Laos) B/D

Relax this morning before leaving late afternoon for your short flight west of Vietnam to the city of Luang Prabang, the jewel of Indochina. Mirroring the character of Laos, French colonial architecture juxtaposes ornate Buddhist temples overlooked by rolling hills layered with pristine forests, home to the remarkable Indochinese Tiger. Upon arrival you will be transferred to your hotel for an evening at leisure.

DAY 12: Luang Prabang B/L/D

The full day tour begins with a cruise along one of the world's great rivers: the Mekong carves its way through six countries, passing imposing temples, lush jungles and forming spectacular waterfalls, particularly in Laos. Further upstream, disembark to explore the Pak Ou Caves and their haunting collection of rejected Buddha statues. Continue to Ban Xang Hai - the 'whisky village' - to sample the robust flavours of Laos famous rice whisky. Return to dry land and ascend Phou Si Hill to marvel at the sun setting behind Luang Prabang city, transforming the Mekong's hue to a brilliant orange.

DAY 13: Luang Prabang to Siem Reap (Cambodia) B/D

Following breakfast, fly to one of South East Asia's most beloved towns, Siem Reap. The town has a contemporary outlook with a rich supply of boutique guesthouses, luxurious spas and an array of eateries, whilst retaining a small-town charm through its shaded boulevards, vivid markets and remarkable temples. Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant with an evening at leisure.

DAY 14: Siem Reap B/L/D

Leave the town of Siem Reap and visit the remarkable 1st century Banteay Srei temple which, boasts some of the world's finest sandstone carvings depicting Hindu tales. This afternoon experience the tranquil floating village of Tonle Sap lake, a fascinating network of stilted houses

overlooking fragile fishing boats, followed by the nearby old market for your final taste of this enchanting land.

DAY 15: Siem Reap B/L/D

Today, tour the ruins of the Angkor region, South-East Asia's most important archaeological location and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Discover an assortment of ancient treasures including the awe-inspiring Angkor Wat, a temple complex constructed to represent the earthly abode of Hindu Gods, which is reflected in both its enormity and grandeur.

DAY 16/17: Siem Reap to UK or Extension B

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your scheduled overnight flight back to the UK or continue on to your chosen extension.

***Please note:** the Halong Bay cruise itinerary may change depending on the boat used

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to Guesthouses. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

If you have booked a triple share please note that your room will be a twin room with a rollaway bed or sofa bed added. This may limit the floor space in the room.

Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Saigon you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **LV Travel**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/LV Travel representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact LV Travel during your stay the details are:

LV Travel Head Office, Hanoi

Floor 18, VTC Online Building,
 No 18, Tam Trinh Str,
 Hai Ba Trung District,
 Hanoi, Vietnam
 Telephone: 0084 24 3941 3748
 E-mail: operation@lvtravel.vn

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for LV Travel head office, Hanoi

Contact Telephone number

Mrs Anna: 0084(0)983 096 032
 Mr Len: 0084(0) 989 200 116

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

Vietnam: A visa is not required for stays up to 15 days. A visa is required for entry into Vietnam for all stays longer than 15 days. You can apply for an e-visa online at evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn. The cost of the visa is approximately USD\$25 and will take roughly 3 working days. Alternatively, we work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa will be advised upon application. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of entry. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. You can also visit the Embassy

of Vietnam in London: 12-14 Victoria Road, London, W8 5RD. This visa information is a guide line only and is subject to change; up-to-date information regarding the process and fees will be advised at the time of calling the Travel Visa Company.

Laos: A visa is required for entry into Laos and this can be purchased on arrival at the airport in Luang Prabang. The cost of this is approximately USD \$35 per person and you will need to bring the money in cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival into Laos.

Cambodia: A visa is required when travelling to Cambodia and can be purchased on arrival. The cost of this is approximately USD \$30 per person and you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well. Please note that it is important that there is plenty of space left in

the passport, as a Cambodian visa alone takes up one page.

Further advice should be sought from the applicable tourist authority for other nationalities and for general queries. We strongly advise you check your destinations' Tourist Board or Embassy for the most up-to-date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. If you have an existing policy with another company, please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health and vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on and off coaches and boats. The tour pace for Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia is Advanced. A higher level of fitness as required as you may be on your feet for most of the day though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, getting on and off coaches, trains, boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. There may be some time spend at high altitude. You will stay in variety of hotels, possibly including overnight trains, and accommodation standards may not match those you are used to at home. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 11, and the maximum will be 45. If in the unlikely event there are less than 11 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Tour Guides - Local Guides

This is a fully escorted tour meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities that you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

WHAT TO PACK

- Insect repellent
- Suncream and a hat with a big brim for sunny days
- Comfortable walking shoes such as trainers
- Sunglasses
- Ruck sack or light bag per person and a small overnight bag to take on your Halong Bay Cruise

Private Tour

If you have booked a private tour then you will be accompanied by a Driver Guide or a Driver and Local Guides. These will be available to you during all scheduled sightseeing. Private Tours can depart on any day of the week depending on flight and train schedules and the opening days of the attractions. They will follow the itinerary as described in the brochure unless you have been advised otherwise and you will still have all of the same meals, sightseeing and local excursions included.

Tippling

It is at your customary to tip both your driver and guide. We would recommend to tip approximately 7 USD per person per day. This is a total of 98 USD per person to budget for tips on your trip. Tips are accepted in the local currency.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND), the currency in Laos is the Laotian Kit (LAO) and the currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riel (KHM). We recommend that you take some US Dollars (USD) with you and exchange this currency whilst you are travelling. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £300- £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

Itinerary changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction &/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

Public Holidays - Vietnam

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. Tet Holiday is between 22nd-23rd January 2023 and 10th-12th February 2024, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

- Personal toiletries
- Travel plug adapter – the electricity supply on board the boat is 220V. You will need a 2 pin round plug adapter
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

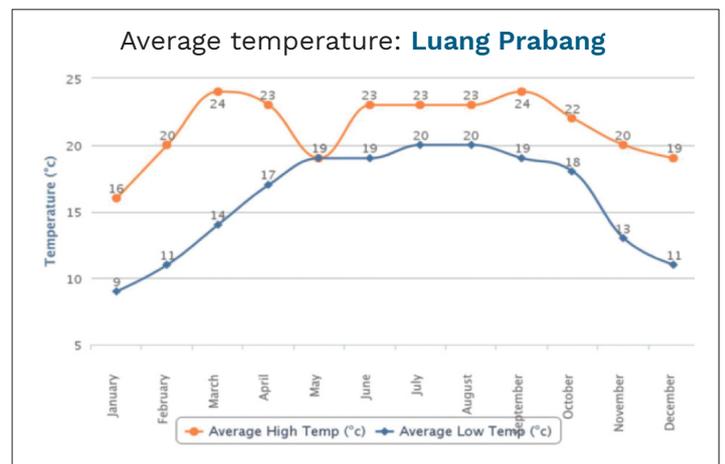
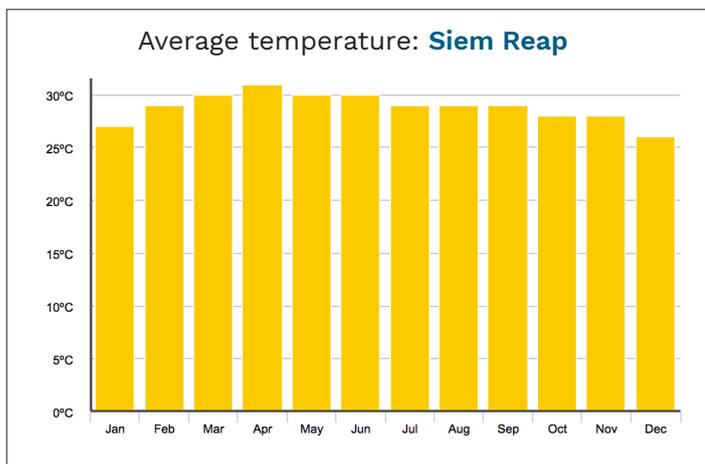
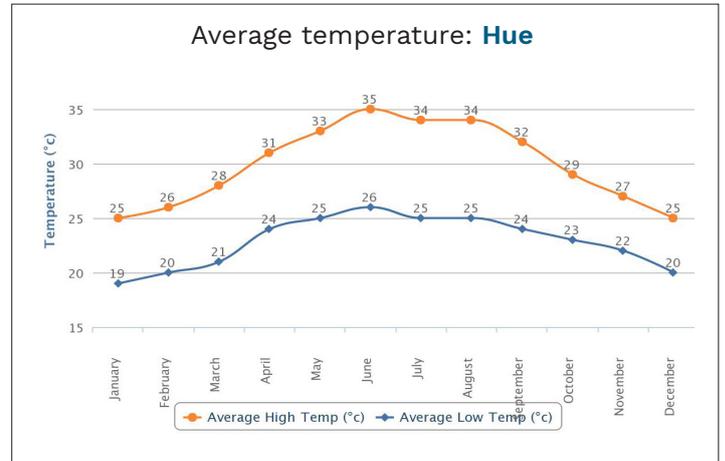
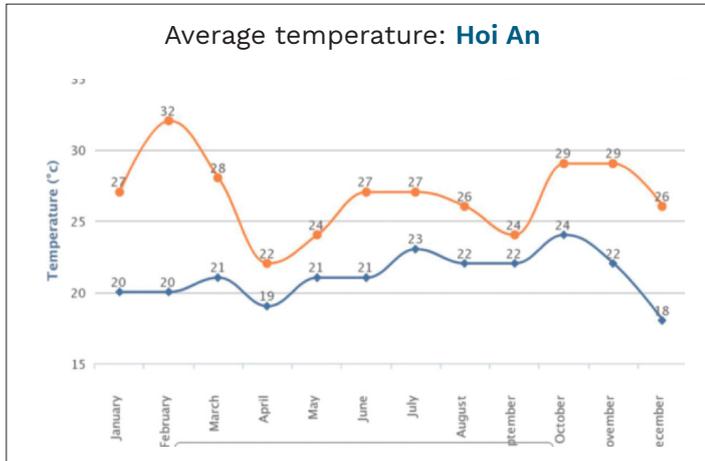
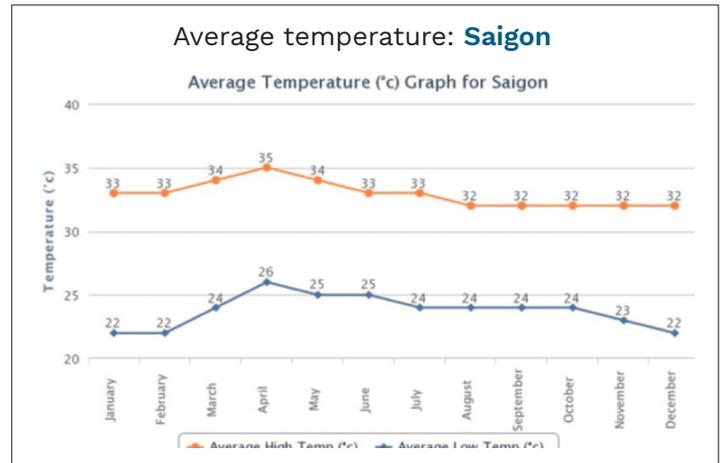
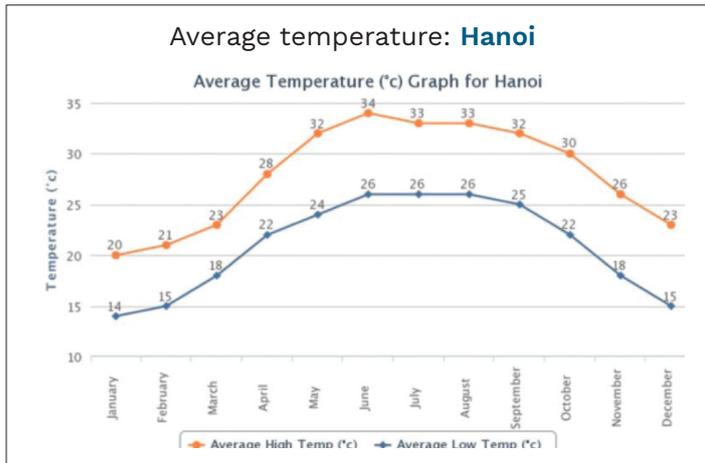
IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details, including terminal, airline and baggage allowance, will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure. A printed E-ticket is no longer required at check-in, all you need to do is present your passport to the staff at the desk and your boarding pass will be given to you.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



Mui Ne Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Your trip will be complete with a 3 night stay to the laidback Vietnamese coastal town of Mui Ne whose golden shores, are enjoyed by both locals and those seeking a tropical retreat. Stroll into the harbour and along the seafront to sample the town's many restaurants.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require during your add-on to Mui Ne.

Mui Ne (4 days/3 nights)

Having journeyed through three countries during your comprehensive 16 day itinerary, this extension is ideal for those looking to unwind while absorbing the warm Vietnamese climate. We have selected two popular hotels, the **4★ Pandanus Resort**, a fantastic modern hotel and the luxurious **4★ Bamboo Village**, to ensure you have luxurious surroundings to relax in.

Hotel Information - (3 nights)

Your stay will take place at either of these hotels:

4★ Bamboo Village on Bed and Breakfast

Providing guests with a serene getaway, the Bamboo Village Resort is located on the beach front and is surrounded by luscious gardens. This charming hotel boasts two swimming pools, a Straw restaurant that serves delicious Asian cuisine and a luxurious pampering spa. Each spacious room is beautifully designed and equipped with a flat-screened TV, a minibar and balcony.

Hotel Information:

38 Nguyen Dinh Chieu, Ham Tien, Binh Thuan Province, Phan Thiet, Vietnam
 Telephone: 0084 252 3847 007

4★ Pandanus Resort on Half Board

4-star comfort awaits at Pandanus Resort, 1 miles from Mui Ne Market. Boasting a 10-hectare tropical garden, this beachfront resort offers a

large free-form outdoor pool and, a hot tub and 2 on-site dining options. All rooms enjoy free Wi-Fi access and air-conditioning. A wardrobe with personal safe, cable flat-screen TV and minibar are included. Certain units feature either a private terrace or balcony with outdoor furniture and offer views of the garden. En suite bathroom comes with a walk-in shower and free toiletries.

Hotel Information:

Số 3 Đường Nguyễn Hữu Thọ, Mũi Né, Thành phố Phan Thiết, Bình Thuận 77118, Vietnam
 Telephone: 0084 252 3849 849

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any meals that are not included in your board, as well as personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and drinks.

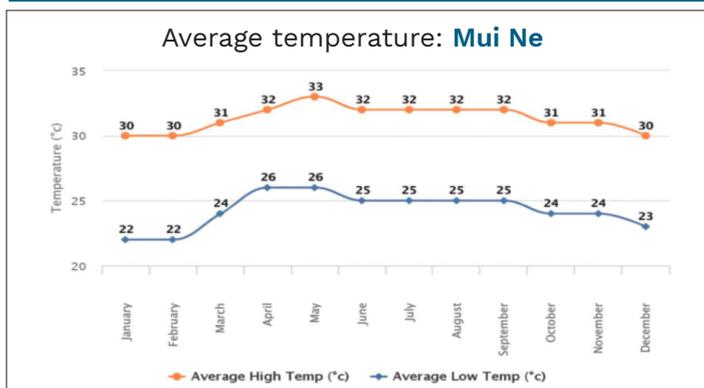
Tour Guides

This extension to Mui Ne is not escorted by a tour guide. Your time will be free to explore the area at your own pace. Transfers are included.

Visas

A single-entry Vietnamese visa will need to be obtained for travel to Mui Ne.

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



Bamboo Village

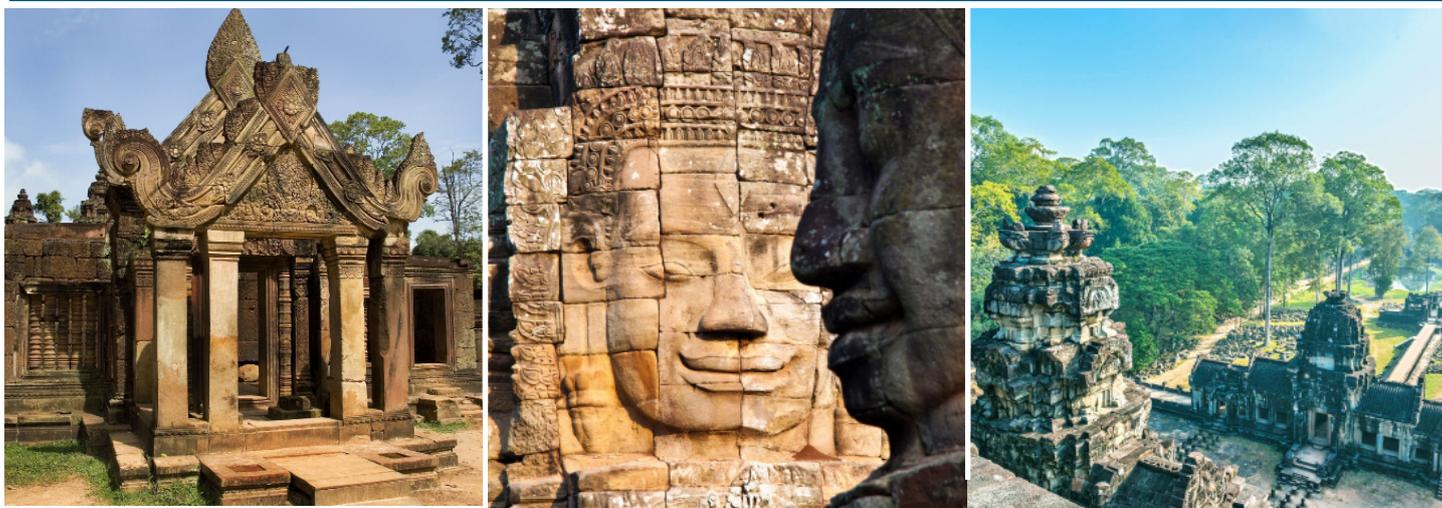
FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0333 003 0522**

Siem Reap Extension

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0333 003 0522



TRIP OVERVIEW

Spend 2 extra nights in Cambodia to further explore Siem Reap or Angkor Wat at your own pace.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Siem Reap.

Hotel

Your 2 night stay in Siem Reap will take place at the **4★ Tara Angkor** on Bed & Breakfast.

Conveniently situated just 6km from the World Heritage site of Angkor Wat Temples, and a few minutes walk to the Angkor National Museum, this stylish property comprises 206 rooms and suites. The hotel also offers good facilities and is a short ride to the city town centre for shopping, souvenirs and culture.

Address: Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia, 17254, Charles De Gaulle, Krong Siem Reap, Cambodia

Telephone: 00855 63 966 661

Any alternative hotels or board basis will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

The hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover lunches, snacks, dinner, drinks and personal purchases such as souvenirs and laundry.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Siem Reap is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Meals

Your stay in Cambodia is on a Bed and Breakfast basis

Please note

This extension takes place after your main tour.



FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.