



SAIGON TO BANGKOK BY BICYCLE

LIFESTYLE CYCLING TOUR OF SOUTHEAST ASIA

OVERVIEW

Want to experience three of Southeast Asia's most captivating countries in one bike tour? Then this iconic SpiceRoads adventure is for you. From the lush Mekong Delta in southern Vietnam to the ancient temples of Cambodia and ending on the sandy shores of the Gulf of Thailand, "Saigon to Bangkok by Bicycle" is the ultimate way to connect the region's two most electrifying cities. Cycle on quiet backroads, immerse yourself in local lifestyles, discover unmissable heritage sites, let loose on tropical cuisine, and unwind in cosy hotels.

We meet in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and head south into the Mekong Delta, cycling for three days through a serene landscape of coconut farms and rice fields. We cross small bridges, take local ferries, explore Vietnam's largest floating market, and speedboat up the Mekong River to the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. From there, we cycle on Cambodia's rugged red-dirt roads and head north to the sleepy town of Kampong Thom before reaching Siem Reap, the gateway to the majestic UNESCO World Heritage-listed temples of Angkor. We spend two days exploring these ancient ruins. A boat cruise then takes us across the Tonle Sap, Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake, for a stay in the former French colonial town of Battambang. And finally, we cross into Thailand and wind down with scenic coastal rides along the Gulf of Thailand until it's time to say goodbye in Bangkok. The tour ends with hotel drop-offs in Bangkok.

Join us on this must-ride Southeast Asian cycling classic!

- DURATION - 14 DAYS
- AVERAGE DISTANCE PER DAY - 55 KM
- ARRIVAL DESTINATION - SAIGON (HO CHI MINH CITY)
- DEPARTURE DESTINATION - BANGKOK

ITINERARY

DAY 1 ARRIVAL IN SAIGON (HO CHI MINH CITY)

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as most locals prefer to call it! Vietnam's largest city and the southern capital, Saigon moves at a pace that may initially be a shock to the system, but you'll quickly adapt. We recommend arriving at least a day or two before the tour begins to get acclimatised and explore sites such as the War Remnants Museum, Reunification Palace, Giac Lam Pagoda, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Cu Chi Tunnels, and Ben Thanh Market. On arrival day, we gather at our tour hotel in the late afternoon for a trip briefing and welcome dinner. Please let us know if you need assistance with airport transfers or pre-tour hotel bookings.

Cycling Distance: 0km Meals: Dinner

DAY 2 SAIGON TO BEN TRE TO TRA VINH

We leave the concrete jungle of Saigon behind and travel 2.5 hours into the Mekong Delta, a vast expanse of lush greenery and braided waterways sprawling towards the East Vietnam Sea. Starting in the city of Ben Tre, we acquaint ourselves with Vietnamese road dynamics (i.e., motorbikes zipping about!), then cross the Ham Luong River into a serene world of coconut farms, banana plantations, sugarcane fields, small hamlets, and criss-crossing canals and rivers. Our route primarily follows narrow farm roads and lanes, featuring several small bridge crossings and two local ferry rides. The second ferry takes us across the broad Co Chien River to reach the city of Tra Vinh, where we settle for the night. Tra Vinh showcases a cultural blend shaped by Vietnamese and Cambodian (Khmer) influences that predate modern borders.

Cycling Distance: 74 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 TRA VINH TO CAN THO

Departing from Tra Vinh, we head westward along a fertile floodplain nestled between the Cho Chien and Hau Rivers, two tributaries of the Mekong. The route winds through an extensive patchwork of rice paddies, highlighting why the Mekong Delta is known as Vietnam's "rice bowl". Taking our time, we soak in scenes of daily life amidst the fields, waterways, fruit orchards, villages, and towns. Along the way, we'll also encounter numerous Khmer-style Buddhist temples, a testament to centuries of Cambodian presence in the heart of the Mekong Delta. After nearly 80 km, we arrive at the outskirts of Can Tho, where we dismount and transfer a short distance to avoid riding in the heavy city traffic. As the largest city in the Mekong Delta, Can Tho serves as a bastion of the region's waterborne lifestyle and thrives as a commercial hub.

Cycling Distance: 78 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 CAN THO TO CHAU DOC

We have an early start as we board a boat to visit bustling Cai Rang, the Mekong Delta's largest floating wholesale market. Here we discover a lively aquatic scene as vendors navigate their brightly adorned boats, displaying goods for sale on tall poles. From the comfort of our chartered boat, you can join the locals for a morning coffee, a bowl of rice noodles, and some fresh fruit. Back on dry land we then hop on our bikes to begin our final green and meandering Mekong Delta ride. We bike on a narrow lane to the main road, where we stop and have lunch. In the afternoon, continue riding along a tiny road leading upstream towards Long Xuyen. At the end of the ride, we jump in the support vehicle to transfer to Chau Doc. Along the way, we'll stop to pay our respects at the genocide memorial site of Ba Chuc where, in 1978, the Khmer Rouge committed atrocities against Vietnamese civilians. We spend the night in Chau Doc, a border town located right along the banks of the mighty Mekong.

Cycling Distance: 65 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 5 CHAU DOC TO PHNOM PENH (CAMBODIA)

Early in the morning, we cruise up the Mekong River by speedboat. Not long after our departure from Chau Doc we'll reach the border with Cambodia and pass through immigration formalities. Then it's a comfortable journey upstream, watching the ebb and flow of daily life unfolding on the Mekong River and its banks. The cruise takes around 5-6 hours and we'll arrive in Phnom Penh, Cambodia's dynamic capital city, in time for lunch. We'll spend the afternoon in the city. While Phnom Penh is best known to travelers for its sobering genocide memorial sites, we'll also experience the city's bright side. We'll take a rickshaw ride from the riverside to the Royal Palace, the official residence of the King of Cambodia and a treasure trove of splendid architecture and art. After a tour we have the rest of the afternoon at leisure. Time permitting you can visit the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum or the National Museum of Cambodia (own expense).

Cycling Distance: 0km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 PHNOM PENH TO OUDONG TO KAMPONG THOM

We manoeuvre our way out of Phnom Penh by bike, not an easy feat considering the city's notoriously unruly traffic but we've found a way. First we ferry across the river to a peninsula wedged between the Tonle Sap and Mekong Rivers. Then we follow a series of riverside neighborhoods leading to Phnom Penh's northern suburbs which, after around 30 km, give way to the countryside. We'll enjoy our first taste of Cambodian rural riding, cycling through villages filled with stilt-houses, farms and curious and friendly locals eager to cheer us on. We finish the ride at Oudong where a sprawling complex of Buddhist stupas sits atop a ridge jutting out of the

plains. This was once the site of Cambodia's capital before it was moved further down river to Phnom Penh. The 400-plus steps to the top will get the legs working over-time, but the views are well worth it. After our visit we have lunch nearby and then transfer 3-4 hours to the sleepy backwater town of Kampong Thom where we spend the night.

Cycling Distance: 47 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 KAMPONG THOM TO SIEM REAP

Starting directly from our hotel, we begin by riding along the meandering Stueng Saen River. After 8 km we cross the river either by a small wooden ferry or a makeshift bridge (depending on the water levels) and then continue north along quiet country roads dissecting the fertile floodplain of the river. This is rural Cambodia at its finest, riding through quaint villages, expansive rice fields, and farmlands. After 40 km, we arrive at the ancient site of Sambor Prei Kuk, a UNESCO World Heritage Site which dates back to one of Cambodia's earliest civilisations preceding the foundation of Angkor. Here, brick temples in various stages of restoration - many still entwined by tree roots - are scattered throughout a forested area and are connected by sandy paths. This makes for some fun mountain biking. After checking out a collection of the many temples we'll break for lunch at a local restaurant and then complete a final 15 km until we reach the main road. We jump in the support vehicle and transfer around 2 hours to Siem Reap, the "gateway to Angkor", where we'll spend the next three nights.

Cycling Distance: 64 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 ANCIENT ANGKOR'S ICONIC SITES BY BIKE

The UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor is home to the once-glorious capital cities of the Khmer Empire, whose powerful god-kings built lavish stone temples between the 9th and 15th centuries. Today, we discover Angkor's most iconic sites by cycling along the numerous paths that pass by, lead to, and twist around the temples and ruins scattered across the plain. At Ta Prohm - brought to fame by the film "Tomb Raider" - we'll find a façade of laterite and sandstone blocks draped by the massive roots of fig trees. At the Bayon - a temple built as a microcosm of the heavens - we'll see the rows of godly faces carved into the temple towers. At Angkor Wat - the national symbol of Cambodia and the largest religious structure in the world - we stroll through the inner and outer courtyards decorated with well preserved carvings and bas-reliefs depicting Hindu myths, wars, life and death. We return to Siem Reap in the afternoon. Tonight we dine at SPOONS, a social enterprise restaurant serving up authentic Khmer food and supporting the professional training of marginalised youth.

Cycling Distance: 42 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 SIEM REAP COUNTRYSIDE

Today we will head further afield from the main sites at Angkor and leave the tourist masses behind. Departing Siem Reap by bike, we head north, initially on paved roads but soon transitioning to quiet dirt roads cutting through an expanse of rice fields and small villages. Along the way, we'll pop into local houses for a close-up look at some rural cottage industries, such as basket weaving and sugar palm production. Our ride ends at the 10th-century temple of Banteay Srey. Considered a jewel of Khmer artistry, Banteay Srey is renowned for its exquisite bas-reliefs carved into delicate, pink sandstone. We'll have lunch at a local restaurant near the temple and then transfer back to Siem Reap. This afternoon is free to relax by the pool, enjoy a massage, or explore the town of Siem Reap. For anyone with extra energy, you are welcome to skip the transfer and cycle back to Siem Reap instead (around 40 km along the main road). Dinner is on your own tonight. There are plenty of options to choose from.

Cycling Distance: 54 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 10 SIEM REAP TO BATTAMBANG

Today, we take a break from cycling but there will be plenty to see and do. We'll journey to the city of Battambang, located across the Tonle Sap, Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake and one of Cambodia's most vital natural resources. When water levels are high enough (typically from October to January), we'll cruise across the lake by boat, a journey that takes 6 to 8 hours. If the water levels are lower, we'll take a morning cruise to a floating village near Siem Reap (accessible year-round) and then transfer to Battambang by vehicle (about 3 hours). After a rest in Battambang, we hop into Cambodian tuk-tuks (motorized rickshaws) and head to Phnom Sampov, a rocky outcrop in the countryside. Here, we'll witness the mesmerizing exodus of millions of bats swirling into the twilight sky from a cave. Dinner tonight is in Battambang's historic core, renowned for its laid-back vibe and well-preserved French colonial architecture.

Cycling Distance: 0 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 11 BATTAMBANG EXPLORATION

Today we'll experience vibrant rural scenes, reflections of Cambodia's history, and some unexpected fun in the countryside around Battambang. We'll start with a 25 km ride along the banks of the Sangker River, passing traditional cottage industries where local favorites like banana chips, rice wine, bamboo sticky rice, and prahok (a pungent fermented fish paste) are made. We'll also explore Wat Phnom Eak, an 11th-century Angkorian ruin, and pay our respects at the Samrong Knong Killing Field, a genocide memorial within the grounds of a Buddhist temple. The second half of our ride takes us through lush rice paddies and roadside markets. Then we'll

take a ride on the bamboo train - a quintessential and somewhat comical Battambang experience - clattering along train tracks on bamboo platforms powered by a small motor. Before riding back to the city, we'll cross a hanging bridge that feels straight out of an Indiana Jones movie and visit the Cambodian Peace Gallery, a thought-provoking exhibition on war and reconciliation. After some free time in the afternoon, we'll gather for dinner at Jaan Bai, a social enterprise restaurant serving fresh local cuisine and providing employment for Cambodian youth.

Cycling Distance: 54 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 12 BATTAMBANG TO CHANTABURI (THAILAND)

It is time to visit the third country on this tour: - Thailand. We start with a morning transfer of about 2 hours from Battambang to the border crossing at Ban Pakkad. After completing immigration procedures, our Thailand guides will meet us in the "Land of Smiles," and we'll continue with a 1.5-hour transfer to the coast of Chanthaburi Province. We'll enjoy a delicious, Thai lunch before saddling up for a short afternoon ride. Starting from the headland of Laem Sing, we'll cycle a well-paved road skirting the Gulf of Thailand for just over 20 km. We'll relax this evening near Chao Lao Beach, a peaceful stretch of palm-fringed sand that's popular with locals but off the usual tourist trail. Note that if the border procedures are quicker than expected we can extend today's ride by around 10 km.

Cycling Distance: 22 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 13 CHANTABURI TO LAEM MAI PHIM BEACH

Starting from our resort, our final ride heads west along the Gulf of Thailand's coast. As we cycle on well-paved secondary roads, we'll pass shrimp farms with their distinctive patchwork of ponds, rubber plantations with neatly spaced trees, and fishing communities with their colourful boats and wooden houses. We'll also enjoy memorable bridge crossings over river mouths leading to the sea. The last stretch takes us right along Laem Mae Phim Beach, where we'll finish our cycling tour. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax with a swim in the ocean, a soothing massage, or unwinding by the pool. We'll gather for a farewell Thai feast in the evening to celebrate the end of our adventure.

Cycling Distance: 58 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 14 LAEM MAI PHIM BEACH TO BANGKOK

After breakfast and some leisure time, we'll transfer to Bangkok, Thailand's brimming capital city. The total driving time is around 3.5 hours and we aim to get you there in the early afternoon.

Lunch is not included, but you can pick something up at a rest stop along the way or save your appetite for a late lunch in Bangkok – one of the world’s greatest culinary cities. The tour ends with a drop-off at your post-tour hotel in Bangkok. If you need assistance with post-tour hotel bookings in Bangkok or airport transfers, please let us know.

Cycling Distance: 0 km Meals: Breakfast

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Accommodation: 3-4 star hotels & guesthouses
- Meals as listed in the itinerary
- English speaking tour guide(s)
- Support vehicle(s)
- Boat rides as listed
- Water and snacks while cycling
- Entrance fees & sightseeing as per itinerary

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Flights and airport taxes
- Passport and travel visa fees (Vietnam visa prior to arrival, Cambodia visa en route)
- Airport arrival transfer (day 1)
- Airport departure transfer (day 14)
- Surcharge for single room
- Bike hire
- Travel Insurance
- Personal expenses and drinks (except water while cycling)
- Tips for guide(s) and support crew

TOUR GRADE 3: MODERATE

We ride a total of 550 km over 10 cycling days.

This is a moderately difficult trip that anyone with a reasonable level of fitness will enjoy. Besides a few inclines here and there, there are no sustained climbs and the rides are predominantly flat throughout. Daily distances average around 55 km, allowing ample time for immersion, sightseeing, and relaxation. In Vietnam and Cambodia, navigating gravel, sand, and cratered country roads requires some handling skills but does not involve technical manoeuvring. The main challenge of the tour is keeping up stamina over back-to-back riding days and cycling in the tropical heat. E-bikes are available but these are limited. The support vehicle is always nearby to

offer refuge to any weary cyclists.

In Vietnam and Cambodia our rides include a mix of paved roads in varying conditions, gravel and sand country roads, and vehicle-width dirt roads. While cycling in Angkor, we' can enjoy some fun single tracks in the forests. In Thailand, the roads are all paved and in good condition. Although much of the route is on quiet countryside roads with minimal traffic, we will regularly share the roads with cars, motorbikes, and buses. There are a few unavoidable sections along the main roads, especially coming in and out of cities and near popular attractions. In the dry season, the roads in Vietnam and Cambodia are notoriously dusty, and when it rains, they can become muddy. We generally ride rain or shine, but based on the guide's discretion or your comfort level, modifications to the planned route can be made. It's all part of the adventure!

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

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