

Addventure VSA - Cambodia Itinerary

Day 1: Late morning rendezvous at Auckland International airport. You will meet the rest of your group and be briefed by a returned volunteer or VSA staff member. Flying Thai Airways, direct to Bangkok, you will arrive in Bangkok, Thailand, late evening.

Day 2: Trip briefing with your Gecko Trails trip leader, then Bangkok daytrip: Travel the Chao Phraya river boat and skytrain to temples; return to Banglamphu for free time exploring the street markets or relax with a massage. Group dinner river cruise or restaurant dinner. **B****

Day 3: An early morning departure and overland travel from Bangkok to Siem Reap, Cambodia. The Cambodian border town of Poipet thrives on cross-border trade, and is a real eye-opener. We arrive in Siem Reap in time to catch the sun setting over the ancient temple of Angkor Wat.

BLD

Day 4 & 5: From laid back Siem Reap we explore the impressive remnants of the Angkor Empire, renowned for their superb temples and monuments. They are a UNESCO World Heritage site, the largest temple ruins on earth, and truly awe inspiring. See the restoration of some temples, and the disintegration of others, as the jungle reclaims them. The temples are best explored at dawn and dusk. In between, we'll be visiting the Landmine Museum, Artisans D'Angkor (silk weaving NGO), the Childrens Hospital (with the option of donating blood), and other possible NGOs. **B, B**

Day 6: Early morning departure for Phnom Penh. Travel by road in private bus following an ancient Khmer highway. 5-6 hours of travel. We'll have a late lunch in Phnom Penh and then spend some time at the VSA office, and learn more about the development work that NGO's and volunteers are involved with in Cambodia. Enjoy a sunset drink and dine riverside, on the banks of the mighty Tonle Sap – the river that flows backwards.

BLD

Day 7: A full day of excursions in Phnom Penh. Uncover Cambodia's tragic history under the Khmer Rouge, with a visit to Tuol Sleng Museum. Discover the fantastically chaotic Russian Market selling crafts, silks and antiques. We take a tour by cyclo through Phnom Penh, using the services of VSA partner organisation, the Cyclo Centre, offering support services to Phnom Penh's cyclo drivers. We lunch at Mith Samlanh café, run as a vocational training centre for street children and visit the Phnom Penh Rubbish dump where 25,000 people live.

BL

Day 8: Embark on the heart and soul of our *Adventure* as we head for the rural province of Takeo. Here we will get a taste of culture and an understanding of Cambodian rural life by home-staying with a Khmer family for the week. We visit the project site for an orientation and meet the people we will be working with. We then return to our home-stay for an authentic Khmer dinner.

BD

Day 9-13: We will spend the next five days working each morning with the project community group. In the afternoons we have the option of going back to the project, spending time speaking English with high school students, or visiting NGO's working in the district. These include Handicap International, which provides prosthetic limbs for landmine victims and the Takeo Eye Hospital. One afternoon we take a boat trip to Angkor Borei temple. Another afternoon we journey to the seaside villages of Kep and Kampot, and enjoy a traditional music performance at the Kampot Traditional Music School, and an independent dinner. On our last morning we wrap up the project, farewell new friends and return to Phnom Penh. There will be time for some last minute shopping at the Russian Market, or the chance to visit more of the city's sights. Our final dinner in Cambodia will be the culmination of an incredible journey and a chance to share treasured moments from our trip.

BLD, BLD, BL, BLD, BD

Day 14: There is an early morning flight to Bangkok, where we will spend the day. It will be possible to take an independent trip into the city to visit the market district, before the return journey home that evening.

B

Day 15: Arrive in Auckland, New Zealand, 1:20pm.

****Note: B, L or D** indicates where Breakfast, Lunch or Dinner are included in your trip cost. Meals not indicated as included are independent and you pay for these yourself. Your trip leader is happy to provide suggestions on good dining/eating options.

NB – It is possible this itinerary will change as Gecko Trails is investigating using Singapore Airlines, and perhaps flying directly into Phnom Penh at the start, and boating up the Tonle Sap to the North. This trip may incorporate a visit to communities living on this mighty river.