

16-Year Friendship, Stronger Than Ever

Experience Vietnam

Even with its vibrant economic growth, Vietnam is as charming, picturesque and wondrous as the first time we cycled here more than a decade ago. Certainly, the country is thriving, but that just means the roads are a bit better (making our bikes a little happier), and even more luxurious hotels pepper the coast. But the people remain the same: gracious, warm, and infinitely inviting—and we certainly meet a lot of them on this epic journey from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. In between, we take in all the highlights, from China Beach to the Imperial tombs to endless miles of scenic, colourful country and coastal roads. A country of a million smiles, we are sure you will fall in love just as deeply with Vietnam as we have, come let us show you how.

THE B&R DIFFERENCE

"I loved the first day's ride through the cemeteries... it was absolutely breathtaking scenery. There were so many experiences that I never would have found on my own, from special dinners to cooking school."

*Holly Brooks,
Vietnam Biking*

LAOS & CAMBODIA

Consider extending your journey with one or both of our Laos pre and Cambodia post-trips. Combined, these three regions make an extraordinary 13 night adventure through the best of South East Asia. See page 8 for Laos and page 11 for Cambodia.



Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677

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the journey

Days 1 & 2

The Imperial City of Hue

THIS MORNING WE MEET AT THE SOFITEL METROPOLE in Hanoi and head straight to the airport for our quick flight to Hue. Once in Hue we have chosen the most picture perfect area for our first ride and will introduce you to some of the most beautiful scenery central Vietnam has to offer. Today we enjoy lunch in a colonial French restaurant located in the shadows of the Citadel. The menu highlights some of Hue's culinary history perfectly. After lunch, we explore the Imperial Forbidden City, the former home of the last Vietnamese Imperial Dynasty, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Cocktails and dinner are held at the hotel, where we will once again sample local specialties while enjoying infamous Vietnamese hospitality.



Today's ride loops through the quiet rice fields and over small riverside paths before ending at the Thien Mu Pagoda. From here, we will board our private riverboat and cruise up the Perfume River—enjoying lunch on board along the way—to the tomb of the Nguyen king, Minh Mang. Perhaps you will opt for more biking after lunch or choose to drive back to Hue and visit the other imperial tombs in the afternoon, or enjoy a massage at the hotel's excellent spa. Dinner is in a royal home this evening, where we will be regaled with stories of Imperial Vietnam.



HOTEL

Pilgrimage Village, Hue

The Pilgrimage Village is located in the peaceful countryside just 4 km from the centre of Hué. You'll come to appreciate this after learning that the only thing the Vietnamese love more than waking up early is honking the horns on their mopeds! The rooms reflect the Vietnamese taste for simple, elegant luxury.

THE ACTIVITY

Day 1: A 25 km (16 mi.) ride through the picturesque fields and towns around Hue.

Day 2: A 24 km (16 mi.) bike ride through the countryside with sections along the Perfume River, with an additional 13 km (8 mi.) option.

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Days 3, 4 & 5 Hoi An

In the morning, we will take a spectacular 1.5 hour drive along coast and cliffs, travelling under (or over!) the famous “Pass of the Clouds,” to the Lang Co Lagune where we will start our bike ride. After this ride you can choose between heading to Da Nang for a quick riverside lunch in the city’s hippest new restaurant, or continue by bike up and over the famous but challenging Hai Van Pass to have lunch in the clouds as you enjoy the views and pat yourself on the back – great climbing! Whichever you decide, you’ll end up in Hoi An, a charming little trading post town that will take us back in time. Once a vital seaport on par with Macau, the now-tranquil Hoi An has been incredibly well preserved. Its fascinating medley of architecturally diverse 400-year-old buildings and totally intact streetscapes has merited it UNESCO World Heritage Site status. You may also choose to do some shopping in this garment mecca. A tailor-made suit or dress is the usual call, or you can just take in the sights of this magnificent little town. Weather permitting, tonight’s dinner is a private beach-side barbeque at the hotel. Our personal chef whips up an incredible feast as we take in the sunset and swap stories of our new bespoke suits!

The next day you may choose to head into the market early in the morning to watch the women haggle over the day’s fresh fish catch, or visit the stalls offering the freshest vegetables in Hoi An. Both promise to stimulate your senses and provide some of the best photo memories in your trips scrapbook. Then we head for a great ride that loops around Hoi An, passing through traditional rice paddies and fish farms interspersed with ancestral tombs, water buffalos and hundreds of smiling

Other questions?
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children. We finish at our favourite cooking school in a beautiful river setting. Our midmorning cooking class will keep us entertained, trained and well fed. Afterwards we will head into Hoi An via riverboat once again, watching the local fishermen bring in their catch. The afternoon is yours for wandering through town, or opt for a cultural tour of this charming village lead by our local guides. Tonight you have the chance to explore the culinary delights of Hoi An with its quaint lantern lit streets as it’s dinner on your own. Just ask your guides for some ideas or let your stomach lead the way.



HOTEL

Nam Hai, Hoi An

This stunning villa resort is located on the pristine Hoi An beach and features sixty guest room retreats as well as forty privately villas, each with a private infinity pool. The serene spa, rated among the world’s best, gourmet cuisine and abundant recreational pursuits including an 18-hole golf course is just a sample of what the Nam Hai offers.

THE ACTIVITY

Day 3: A 11 km (6.8 mi.) ride on flat terrain skirting the Lang Co Lagune with a 21km (13 mi.) long option over the Hai Van Pass (9% grade).

Day 4: A 24 km (16 mi.) loop ride around the flat countryside surrounding Hoi An.

Day 5: A 25 km (15 mi.) flat bike ride.

Today your guides will give you a couple of options. You can bike inland to the marvelous Cham Temple of My Son. The Cham civilization was a contemporary of the Khmer in Cambodia; if you are continuing onto Siem Reap with our Cambodia post-trip, the comparison can prove especially fascinating. Or, if you are in the mood for something more scenic and relaxing, your guides can bring you to the local ferry crossing, where you'll take the boat to the other side for some fantastic riding past rice fields and through local villages. You might even choose to cast some fishing nets on your return trip. Tonight we dine riverside beginning with a cocktail or two at our friend Duc's restaurant, where we will taste this culinary wizard's signature lemongrass infused Martini and then sit down for a tasting of Vietnam's best fusion cuisine. This evening will be impossible to forget!

Day 6

Ho Chi Minh City: Vietnam's Metropolis

Goodbye Hideaway, hello Ho Chi Minh City. Now the largest city in Vietnam, this vibrant metropolis began as a small fishing village known as Prey Nokor and now resembles a fire breathing dragon of a city. After a leisurely breakfast, we will fly to Ho Chi Minh, where our individual vespas and drivers await! We'll whisk into town and explore the best of Saigon on a different kind of two wheels. Our final night culminates in an unforgettable dinner in the unmistakable Ly Club. With a few surprises left up our sleeves it is a night not to be forgotten and a great way to say goodbye to Vietnam in style.

HOTEL

Park Hyatt Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City

This beautiful new hotel is centrally located on Lam Son Square near the elegant Opera House in downtown Ho Chi Minh City and within walking distance of businesses, shopping, entertainment and main tourist attractions. The Park Hyatt is a 25-minute drive from the airport, and a 5-minute walk to the famous Ben Thanh Market.

THE ACTIVITY

Day 6: 2 hour vespa city tour.



Day 7

Fond Farewells!

Today, we bid adieu to Vietnam. Breakfast and departure are at your leisure this morning—even better, continue on to Cambodia with us!

Eat Fast, Walk Slow, Laugh Often

By **Nathan Lane**

My friend and guide Anh once told me, “the Vietnamese eat fast, walk slow and laugh at everything.” I laughed, but sure enough, this observation, while light-hearted in context, turned about to be as true as everything else he has told me.

During my 15 years in Vietnam, I have learned much about the Vietnamese: they are industrious; they have incredibly strong family values; they are creative and hard working. They love spicy food and don’t need to go to the pagoda too much because almost everybody has an altar at home. They have an amazing appreciation for fresh fruit, vegetables and seafood. They can carry anything and everything on the back of a motorbike (a family of five with two live pigs strapped on back is my personal record).

But I prefer things to be simple. I think Anh knew that when he told me this, and his quote is a wonderful simplification of this fascinating and complex country.

The Vietnamese eat fast. Fast and constantly. The roads in Vietnam are like one big dining hall: every other shop is a restaurant, usually serving the local noodle. I haven’t gotten a good count yet, but it seems to me that the noodle variations here rival those of Italy.

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They walk slow. This country is growing fast, but the people haven’t forgotten how to slow down and enjoy life. Perhaps it’s because the sidewalks are so full of action its hard to walk fast, but I think there’s more to it. Wandering the streets, I often find families having little reunions and cyclo drivers chatting with friends. Vietnam is full of magical small corners, and you have to slow down to see them.

The Vietnamese laugh at everything. When we ride our bikes down the small streets, I feel like the greatest comedian that has ever lived. The kids love us; they smile and wave and scream with joy. But it’s not just them: it’s also the lady picking the rice and the old man on the porch. They are all laughing. When I try to buy something in a store, it always begins with my earnest attempts to speak Vietnamese and ends with both the shopkeeper and I smiling and laughing as we cheerfully banter from opposite sides of the language barrier. I always leave with a smile. It’s hard to not love Vietnam. With everybody laughing and smiling all the time, it just makes sense.

B&R REGIONAL EXPERT

Nathan Lane

Originally born in Lebanon, New York, we first met Nathan while he was guiding walking tours through Rome in his own inimitable way. Since then he’s guided 100+ trips through locales as varied as Puglia, Southeast Asia and Spain, and crafted dozens more as one of our expert trip designers.



the details

2017 Price:

From \$5,995
(\$1,200 single
supplement)

Single supplement is based on the most affordable rooms within B&R's allocation. Upgrades often available.

Duration

7 days / 6 nights

Please see our website for list of departures.

Start

Hanoi

Sofitel Legend Metropole
Early morning

Finish

Ho Chi Minh City

The Park Hyatt Hotel
At your leisure

HOTEL TYPE

Signature Hotels

Hotels on our Signature trips are unique expressions of the region. Oftentimes that means they've had a previous life as a monastery or a castle, but in every case it means they offer both an exceptionally comfortable stay and a taste of the region's culture. Best of all, we're friends with our hoteliers. (Translation? Preferential treatment for you.)

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All hotel accommodation
- All breakfasts, six lunches and five dinners, including wine
- Services of B&R guides, local guides and support vehicles with drivers
- All special events, private tours, guest experts and entrance fees
- Use of a hybrid bicycle and helmet
- Detailed maps, route suggestions and water bottle
- All transportation from rendezvous to drop-off, including van support, coach transfers, boat rides, vespa rides and internal flights
- All baggage transportation
- All gratuities for baggage, porters and hotel service

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Recreational

The daily distances for bike rides range from 20 to 50 km (12 to 31 mi.); some days offer longer/shorter option rides. The terrain is moderate on the first two days and then easygoing for the rest of the trip.

MORE INFO

How do I get to Hanoi?

Your B&R trip starts in Hanoi the nation's capital. Depending on the airline you are flying with, you will probably hub through Singapore, Tokyo, Bangkok or Hong Kong. All of these cities have hotels near the airport with easy access to downtown areas should you want to have a stopover.

THE SOFITEL LEGEND METROPOLE, HANOI

www.sofitel.com

A gorgeous French colonial-style hotel located in the heart of Hanoi, the Legend Metropole is a hotel with a history. Built in 1901, it has welcomed politicians, business leaders, artists... and now us.

Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677

The itinerary information may vary slightly for your specific departure as we continuously research and develop each trip. Inclement weather may also necessitate minor alterations. Prices are per person and in USD. © 2017 Butterfield & Robinson Inc.



your next steps

At Butterfield & Robinson, the guiding starts while you're still at home. We make sure you know everything you need to know before you've even left your living room.

READY TO BOOK?

- Call or email a Distinctive Journeys with any remaining questions, and to reserve your space. **1-770-888-6677 / Doug@Distinctive-Journeys.com**
- Reserve your flights to and from the region.
- Book your night before hotel.
- Make sure your passport is up to date.
- Enquire after travel insurance.
- Begin steps to secure a visa for Vietnam.

Once you are confirmed on a B&R trip, you will receive a Confirmation Email that links to tons of information to help you prepare for your trip. Then, about a month before you leave, we will send you a list of your fellow travellers, final rendezvous instructions and your hotel contact numbers.

Weather: Vietnam

month	high	low
Jan/Feb	90	71
Mar/Apr	94	74
May/Jun	90	75
Jul/Aug	87	75
Sep/Oct	87	73
Nov/Dec	87	72

Other questions?
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at 770 888 6677

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Like B&R on Facebook and get the latest news



and photos from the road, updates from guides and more.

YOUR BIKE

We pride ourselves on having the very best equipment for each activity and locale, maintained by expert staff and custom tweaked just for you. Visit us at www.butterfield.com/ourbikes to learn about our biking equipment and see pictures of what you'll be riding. And don't forget that we will modify your bike to accommodate most special gear requests. Just ask.

EXTENDING YOUR TRIP

We strongly encourage you to extend your trip to this region with a pre-visit to exotic Luang Prabang in Laos and post trip to Cambodia to see the awesome Khmer temples at Angkor. B&R offers a pre- and post-trip you can join (details on following pages). You may also want to spend a few days in Hanoi—it offers great shopping plus provides an easy starting point for a day trip to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Ha Long Bay.

STAY IN TOUCH!

Sign up to receive *The Slow Road* our newsletter that is full of travel news, unique offers and B&R insider info.

PHOTO CONTEST

While on your trip, keep in mind you can win some great prizes with the B&R Photo Contest. We've created three categories that capture the true spirit of B&R adventure: Faces, Places and Moments. Send in your top shots and show us how you see the world with Butterfield & Robinson. Visit www.butterfield.com/photocontest for full details.

In the meantime, if you have any questions about your B&R experience—big, small or downright quirky—please call a Travel Advisor or contact your Travel Professional. We are always happy to help.

Laos Pre-Trip

Days 1, 2 & 3 Luang Prabang

Upon arrival at the Luang Prabang airport, a B&R representative will greet you and escort you to the Hotel de la Paix. Our trip begins with evening cocktails to get acquainted with your guides and fellow travelers.

The next day, our journey through Luang Prabang begins on our bikes for a gentle day of riding. From the hotel entrance, we cycle through the “busy” town centre across a bike-only bridge, journeying north into the countryside. The road gets quieter and more scenic with every kilometer we leave behind us, the Mekong by our side the entire time. After conquering a few rolling hills we are rewarded with a lovely boat ride towards the nearby Pak Ou cave. Once inhabited by a hermit who achieved enlightenment. The upper and lower sanctuaries contain more than 4,200 wood and gilded Buddha statues. From the caves, we re-board our vessel for a gentle cruise down the Mekong with lunch along the way, arriving back at the hotel that afternoon. After some time to relax or perhaps a plunge in the pool, we venture out for a walking tour of this unparalleled UNESCO World Heritage Site. You’ll see the town’s famed mix of stately temples and vestiges of French colonialism. A definite highlight is Wat Xieng Thong, a beautiful temple dating back to the 16th century. The roof of the main chapel sweeps low to the ground and coloured-glass panels adorn its walls. Our walk ends at the National Museum in the former Royal Palace, open exclusively for us. Tonight, dinner is a traditional Lao Baci well-

wishing ceremony, complete with music and dancing, followed by our first taste of Laos cuisine.

Luang Prabang is at its prime just after dawn when the gongs chime to signal the end of morning prayers. More than 600 saffron-clad monks emerge from the temples and silently proceed through town to collect alms. We rise early today to witness—and even join in—this extraordinary ritual. When it’s all over, we walk through the morning market and then head to the picture perfect, multi-tiered cascades of the Tad Kouang Si waterfalls for breakfast. Our ride leaves from the falls and traverses rolling terrain—mostly downhill initially, then uphill near the end. We finish pedaling once we’ve arrived back in town for lunch, and then have the option to stay in town to explore and shop, or ride back to the hotel. Dinner tonight is in town at one of our favorite locals to take in the sunset.

HOTEL

Sofitel Luang Prabang

Built upon a UNESCO site, this former Governor’s mansion is a beautifully redesigned oasis of calm. Twenty-three tastefully designed suites, in addition to a spa and pool, form the heart of this hotel, which is a blend of classic colonial design and contemporary Asian style. This is serenity and magic in the heart of Luang Prabang.

THE ACTIVITY

Day 1: A 33 km (20 mi.) ride on paved undulating roads that become hillier near the end. In the afternoon, we have a 1.5-hour walking tour of the city.

Day 2: A 31 km (19 mi.) ride over rolling terrain with a few bigger hills toward the end; option to ride a few more kilometres in town.

Day 4
Hanoi

The next morning a short flight takes us east to Hanoi. We'll venture into town for our first taste of Vietnamese fare. The afternoon and evening are yours to explore. Your guides will offer both shopping and dining recommendations. Or you may simply choose to relax at the hotel spa in preparation for the spectacular days of biking ahead!

HOTEL

Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi, Hanoi

Built in 1901, this gorgeous French colonial-style accommodation is located in the heart of Hanoi. It offers 364 guest rooms & suites, complemented by a choice of three restaurants (French cuisine, Vietnamese specialties and Italian flavours), three bars, a lush and relaxing rooftop garden, a heated swimming pool, health club and the luxurious Le Spa du Metropole.



Day 5
Onto Vietnam Biking Trip!

Woke up at the Sofitel in Hanoi and meet with your Vietnam Biking group before flying to Hue for the next leg of your adventure!



Other questions?
Call Distinctive Journeys
at 770 888 6677



the details

2017 Price:

From \$3,995
(\$700 single
supplement)

Single supplement is based on the most affordable rooms within B&R's allocation. Upgrades often available.

Duration

5 days / 4 nights

Please see our website for list of departures.

Start

Luang Prabang
Sofitel Luang Prabang

Finish

Hanoi
Sofitel Legend Metropole

HOTEL TYPE

Signature Hotels

Hotels on our Signature trips are unique expressions of the region. Oftentimes that means they've had a previous life as a monastery or a castle, but in every case it means they offer both an exceptionally comfortable stay and a taste of the region's culture. Best of all, we're friends with our hoteliers. (Translation? Preferential treatment for you.)

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Occasional

This trip is rated Recreational. The longest ride is about 45 km (28 mi.). The riding in Laos is gently rolling and the temperature should be quite comfortable.

MORE INFO

We recommend arriving in the region a couple of days prior to the start of your trip to ensure you have adjusted to the change in time and climate. Luang Prabang is a fun city to explore and well worth visiting on your own – or of course we can help make arrangements for you. Our rendezvous hotel is the Hotel de la Paix, Laos, built upon a UNESCO site, this former Governor's mansion is a beautifully redesigned oasis of calm.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All breakfasts, all lunches and two dinners, including wine
- Services of B&R guide(s) and support vehicle
- All special events, private tours, guest experts and entrance fees
- Use of a bicycle and helmet
- Detailed maps, route suggestions and water bottle
- All transportation from rendezvous to dropoff, including flights, vans and boats
- All baggage transportation
- All gratuities for baggage, porters and hotel service

Other questions?
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at 770 888 6677

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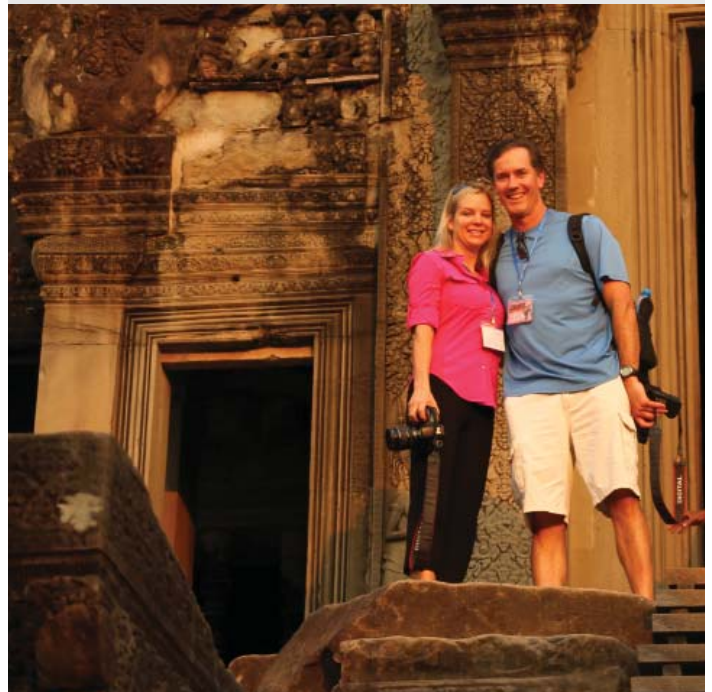
Cambodia Post-Trip

The spectacular ancient Khmer temples at Angkor comprise one of the most impressive and well-preserved temple complexes in the world. Finally, thanks to Cambodia's political stability and the creation of such high-end accommodations as the Grand Hotel d'Angkor—which we have chosen as our journey's base—the timing is perfect to visit this magical site. That's why we created this “post-trip” to our Vietnam trip, dedicating two full days to temple exploration. When you've already come this far, Angkor simply should not be missed.

Days 1, 2 & 3 The Temples of Angkor

Our flight arrives mid afternoon, if time permits, we will meander by bike into the heart of the Cambodian countryside and finish our ride at Tonle Sap for a lovely sunset boat ride on Asia's largest lake. Our ride will explore the local rural landscape of Cambodia before we venture into the ancient Angkor kingdom tomorrow. During our first night in Cambodia, we will dine at the hotel in anticipation of an early wakeup the following morning.

Our second day will be an extensive discovery of the temples of Bayon and Angkor Wat with our local guide, who will bring the stone celestial dancers to life for us. In the morning, we will head to Bayon to visit this exquisite Buddhist temple before hopping on our bikes to explore the park on two wheels. Our bike trails are lined by a jungle of silk cotton and strangler fig trees. Once upon a time, the only traffic that passed this way was the majestic elephants. We will then head back to our hotel to enjoy lunch and a cat nap in the shade by the pool. After a bit of relaxation, we will head to magnificent Angkor Wat, where our local guide will teach us all about this awe-inspiring temple that has defied time and nature for over 700 years. We will finish our visit alone on the top of the main tower inspecting the renovation project with the temples' head restorer and privately taking in the sunset above the crowds below. Tonight you will head into town for dinner on your own, and our guide will be happy to discuss recommendations.



Other questions?
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On our last morning, we will head out to explore the wild jungle temple of Ta Prohm. Famous for the jungle that still grows around it, this is an awe-inspiring homage to both nature and mankind. We will bike from here through the park, passing the temples of Bayon, Angkor Wat, the Elephant Terrace and the gates of Angkor Thom on our way back to the hotel. Lunch today is on your own. Wander into town to shop and explore, or grab a quick bite at the hotel before jumping on your bike for an afternoon ride through the Cambodian countryside to see Bakong. In the evening, we will celebrate our time together by heading into town for a farewell dinner at the trendy Hôtel de la Paix.

Day 4 Farewells

Our adventure together comes to a close after breakfast at the hotel.

HOTEL

Park Hyatt, Siem Reap

Situated nearby the renowned 12th century ruins of Angkor, a UNESCO World Heritage site, Park Hyatt Siem boasts 109 guest rooms and suites and features two restaurants, a bar and a bakery, as well as a relaxing spa and two tranquil pools.

THE ACTIVITY

Day 1: An easygoing 17 km (11 mi.) bike ride.

Day 2: An easygoing 27 km (18 mi.) bike ride along flat roads.

Day 3: An easygoing 16 km (10 mi.) bike ride along flat roads and an additional 17 km (10 mi.) afternoon option.



the details

2017 Price:

From \$2,495
(\$500 single
supplement)

Single supplement is based on the most affordable rooms within B&R's allocation. Upgrades often available.

Duration

4 days / 3 nights

Please see our website for list of departures.

Start

Ho Chi Minh City
Park Hyatt

Finish

Siem Reap
Park Hyatt
At your leisure

HOTEL TYPE

Signature Hotels

Hotels on our Signature trips are unique expressions of the region. Oftentimes that means they've had a previous life as a monastery or a castle, but in every case it means they offer both an exceptionally comfortable stay and a taste of the region's culture. Best of all, we're friends with our hoteliers. (Translation? Preferential treatment for you.)

LEVEL OF ACTIVITY

Occasional

The biking is along flat roads, and the walking is on the paths through the temple complexes.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- All hotel accommodation
- All breakfasts, two lunches and two dinners, including wine
- Services of a B&R guide, a local guide and support vehicle with driver
- All special events and private tours, guest experts, entrance fees into historical sights and museums
- Use of a hybrid bicycle and helmet
- All transportation from rendezvous to drop-off, including van support, coach transfers, and flights
- All baggage transportation
- All gratuities for baggage, porters and hotel service

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