

TIPS AND TIDBITS

A fact sheet about your

WALKING CAMBODIA & VIETNAM CRUISING THE MEKONG DELTA Adventure

Walking Adventures International plans and guides walking adventures that combine international travel with walking. Our itineraries blend historic, cultural, and scenic highlights of the regions we're traveling through with walks in the area. Our trips are fast-paced; they are designed as overview tours to expose travelers to as much of the region's significant highlights as we can manage, and still maintain a reasonable daily schedule. Even though most active travelers find it easy and natural to enjoy our style of travel, we want to ensure that we've afforded every opportunity for travelers to know what to expect, in advance! Listed below are a series of questions and answers to help you develop accurate expectations of this Adventure and make plans to maximize your enjoyment. Please feel free to call us with any additional questions you have.

Questions & Answers

Q: Do you have more detailed information than is available in the Adventure brochure?

- A: About four weeks before departure, a final packet will be mailed to each participant. This packet will include:
- * Hotel listing (including address and phone information of all hotels)
 - * Traveler List
 - * Daily schedule
 - * Adventure t-shirt
 - * Adventure map
 - * Brand new luggage tags!

Q: Do I need a passport or visa?

- A: **Yes, both countries require a passport and visa for citizens of the USA and Canada. The Vietnam visa must be obtained prior to arrival. Information on how to obtain your Vietnam visa has been sent to travelers who are registered for this Adventure. By now, you should be in the process of obtaining your visa. Please contact our office if you have any questions.**

The visa for Cambodia is better obtained at the time of entry into the country—during our tour together. Ship staff will expedite this process on our behalf as we enter Cambodia on the Mekong River. **You will, however, need to have \$30 in cash (USD) and at least one blank visa page in your passport.**

Also, please ensure that your passport does not expire for at least 6 months after our date of entry into either country.

IMPORTANT: Please make a copy of your passport and birth certificate and keep them in your luggage separate from where you keep your passport. In case your passport gets lost, having these copies really speeds up the replacement process.

Q: Are there any customs regulations that we should be aware of?

- A: **When entering Vietnam, visitors should declare all precious metals, jewelry, cameras, radios, videos, and unexposed camera and video film that they plan on taking back with them. Actual checks are rarely made. On exiting, however, you may be asked to**

prove that you brought all these items with you. When leaving Vietnam, you should also keep exchange receipts for all foreign currency you spent even though authorities rarely check. The import and export of Vietnamese Dong is forbidden. NOTE: We were not challenged in either of these areas during our first two visits to Vietnam.

Q: Do you have any suggestions to help with flights to Vietnam and home from Cambodia?

- A: **By now your flights to Vietnam and home from Cambodia should be booked. If you have not yet booked your flights, we strongly suggest that you do so as soon as possible.** For information on how and when to book your flights, please see the Adventure Advice flyer mailed to you after you registered for this tour. WAI is not a travel agent, and we don't have the authority to make individual bookings or print airline tickets.

Travel agents are still the simplest way to plan your flight and provide you with a lifeline should you encounter problems on the day of travel. **There are two travel agents we recommend to book flights for this Adventure.**

Sonja at ValueAir

Phone: (866) 984-6247 or (714) 513-1773

Email: sonja@valueair.com

Debbi Custer

Phone: 888.276.0925 or 503.231.9507

Email: debbi@wtpdx.com

Please see the Adventure Advice flyer mailed to you after registration for more information.

A word (or two) on jet lag: Much has been theorized about the best way to fight jet lag. One small booklet we've added to our library is *Jet Smart* by Diana Fairechild. An oversimplified summary of her book would suggest that you:

- 1) eat as little as possible while in transit, avoid alcoholic beverages, and eat high carbohydrate foods if you must eat,
- 2) get up and walk around the plane when you can,
- 3) do isometric exercises (flex and relax your muscles) occasionally during the flight,
- 4) adjust your sleep schedule to the local time as soon as possible.

NOTE: Some information is generally true for most of our Adventures. Text in bold represents information that is specific to this Adventure only.

IMPORTANT: We particularly recommend no's. 2 and 3. Over the years, we've had several travelers who have experienced circulation problems during the Adventure due to the long flight.

Q: What type of hotels will we be in?

A: We will, of course, be on the *RV Indochine* for the majority of the Adventure. In Ho Chi Minh City and in Siem Reap, however, we will be staying in hotels. Both hotels are modern, excellent 4 star/5 star hotels. As you may know, our preference is for smaller, traditional, boutique type hotels. However, in this part of the world, we have not yet found that type of property readily available.

Q: What will the *RV Indochine* be like?

A: Ships designed for river cruising are much smaller than the ocean-going vessels that have made luxury cruising popular. We prefer, however, to sacrifice some of the luxury for the smaller, more intimate atmosphere of river cruises. Here are several things to keep in mind about the *RV Indochine*:

- All cabins face outside so all passengers have river views through large picture windows.
- As cruise ships go, cabins are relatively spacious at 145 square feet each.
- The Adventure price reflects cabins on the Main deck. Cabins on the Upper Deck are no larger than those on the Main deck, so what you are buying is simply a view from a bit higher up.
- All cabins are air conditioned and the indoor common spaces (lounge and dining room) are also air conditioned. No smoking is allowed indoors, but smoking is allowed in designated areas outdoors.
- Bottled water is provided in your cabin daily, and is available, along with soft drinks, throughout the day from the lounge. Bottled water and soft drinks are also included with each meal.
- The ship was built in Vietnam. It seems, therefore, that many of the doorways and clearances onboard are designed for those of shorter stature. Guys six feet or over in height will either want to be ready to duck or bring a hardhat.
- This is the smallest ship on which we have traveled—24 cabins. We were therefore impressed with the public space on the ship—a lovely indoor, air conditioned lounge, an outdoor sundeck, partially under cover, and a very pleasant dining room.
- Staff aboard the ship are all Vietnamese and Cambodians, mostly Cambodians. They do an excellent job of making us feel welcome and work very hard to provide an atmosphere of service and hospitality. One of the highlights of the aboard ship experience was the gracious, smiling staff!
- Many of our excursions involve transfers into the smaller boats that are constantly moving goods and people around the Mekong waterways. Again, staff are always there with a helping hand, but moving slowly and carefully, and finding your sea legs will help you navigate between boats successfully.
- The river cruising segment of the Adventure is in itself one long excursion. Unlike many river cruises, there are not many stretches of the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers that are not filled with

either scenic value or cultural value. Life on these rivers is vibrant and fascinating.

- Dress code is completely informal aboard ship. There is a Captain's Dinner near the end of the cruise where some people do dress up a bit, but don't worry about jackets and ties. For us, dressing up usually means wearing the nicest button down travel shirt we have.

Q: What will our walks be like?

A: The walks in Vietnam and Cambodia will be led by your WAI guides with the help of local guides, and will provide an insightful blend of rural and nature venues along with city sightseeing. There are no walking clubs in either country, and these walks were laid out by WAI staff during a planning trip. Because of limited time in several ports, a number of the walks are 5 km or less in distance; in some cases, we will combine these to make one official walk for IVV stamps purposes.

Using the AVA's difficulty rating system of 1 to 5, with 1 representing flat, smooth walk routes and 5 representing difficult hikes, these walks fit mostly in the 1 to 2 range. Here is the description of ratings used by the AVA:

1. An easy walk on pavement or well-maintained trail with no significant hills.
2. A moderately easy walk, may be on pavement or on trails. No significant difficulty with hills.
3. A moderate walk in any setting with some difficult terrain, one or two substantial hills and/or steps.
4. A more difficult walk. Most likely in a natural setting with poorly maintained paths and steeper or hilly inclines. Participants with certain health problems should take caution.
5. A very difficult walk. All in rough fields or woods. Many steep hills or high altitude trails, or very rough uneven terrain, steep or unstable inclines. Not suitable for any person who is not in good health

If you are walking for IVV credit, you may use the same event and distance books for this Adventure that you use here in the States. We will have a supply of extra event and distance books along if your books get filled up en route.

In planning the program, we allow 3 to 3¼ hours to complete a standard 10 km (6.2 mile) walk, unless the walk is intended to allow for shopping and sightseeing time. Of course, none of the walks are mandatory. If you need to take a day off, or don't feel like doing the entire walk, just let your WAI guide know and he or she will help you make plans to do a partial walk or find some other interesting things to do.

Carrying a water bottle on the walks is essential due to the warm tropical climate. If you often use a walking stick at home, we would advise that you also make plans to have your walking stick with you in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Q: Will the walks be sanctioned volkswalks?

A: IVV has instituted a new sanctioning process for countries with no IVV walking clubs. We believe the walks will be sanctioned, but it is too early to confirm this.

Q: What is a volkswalk?

A: Volkssport is a club activity that began in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland in 1968. There are four primary activities: walking, biking, swimming, and cross country skiing. Walking is, by far, the most popular and well developed. A volkswalk is walked at a steady pace through a scenic and/or historic area over a pre-marked route (usually 10 km, which is 6.2 miles). Normally, it is hosted by a local group of volunteer club members. It is noncompetitive, and aims to involve people of all ages. Everyone who participates is declared a WINNER! Presently, there are walks in all 50 states and more than 30 countries worldwide.

Q: What type of walking gear should I bring?

A: Walking in international settings takes you away from the familiar haunts of home and may require a different kind of preparation. **Sturdy walking shoes/boots, a walking stick, quality rain gear**, a hat for protection from the sun, sun screen, bug repellent, and a **ready supply of water** while walking are all "musts" and should all be "standard equipment" for the traveling walker. This *could* mean the trusty fanny pack you use at home needs to be traded in for a day pack. Be ready for the Adventure!

Two pairs of walking shoes or boots are recommended. The first pair may get wet or muddy and needs a day off. The increase in the number of light-weight hiking boots is making them a more attractive and practical option. We believe a quality pair of lightweight hiking boots is a good investment for a traveling walker and, if waterproof, can even eliminate the need for a 2nd pair of walking shoes.

Q: Is the water drinkable in the countries we're visiting? Are there any health precautions I should take?

A: **Do NOT drink water from the tap in Vietnam or Cambodia. Bottled water will be present in your hotel rooms on a limited basis and will be complimentary on the ship. Water that is served for meals has been purified and is safe to drink.**

One of the realities of foreign travel is that we encounter different bugs and bacteria than we do here at home. **Particularly in Southeast Asia, travelers often experience a higher than normal susceptibility to germs. A good rule of thumb to follow is to only eat food that is hot and has been cooked.** Another reality is that group travel involves sharing a lot of things — including germs. As a result, cold nasties can quickly travel through our group looking for weak immune systems to attack. There are several supplements and behaviors that can make a significant difference in your ability to resist these bugs and preserve a healthy Adventure, including the following:

- * Use Vitamin C and some kind of immune system booster (some of us use grapefruit seed extract) beginning a week before the trip and during the trip to boost your immune system.
- * Maintain the use of a good multi-vitamin both before and during the trip.
- * **Wash your hands thoroughly and frequently** (carrying a waterless hand cleaner is highly recommended).
- * If/when you cough, cover your mouth as completely as

possible to avoid the spread of germs in consideration of fellow travelers.

- * Avoid touching your face and rubbing your eyes.
- * Do not use tap water even for brushing teeth!
- * Be sensitive to your health and particularly your need for rest. Guard against fatigue by monitoring your participation in trip activities and allowing yourself necessary "down time."

Q: What immunizations are recommended?

A: **No shots are required, but you will need to consult your physician for the immunizations they advise for the areas we are visiting. Many HMO's also have travel consulting services.**

In the past, we have been advised to have all immunizations typically recommended when visiting developing countries: polio booster, hepatitis A, rabies, tetanus, etc. We were also advised that yellow fever is not an issue in this area and received conflicting reports on the need for malaria protection.

Malaria has been an issue on the fringes of the places we travel in Cambodia. Dengue Fever has been an issue in some areas we visit.

We are not qualified, however, to give medical advice, so you will need to consult a medical professional. We propose that travel clinics specializing in immunization have better data than a general practitioner relying primarily on the Center for Disease Control for information.

Take your brochure (it has a helpful map) and show your physician the areas we will be traveling through — Ho Chi Minh City to Phnom Penh along the Mekong River, then up the Tonle Sap River and through Tonle Sap Lake to Siem Reap.

Q: How many people do you accept on an Adventure?

A: Generally, we close the trip at no more than 30 people. This trip will be around 20 walkers—we currently have space for 2 more! **The trip will be led by two WAI guides with assistance from local guides in both Vietnam and Cambodia, and a cruise director aboard the RV Indochine.**

Q: What is the average age of your groups?

A: Most of our travelers fall between 50 and 70 years of age. This seems to be the age bracket that has the time and means to travel. However, we always have travelers that fall outside that range, from the 20's up into the 80's. Walkers are characteristically great traveling companions — positive, cheerful, and appreciative of the opportunity to see the world. As we travel and observe other tour groups, we are always pleasantly surprised at the difference in mobility and energy level/enthusiasm between our travelers and the typical group of "tourists".

Q: What is the split between men and women?

A: One of the realities of life is that there are more women on the planet than men. Another is that they tend to outlive their spouses. As a result, we do have more women on the trips than men. The percentage of women on the trip can run anywhere from 60 to 80%. We have quite a few couples, a lot of women traveling together or singly,

and more and more single male travelers. We like to see this ratio as even as possible and are always looking for a few more good men!

Q: What if I don't have a roommate?

A: It's always best to register for the trip with your own roommate, but we do offer to help match travelers up with others needing roommates. We provide contact information for potential roommates and allow travelers to contact each other and make their own decisions.

Q: What will the motorcoaches be like?

A: We will be traveling in several different coaches and different types of vehicles, but will not be spending a significant amount of time on any of them. We normally employ a seat rotation system but do not plan to use this system in Vietnam and Cambodia due to the limited amount of time on the coach and the lack of continuity with any one vehicle. Also, as is common in most developing countries, the standard of coaches in this part of Asia is not comparable to the luxury standard we have become accustomed to in Europe and North America.

Q: How much money should I take along?

A: The Vietnamese currency is the Dong. The rate of exchange at the time of this printing was \$1 USD = 19,180 Dong. In Cambodia, the currency is the Riel. The rate of exchange at the time of printing was \$1 USD = 4,181 Riel. The US dollar is accepted almost universally in Vietnam and is the currency of choice in Cambodia.

ATM's are widely available in the cities that we visit along our journey, though not in the rural areas that make up much of our cruise program. The most practical formula for your money needs in Vietnam and Cambodia is therefore a combination of U.S. dollars (unwrinkled) brought from home and ATM access via your debit card. Dollars are distributed from ATM's in Cambodia. Though you will be able to use a credit card for all purchases aboard the ship, on the street cash is still "king"!

We therefore suggest that you take US dollars with you in a money belt, and carry your cash underneath your clothes, close to your heart.

Fortunately, very little cash is "needed" for this Adventure. The first dinner is not included (since arrivals can be very late), but we will likely be fed on the plane. All other meals are included except for dinner on Day 12 and lunch on Day 13. Drinks for some of the lunches and dinners ashore are not included. Water and soft drinks aboard ship are included. You will also need to be prepared to pay a Departure Tax at the Siem Reap airport of approximately \$25 per person in cash.

A minimum amount of cash which should cover only the beverages, the meals mentioned in the paragraph above, and the gratuities that are not included in the Adventure is \$250 (to exchange en route). Many travelers take double or triple this amount.

Money can be exchanged at the two hotels at the beginning and end of the trip but not aboard the

ship. Aboard ship, you will be able to run a tab, which you may then clear on the last day by cash or credit card, for which a service fee is charged. Usually it is best to use a credit card and conserve your cash.

As usual, it is important to use a money belt and be discreet and inconspicuous in the handling of your money.

NOTE: The import and export of Vietnamese Dong is illegal so spend it before you depart if possible. You may be able to convert small amounts to Cambodian Riels in Phnom Penh.

We do not recommend the use of traveler's checks, as they are difficult to cash. We strongly recommend that you bring a high percentage of your US currency in small bills in good condition— especially \$1 and \$5 bills. Bargaining with street vendors is carried on mostly in dollars, and it is always best to be able to give exact change and therefore avoid the frequent problems created when a street vendor is asked to make change.

Q: What type of clothing is appropriate?

A: Casual tourist attire will be the norm for the entire trip. Most of the time, we will be dressed in our walking clothes. Our own strategy is to take two or three pairs of nylon pants with zip-off legs along with several t-shirts and nylon or tri-blend travel shirts. We supplement this with a quality set of breathable rain-gear. Additionally, we also take along a light jacket. In any case, we have found that packing lightweight layers of clothing is the most practical strategy, especially in a warm climate.

Cruise dress code: There is no dress code aboard the *RV Indochine*. You may want to dress "smart casual" once or twice for dinner, but this is entirely up to you.

Weather:

December in Indochina is the beginning of the "dry" season and an ideal time to visit. Water levels from the monsoons should still be high, but rain should be light and temperatures and humidity should be at their annual low. Still, we are in the tropics, so it will be warm and humid by North American standards. Highs will be in the 80's and lows in the mid-70's. Be prepared with protective sunscreen and a sun hat! Though we are there in the dry season, do be prepared for rain at some point during our Adventure.

Q: Do you have a suggested reading list for this Adventure?

A: Check out your local library or the internet at www.amazon.com or www.longitudebooks.com to preview the following list, or find a new gem about this ancient and mysterious region of our world. In addition to the suggestions below, we recommend that you obtain a good guidebook such as those published by Lonely Planet, Moon, or DK Eyewitness.

* *A Traveller's History of Southeast Asia* by J.M. Barwise and Nicholas J. White. A compact account retracing the ancient roots of the region.

- * The River's Tale – a Year on the Mekong by Edward Gargan. A richly descriptive tale of one man's journey down the Mekong from source to sea.
- * To Asia with Love – a Connoisseur's Guide to Cambodia, Laos, Thailand and Vietnam – anthology edited by Kim Fay
- * Red Brotherhood at War by Grant Evans and Kelvin Rowley. Politics and history in Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos since 1975.
- * A Dragon Apparent by Norman Lewis. Interesting account of travels in 1949, just before the fall of the French empire in Indochina.

VIETNAM

- * Vietnam: A History by Stanley Karnow. Authoritative, detailed history of Vietnam, with special emphasis on the American War era.
- * Ho Chi Minh by William Duiker. A whopping 700-page definitive biography of this enigmatic Vietnamese leader.
- * The Birth of Vietnam by Keith Taylor. Covers the early history of the country.
- * Catfish and Mandala by Andrew Pham. One of the best travelogues on modern Vietnam.

CAMBODIA

- * A History of Cambodia by David Chandler. Well written history of the country.
- * How Pol Pot Came to Power by Ben Kiernan. History of communism in Cambodia from 1930-1975.
- * The Gate by Francois Bizot. Incredible true story of a young French ethnologist captured by the Khmer Rouge in 1971 in Cambodia.
- * Travel in Siam, Cambodia, Laos, and Annam by Henri Mauhot (1864). About the discovery of Angkor Wat.
- * Ancient Angkor by Claude Jacques and Michael Freeman. An excellent, lucid book with great photos and maps. A good guide to Angkor.
- * Sacred Angkor: The Carved Reliefs of Angkor Wat by Vittorio Roveda. For travelers fascinated with the amazing relief carvings, this book concentrates solely on the relief carvings and inscriptions that wrap for more than 1/3 of a mile around the walls of Angkor Wat.

Other Important Information

MEALS:

All breakfasts, dinners, and lunches are included in the Adventure price (except for the dinner on the early arrival day, dinner on Day 1 and 12, and lunch on Day 13). Breakfasts will be mostly American-style buffets, and lunches and dinners will be mostly local cuisine with a few days of western menus thrown in aboard ship. Chopsticks are the standard eating utensils in restaurants, but western-style cutlery is standard aboard ship and will be available in restaurants as well.

CALLING/MAILING HOME:

Calling home from overseas can be complicated. Internet cafes and business centers in hotels that have internet are usually a more practical way to stay in touch with loved ones back home. **We had particular trouble getting our phone cards and international mobile phone to work in Cambodia. For calls that must be made, international call centers (similar to internet café's but offers long**

distance phones) are operated in many cities.

LAUNDRY:

You will not find self-service laundry facilities in any of the places we visit. Hotels will have laundry service available for a fee, but it will be more convenient and economical to have your laundry done by the ship staff. You may, of course, also do laundry in your room or cabin.

TIME ZONE:

Vietnam and Cambodia are on the same time zone, which is 15 hours ahead of Los Angeles and 12 hours ahead of New York. So when it's 4 pm in Ho Chi Minh City, it is 1 am in Los Angeles and 4 am in New York.

ELECTRICITY:

Vietnam and Cambodia use 230 volts and generally use either the three-pronged angle pins (like Australia), the American style 2-prong pins, or the European style round 2-prong pins. If you plan to use electrical appliances (hair dryers, battery rechargers, etc) we recommend that you bring along a travel transformer for the current and two adapters for the plugs — Australia three-pronged and European two-pronged. These can be obtained from most AAA offices or anywhere travel accessories are sold. NOTE: There are hairdryers in the hotel and in each cabin of the ship.

GRATUITIES:

Gratuities for meals and lodging are included in the cost of the Adventure. In addition, the Adventure price also includes the tip for all service staff used for land/shore excursions—drivers and guides. In addition, WAI will tip the cruise director, who exerts significant effort to make our unique walking program possible. Due to the variety of services received from the 24 members of the ship's crew, however, tipping aboard ship for the rest of the staff is not included. Recommended amounts for tipping ship staff are as follows:

Pooled tip: The ship uses a pooled system for most of the staff, which is shared among all staff. The recommended amount is \$7 per person per day, or \$70 per person for the trip.

Individual tips: If you receive special service or would like to recognize a member of the staff who has been particularly helpful or kind, you are free, of course, to recognize them with a \$5 or \$10 tip, and reduce your pooled tip by this amount.

For luggage portage service at hotels, a tip of \$1 per room will be about right. Tips for chambermaids are generally \$1 per day.

LUGGAGE:

As you will notice in the General Tour Conditions sheet originally inserted with your Adventure brochure, we request that you limit your luggage to one suitcase per person plus carry-on type luggage. Portage will be provided at hotels but will be accompanied by the expectation of the usual tip from the bellman.

In addition, common practice among airlines now includes charging fees for check luggage. Make sure you check on the weight limitations and fees of the airlines you are using.

CULTURE SHOCK:

Since North American culture is linked closely with our common European heritage, Southeast Asia presents us with a fascinating opportunity to see into a very different culture. There are aspects of this Adventure that will amaze and delight you. Undoubtedly there will be other aspects that will confound and frustrate you. We recommend that you pick up a travel guide like *Lonely Planet* or *Moon*, or recommendations from our reading list, and become aware of some of the differences you can expect to encounter.

Poverty and beggars: With Vietnam and Cambodia warmly welcoming overseas' visitors, you will see evidence of vibrant economic activity. Though Vietnam is a communist country with a controlled society and economy, they have adopted the Chinese model of loosening up their economy over the past ten years. However, you will still see much poverty and some heartbreaking scenes of people whose lives have been marred and maimed by war and its residual impact in the form of Agent Orange (Vietnam) and landmines (mostly Cambodia).

Traffic safety and walking: Walking in the cities can be an amazing experience, for several reasons. Here are some safety tips to be aware of:

- * Be alert for uneven pavement and obstructions of all kinds on the walkways.
- * Pedestrians do NOT have the right of way. In some cases, you may feel invisible. In Vietnam, however, crossing the street is a bit of an art form, and a thrill once you learn the game. Step slowly into traffic and move slowly across traffic, allowing it to flow around you. Make no sudden moves and never run across or stop in the middle of the road. As long as you are predictable, traffic will move around you.
- * Walking at night in Ho Chi Minh City or Phnom Penh can be hazardous because of these issues.

Local customs: Being aware of and observing the customs of the people in whose country you are an honored guest will make your trip most rewarding. Here are a few tips to help you transition smoothly as a guest in Vietnam and Cambodia:

- Do not touch people on the head or upper body.
- Shaking hands is not part of the culture in either country. Instead just smile and/or nod your head.
- Buddhism is the national religion in both countries, more so in Cambodia, which has never been communist. Don't cross your legs in the company of a monk or elderly person.
- Don't shake hands with a monk.
- Females should never sit down next to a monk.
- In temples or pagodas, shorts and skirts should be longish—at or below the knees.

Local guides: In this developing part of Asia, we found that the mastery of English and the standard of presentation by our local guides was not as high as in areas where tourism is more developed. This is simply one aspect attached to the privilege of visiting areas that have not yet been as "discovered" by Western visitors.

Local guides have plenty to share. Listening can therefore require a bit more effort, but is generally worth the effort. We found all guides to be friendly and willing, sometimes anxious, to share about their country on an individual basis, as well as in group settings. We will have Vietnamese guides with us on the ship during the Vietnam portion of the tour, and Cambodian guides sailing with us from Phnom Penh to Siem Reap.

Orphanage visit: We will have the opportunity to visit an orphanage in Phnom Penh. This visit is organized by the same couple who we are working with during the Cambodia Voluntourism Project after the walking adventure. You will have opportunity to interact with the kids, which for many is a highlight of the trip. If you would like to leave a gift, suggested items include snacks (like granola or fruit strips), small shampoos, lotions, other toiletries, or small toys.

Photography: For us, the people of Southeast Asia were the highlight of the trip. Friendly smiles and waves were liberally sprinkled our direction wherever we went, especially in Vietnam. Usually people are happy to have their photo taken, and using a discreet approach from a distance poses no problem. If you want a conspicuous photo of a person, however, it is best to ask by gesturing to your camera. They will usually nod "yes" and enjoy seeing the results on your digital camera if possible.

We do NOT recommend paying locals for the photo. When visitors hand out money in situations like this, it creates an expectation of being paid that spoils the experience for others and tempts the locals to use their smile, or their children, as a source of income. We seek their photograph because they are beautiful or special or unique to us. That respect and delight should be payment enough. We propose that feeling guilty because of the difference in our standards of living is not a good reason to pay them for a photo, and does not change their circumstances, only their attitude.

Toilets: The traditional Asian toilet is not what they laughingly refer to as a "throne" (western style). Rather it is a fixture (a.k.a. squatty potty) lying flush with the ground that the user must squat on their haunches to utilize. Western-style toilets will be available, of course, in all the hotels and in most places we visit. At some point in the trip, however, you may find yourself faced with the uncomfortable decision of either using a squatty potty or waiting until the next opportunity to use a throne. In all fairness, we have to agree with the Asian argument that squatty potties may be more hygienic than thrones in that a squatty potty requires no part of your body to make contact with the fixture (unless you count your feet on the floor).

In addition, toilet paper is often not provided in public toilets. Rather, the user is expected to BYOTP (bring your own toilet paper). Make sure you always have a supply of TP in your daypack!

Further, most public toilets are not connected to sewage systems. If you see a waste basket next to the toilet, that generally means used toilet paper should be deposited there.

TRAVEL INSURANCE:

Walking Adventures International strongly recommends travel insurance. Many years of helping travelers deal with unexpected circumstances that require cancellation of their travel plans, or expensive special flight arrangements to return home have made us believers in the benefits of this form of insurance. WAI offers Preferred Benefits™ through USI Travel Insurance Services as part of the Adventure registration process.

There are two primary reasons we recommend travel insurance:

- 1) trip cancellation coverage which reimburses travelers for the cost of the tour if they are unable to participate due to a "covered reason" (e.g. their illness or that of a close family member) before or during a tour, and
- 2) medical expense and evacuation. Many medical insurance policies cover travelers overseas. Not many, however, will cover medical evacuation, which can be extremely expensive even for non life-threatening injuries which require first class or business class seats for a flight back to the USA.

Please call our office if you have questions on how to purchase travel insurance.

TRAVELER'S PERSPECTIVE:

As with most things in life, the benefit you receive from this experience will depend to a large degree on the frame of mind you have at the outset. If you've not traveled outside the U.S. before, there are a few things you should be aware of:

- Though we attempt to eliminate it as much as possible, travel always contains an element of uncertainty. Being ready to adjust will enhance your experience.
- To varying degrees, hotels, food, and local customs are different in other countries. This can be uncomfortable...and exciting!
- Though we continue to look for ways to slow the pace of our "Adventures," we still believe in providing a full day's opportunities for our travelers.
- Group travel, by its nature, involves giving up a certain degree of individual convenience. Though we strive for added flexibility for the individual, much of the time we all need to be "headed in the same direction."

We hope we've covered most of your questions. If not, feel free to contact us and we'll be glad to fill in the gaps. We look forward to walking Cambodia & Vietnam with you!



"Come walk with me!"

**Walking Adventures
INTERNATIONAL**

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Adventure Checklist

Though by no means intended to be comprehensive, following is a list of things you should probably consider bringing with you on this walking adventure. We've left a few blank lines for you to add your own "necessities" as you think of them.

- two pairs of walking shoes (or boots)
- clothing that can be layered
- rain gear
- walking stick
- sun screen
- sense of adventure
- earplugs
- foreign currency
- passport (with Vietnamese visa)
- airline tickets
- 1 passport-sized photo for Cambodia visa
- sunglasses
- sense of humor
- electrical transformers
- adapter for wall outlet
- camera (with extra batteries)
- extra memory disc for digital cameras
- travel binoculars
- country or area maps (we'll be sending you one)
- handi-wipes or waterless hand cleaner (for quick cleanup on bus)
- hat or visor
- walking credit books
- photocopy of passport (**with visa**) & birth certificate
- mini flashlight
- insect repellent
- swimsuit (both hotels have pools)
- cold and flu preventatives and remedies
- photocopy of credit/debit cards
- WAI Walking Journal from prior trips
- highlighter for marking road/walking maps and sheet protectors in case of rain
- NO knives, scissors, sharp objects in carry-ons at airports
- toilet paper (for on the trail)
- medications recommended by doctor
- medical insurance card/identification
- cold and flu preventatives & remedies
- washcloths