

# WELCOME TO VIETNAM!



“Bold, bustling, and vibrant. Vietnam offers adventure of all kinds, from within its cities to its majestic countryside. Engaging and inviting locals. Surprisingly sophisticated cuisine and beautiful views around nearly every bend make Vietnam one of the most rewarding cycling destinations in Southeast Asia”

## INTRODUCTION

- Isolated from the world for years, Vietnam is slowly laying its war torn past to rest and emerging as one of the most interesting and diverse destinations in Asia.
- Vietnam borders Cambodia, Laos and China. Its coastline stretches for 3200km along the South China Sea - about the same distance as the west coast of America. Almost the entire coastal strip is a patchwork of brilliant green rice paddies tended by local people.
- The country's two main cultivated areas are the Red River Delta in the north and the Mekong Delta in the south. Between the two deltas, the coastal paddies give way to soaring mountains cloaked with rainforest. Paddy fields, water buffalo, bicycles and street markets are common sights.
- Stretching along the South China Sea from Southern China to the Gulf of Thailand, Vietnam is home to 78 million people. The country boasts stunning landscapes, wonderful cuisine and two of Asia's most interesting cities - vibrant Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) is the hub of the south, while Hanoi, the French-flavoured capital, is the main focus of the north.
- After French colonial rule (1867-1954), the Vietnam War (1955-75) and subsequent communist policies, the country has finally lifted many restrictions on tourism and foreign investment and is rapidly becoming a key destination for backpackers and more adventurous holiday makers.
- The Vietnamese are extremely friendly to western visitors and supportive of more contact with the outside world.

## Geography and location

Vietnam is located on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia. It has a long land border of 4,550 km, bordering China to the North, Laos and Cambodia to the West, and the Eastern Sea (South China Sea) of Pacific Ocean to the East. On the map, Viet Nam is an S-shaped strip of land, stretching from 23°23' to 8°27' North latitude. The country's total length is 1,650 km from the northernmost point to the southernmost point. Its width, from the Eastern coast to the Western border, is about 500 km at the widest part and about 50 km at the narrowest part.

## Culture & People

The origins of the Vietnamese people are a combination of the Mongol races of north and east Asia, with Chinese and Indian influences. The population is surpassed only by Indonesia as Southeast Asia's most heavily populated country. However, Vietnam is the region's most ethnically homogenous country with the Vietnamese making up about 90% of the population.

Vietnamese language reflects the country's unique mix of racial and cultural origins, with its fusion of monotonic Mon-Khmer, and Tai tonality and grammar. Having been a Chinese province for over a millenium (111 BC-939 AD), most of the country's governmental, literary, and technical vocabulary comes from the Chinese language.

## A few facts and figures:

Full name:	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Area:	331,991 sq km
Population:	93 million (UN estimate 2016)

Capital City:	Hanoi
People:	85% ethnic Vietnamese, 3% ethnic Chinese, also Khmers, Chams and members of some 60 ethnolinguistic groups
Currency:	Dong
Language:	Vietnamese. Basic English is often spoken in main towns & cities
Religion:	Buddhism is the principal religion, followed by Hinduism and Caodaism
Government:	Socialist Republic since 1980 (gained independence from France in 1954)
Head of State:	Tran Dai Quang (Since April 2016)
Electricity:	Mostly 220V but 110V also exists
Time:	7 hours ahead of the UK (end Oct – end March)
Telephone:	Dialling Vietnam from the UK the code is 0084

## BACKGROUND READING

### Vietnam

A land of staggering natural beauty and cultural complexities, of dynamic megacities and hill-tribe villages, Vietnam is both exotic and compelling. Vietnam is known for its beaches, rivers, Buddhist pagodas and bustling cities. Hanoi, the capital, pays homage to the nation's iconic Communist-era leader, Ho Chi Minh, via a huge marble mausoleum. Ho Chi Minh City has French colonial landmarks, plus Vietnamese War history museums and the Củ Chi tunnels, used by Viet Cong soldiers.

### City of Hanoi

Hanoi ranks among the world's most attractive and interesting cities. Originally named Thang Long, or "City of the Ascending Dragon," the city was first the capital of Vietnam in A.D. 1010 and has had many names until its current incarnation. The name Hanoi, in fact, means "Bend in the River" and denotes the city's strategic location along the vital waterway. Historians liken the life-giving Red River its banks crowded with green rice paddies and farms to the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, a cradle of civilization. Even when the nation's capital moved to Hue under the Nguyen dynasty in 1802, the city of Hanoi continued to flourish, especially after the French took control in 1888 and modelled the city's architecture to their tastes, lending an important aesthetic to the city's rich stylistic heritage, even expanding the city and adding rail connections over the Long Bien Bridge in 1902. In 1954, after the French departed, Hanoi was declared Vietnam's capital once again. The city boasts more than 1,000 years of history, and that of the past few hundred years is marvellously preserved.



### Flying Dragons & Thieving Turtles: Hanoi's Founding

Originally, at its prehistoric founding as Thang Long, Hanoi was called "The Ascending Dragon." The dragon that ascended, so the story goes, created civilization as we know it along the Red River Valley and then plunged to his sleep in Halong Bay, thereby creating the grand karst slopes today a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The dragon is the symbol of the city, and you'll find references to it wherever you go.

Hanoi's other important creation myth is one oddly echoed by the legend of King Arthur and his rise to the throne after receiving the sword Excalibur from the Lady of the Lake. "Strange women lying in ponds distributing swords is no basis for a system of government," says Michael Palin's character in Monty Python and the Holy Grail, the spoof of the Arthur legend, and Hanoi's mandate granted by a giant turtle in Hoan Kiem is equally ridiculous, but a great one for putting the kids to bed at night.

### Vietnamese food



Vietnamese food is distinct and unforgettable. The cuisine relies on a balance of salty, sweet, sour and hot flavours, achieved through use of *nuoc mam*, a fermented fish sauce, cane sugar, the juice of kalamansi citrus fruit or tamarind and chilli peppers. Goi cuon is Vietnam's most famous dish: translucent spring rolls packed with greens, coriander and various combinations of minced pork, shrimp or crab.

## THE CHALLENGE IN DETAIL

You will be taking part in the Truants' Vietnam Bike Ride. Riding approximately 220km in 3 days, it will be a challenge and one that you need to prepare for.

This document includes specific details about the trip and what to expect from the ride.

## WEATHER

The climate in Vietnam is typically warm and humid, the weather can vary significantly from one region to another due to the country's length. January is one of the driest months of the year in Hanoi and the north. Whilst you can expect plenty of sunshine and clear blue skies, temperatures in the north will remain quite cool with the average temperature of 18°C.

Rainfall is at its lowest in January although a misty haze is not unusual, especially in coastal areas and around Halong Bay. In the far north conditions are dry but chilly and sometimes foggy, especially at night, so suitable clothing is recommended.

## TYPICAL DAY

On most days we will get up early, bags will be packed onto the support vehicle each morning before breakfast.

- Breakfast will be at around 6.30am
- Before we start riding each day we will do a warm up and receive a final brief on the day ahead from our guides.
- There will be water / snack stops every 15 – 20km, depending on temperature and the ability of group.
- Lunch will last approximately 1-1 ½ hours.
- Each evening everyone will eat together followed by a group briefing on the next day's riding.

*These timings are approximate and may change depending on group cycling ability, weather and other factors*

## TRAINING AND TERRAIN

The route we have designed is mostly flat terrain with a few undulating areas. There will be a mix of good tarmac roads, bad / pot-holed tarmac roads and unfinished roads. Training Guidelines are provided separately.

Participants will be briefed on road safety every day and at every briefing. Part of the challenge is keeping focused and Vietnam, especially, has some busy sections of road where concentration is essential.

**BIKES**

Each rider will be provided with 18 gear middle of the range mountain bikes. The standard sized frame is 18 inches but we can provide larger and smaller frames. There will be a range of sizes available with standard pedals and seats —we will use your height on your registration form to allocate the correct sized frame.

Good quality padded cycling shorts, a decent sized bum bag to wear when cycling for sun-cream, tissues and waterproof jacket, fingerless, summer-weight cycle gloves with gel pads will all make the experience more comfortable. Remember to bring your cycle helmet as this is not included. This must be worn at all times when cycling. You will not be allowed to cycle without one. It is advisable to take your helmet in your hand luggage at least, so if any baggage is lost/delayed on the way over you can still do the ride. You may also wish to do the same with your gel saddle and cycle shorts. The bikes will have a water bottle holder, so please bring your own water bottle.

To make sitting in the saddle for 3 days as comfortable as possible you may prefer to bring your own bicycle saddle or a gel seat saddle cover. The local mechanic will fit this for you (no need to bring the pole as it may not fit the frame). You may also want to bring your own pedals and toe-clips if this is what you prefer to use. These are entirely optional as bicycles will have saddles and pedals.

The mechanics will also help you get the saddle and handle bars at the right height so you are comfortable cycling. The mechanics will be with us for the whole event and so will be able to adjust your bike if you need to and carry out repairs along the way so you can carry on cycling.

**SUPPORT ON THE RIDE**

Classic Challenge will provide the services of a Tour Manager throughout the event. A volunteer medic will cycle with you for the duration of the challenge, and you are welcome to contact the medic in advance for advice should you need to. A representative of Classic Challenge will meet the group at London Heathrow Airport to distribute flight tickets and ensure that the check in procedure runs smoothly.

Our local Vietnam team will comprise one or two mechanics (depending on the size of the group), to be on hand to carry out any repairs. Support vehicles will carry water, refreshments, bicycles and spares, luggage and people who may be tired or injured. There will always be a vehicle at the front of the group and one at the back. All vehicles have mobile communication. Contact cards will be given to each participant with staff and hotel contact details as a precaution.

Mobile phones will be used to communicate between staff whilst on the road on cycling days. However, there could be areas en route where mobile phones will not work.

The route will be marked by marshals and an overall route map will be available at the snack and lunch stops so that you can track your progress.

**FOOD AND DRINK**

Water is of varying quality so bottled water should be used for drinking and cleaning teeth. All water should be regarded as being potentially contaminated. The number one rule is “be careful of the water”, especially ice. Drinking water will be provided during the cycle days. If participants buy water themselves they should ensure that the bottle has a serrated seal - not tops or corks as these can be filled with tap water. Fruit juice should be treated with suspicion as water may have been added. Well-known brands of soft drinks are available throughout the ride. Tea and coffee are generally ok as the water should have been boiled.

Dehydration is a risk on all charity challenge events due to the physical exertion. Remember to drink plenty of water, replace salts (lost through sweat) using rehydration formula and eating the salty snacks provided. Thirst is a sign that you are already dehydrated, so riders will be reminded to drink small quantities of water regularly together with rehydration salts. Camelbaks can result in drinking too much plain water without taking on enough salts, so if you plan to bring one we recommend you train and get used to assessing how much water you are drinking. We recommend participants bring water bottles, as it is easier to measure water intake.

Food is an opportunity to experience the local culture. Food in Vietnam is considered less spicy than Thai and less oily than Chinese. The food provided on the event will be wholesome and tasty to provide energy. A typical menu:

- Breakfast:** Bread, omelette, rice porridge, fruit juice, cereal, tea, coffee.  
**Snacks while cycling:** Local fruit, biscuits, nuts, raisins, crisps, water (you may want to bring energy bars)  
**Lunch:** Similar to evening meals.  
**Evening meal:** Noodles, steamed rice, meat (beef, pork, or chicken), steamed vegetables, and tasty clear soup. Tofu is available for vegetarians.

Classic Challenge need to know in advance of any special dietary requirements to make arrangements with the airlines and ground handlers. Vegetarians can be catered for, although they may wish to bring extra snacks and be prepared for repetitive meals. If any participant has an unusual dietary request we will try to help but it would be the responsibility of the individual to organise additional snacks as required.

**FLIGHT DETAILS (proposed flight times; subject to change)**

Airline: Singapore Airlines

**20 January 2020**

Depart: London Heathrow 10:55  
Arrive: Singapore 07:50 (arrive the next day)  
Flight no.: SQ317

**21 January 2020**

Depart: Singapore 09:20  
Arrive: Hanoi 11:40  
Flight no. SQ176

**26 January 2020**

Depart: Hanoi 18:35  
Arrive: Singapore 22:55  
Flight no. MI653

Depart: Singapore 23:45  
Arrive: London Heathrow 05:55 (arrive the next day)  
Flight no. SQ322

Time difference: Vietnam is: +7 hours ahead of the UK (end Oct to end March)  
Singapore is +8 hours ahead of the UK (end Oct to end March)

Flight arrangements for all our events are arranged through scheduled airlines over which Classic Challenge has no control. Consequently, we cannot be held responsible for any flight delays, cancellations or overbookings.

A charge of approximately £250 per person will be included on the final invoice for the pre-paid airport taxes. This amount is subject to change up until ticketing. There is currently a departure tax incorporated into the ticket price collected before departure from the UK.

**Flight Upgrades**

Everyone will be expected to fly in economy with the group flights on the outbound, or receive a fine of £500 (pls note- Stuart!)

But the return, if people so wish, they can have a rest on the way home. The cost to upgrade on the return journey to business class will start from £1,800 approx. (exact price on request – subject to availability and confirmation) and invoiced separately through Classic Challenge.

Please contact [Lara@classicchallenge.co.uk](mailto:Lara@classicchallenge.co.uk) to arrange this if travelling with the group.

If you are arranging your own flights, please send details asap through to [Lara@classicchallenge.co.uk](mailto:Lara@classicchallenge.co.uk)



## ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation is selected for location and the ability to accommodate groups and is subject to change. Rooms are twin share, throughout the event. If you wish to share with someone in particular, make a note on your registration form and we will try to accommodate.

Part of the fun of the challenge is the room-sharing if this is your first time. If you would like to book a single room, **the cost is £300** for the 5 nights, subject to availability. This will be invoiced separately via Classic Challenge. Please click on the single supplement box when registering online and Lara will be in touch with the invoice.

### Day 1 – Overnight on flight

#### Day 2 - Muong Thanh Luxury Ha Nam Hotel

<http://muongthanh.com/en/home.html>

The hotel features a restaurant, an outdoor pool, fitness centre, Karaoke, bar/lounge, outdoor tennis court, terrace, spa services. It is approximately a 90km (2 hour) transfer from the airport.

#### Day 3 – Hidden Charm Hotel, Ninh Binh

<http://hiddencharmresort.com/intro.html>

Set within a charming landscape that encompasses native greenery, fragrant golden rice field and stunning view of the mountain range.

#### Day 4 – Huu Nghi Hotel, Hai Phong

<http://www.huunghihotel.vn/>

Contently located in the heart of Hai Phong city, the hotel is easily accessible to the commercial and entertainment centre of the city.

#### Day 5 – La Paz Resort, Halong

<http://www.lapazresorts.com/>

Nestled in the heart of beautiful Tuan Chau Island by the entrance of Ha Long Bay, With the perfect combination of pristine yet modern architectural design inspired by old time French architecture.

#### Day 6 – Melia Hanoi Hotel, Hanoi

<https://www.melia.com/en/hotels/vietnam/hanoi/melia-hanoi/index.html>

The unrivalled location in the centre of the city and the sensational range of cuisine available at Meliá Hanoi will make you feel as if you are part of the culture of Vietnam.

## EXTENDING YOUR STAY IN VIETNAM AFTER THE BIKE RIDE

There will be the opportunity to extend your stay in Vietnam after the ride. Places are limited and will be confirmed on a first come first served basis. The Deadline for applications is approx. 4 months prior to departure. The cost of extending the flight is approximately £40 per person plus any surcharge imposed by the airline provided that the same routing as the group is taken.

You may stay on in the Melia Hanoi Hotel where we finish the group tour or travel to another part of Vietnam.

## HEALTH

- A UK doctor will accompany the ride. All participants are required to complete a medical form online at the point of registration. Participants should keep Classic Challenge up to date with any changes to their health. Participants aged 65 + will be asked to obtain a doctor's signature on their medical form. All medical details will be passed on to the group doctor.
- Participants should bring their own regular medication with sufficient supplies for the whole trip (including a few spares in case of any unexpected delay back to the UK) and a small first aid kit (see Suggested Packing List). Local pharmacies provide a limited supply of medications, but because the quality of locally obtained medications can vary greatly participants should bring adequate supplies with them from the UK.
- All allergies can be declared on your medical form. Anyone with a nut allergy should bring their own adrenaline treatments as part of their personal first aid kit. This should be carried as hand luggage on the flights, a medical letter is recommended to avoid problems at customs.
- You should consult your GP before travelling for vaccinations and advice. Below are some guidelines and information but you need to speak to your doctor for up to date information as things do change.
- We recommend you visit your health professional at least 6 weeks before travel to check whether you need any vaccinations or other preventive measures. This appointment provides an opportunity to assess health risks taking into account a number of factors including medical history and the cycle challenge. For those with pre-existing health problems, an earlier appointment is recommended.
- Country specific information and advice is published by the National Travel Health Network and Centre on the TravelHealthPro website and by NHS (Scotland) on the fitfortravel website <http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk>.

**Hepatitis A, Tetanus and Typhoid** should be up-to-date as well as routine vaccination courses and boosters as recommended in the UK : measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) and diphtheria-tetanus-polio.

**Rabies** – Rabies has been reported in domestic and wild animals in this country. Bats may also carry rabies-like viruses. Travellers should avoid contact with all animals. Rabies is preventable with prompt post-exposure treatment. It is recommended that you discuss if pre-exposure vaccinations are recommended for travel to Vietnam, by your health professional.

**Cholera** - Cholera occurs periodically, largely in rural areas where access to sanitation is limited. You are advised to practise food and water hygiene precautions. Cholera vaccine is not routinely recommended and no certificate is required. If you suffer from diarrhoea during or after your stay seek medical attention immediately.

**Dengue Fever** - is a mosquito-borne infection found in tropical and sub-tropical regions around the world, is also widespread in Cambodia. Symptoms are a severe flu-like illness, but infection is seldom fatal. There is currently no vaccine to prevent infection. You should take normal precautions against mosquitoes.

**Malaria** – Vietnam is a low risk country for Malaria. Participants are encouraged to seek own professional medical advice regards to the requirement to take anti malarial medication. Classic Challenge will need to be provided with a list of which Malaria tablets each participant is taking so we

have a record of it in case they suffer from any side effects. Participants are advised to promptly seek medical care in the event of a fever or flu-like illness in the first year following return from the event.

Malaria tablets have been known to cause extra sensitivity to the sun – high factor suncream and loose fitting trousers / long sleeved shirts are recommended if this occurs.

To reduce the chance of being bitten, here are some guidelines:

- wear light-coloured clothing;
- wear long trousers and long-sleeved shirts;
- use mosquito repellents containing DEET on exposed areas;
- avoid perfumes and aftershave.

These precautions apply especially just after dawn and before dusk.

- The more training participants do, the more they will enjoy the bike ride. Cycling for 5 days in a row is a challenge and training should be little and often so that muscles get used to consecutive days of cycling. However, don't strain anything too close to departure. To prevent saddle soreness, bring Vaseline, practise riding out of the saddle and use bar-ends to alter cycle position. Taking your own saddle also helps.
- If anyone's health has changed since they filled out our medical form when they registered, please ask them to complete another form and they need to advise their insurance company. If anyone fails to advise their insurer of pre-existing medical conditions, their insurance will not be valid.

#### **Common ailments on a long haul charity challenge :**

- Traveller's Diarrhoea can be avoided by following basic hygiene rules: avoiding ice, only drinking bottled water, if you drink from a can clean it first. Hand gels and wetwipes are essential before touching any food. Each cyclist should bring their own waterbottle (with protected mouthpiece). Drinking water will be provided during the cycle days, participants need to budget for buying their own bottled water in the evenings.
- Stomach upsets – this is a difficult one as it can be caused simply by jet lag or a change of routine. Bring Dioralyte to replenish loss of minerals and nutrients.
- Dehydration - fluids lost in sweat must be replaced. Bring a suitable water carrier and rehydration salts (they come in packets in different flavours).
- Sun & heat related illness - Participants are asked to carry their sun cream on their person whilst cycling and they reminded to re-apply cream. Break stops will be shaded. If the weather is hot, we may set off earlier than planned to avoid cycling for long hours in the hottest part of the day.

## RISK ASSESSMENT & EMERGENCY GUIDELINES

Further details regarding emergency procedures will feature in our risk assessment document, which will be issued to the charity prior to the event. An additional document, the Emergency Guidelines, will also be drawn up detailing emergency contacts and procedures here in the UK for both Classic Challenge and the charity, in case of a serious incident.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

- All participants must have adequate travel insurance cover to participate in the challenge.
- Classic Challenge has organised insurance cover with specialist brokers Campbell Irvine
- To purchase insurance through Campbell Irvine, please follow this link:  
[www.campbellirvinedirect.com/classicchallenge\\_home.htm](http://www.campbellirvinedirect.com/classicchallenge_home.htm)
- There is no obligation to take our insurance however you must be adequately covered to go on the event.
- You should check it covers you for repatriation back to the UK and medical expenses.
- If you are organising your own insurance you should advise your insurance company that you are cycling for charity in Vietnam. Details of your insurance must be sent to Classic Challenge at least 8 weeks before departure.
- If you have a pre-existing medical condition you need to advise your insurance company so that you are adequately covered and update them of any changes prior to departure.

## PASSPORT / VISA

- Everyone should retain the yellow portion of their immigration Arrival-Departure card on entry to Vietnam, as this is required for exit.
- An entry visa is required to enter Vietnam, This should be applied for online at this [link](#). Visas may be applied for up to 2 days before travel however we encourage applications to be made well in advance of travel.
  - Applicants need to include their dates of entry into and exit from Vietnam and the ports of entry and exit.
  - Visa fee is \$89 at the time of writing.
- Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam  
12 Victoria Road  
London W8 5RD  
Tel: 020 7937 1912

Fax: 020 7937 6108

E-mail [consular@vietnamembassy.org.uk](mailto:consular@vietnamembassy.org.uk)

Opening hours: 9.30 – 12.30, Monday – Friday except public holidays.

- A single tourist visa is valid for one month from the date of arrival in Vietnam.
- The Embassy recommends 5 working days for processing but Classic Challenge advises one month.
- If anyone is staying on and plans to go back to Vietnam after the bike ride it would be prudent to organise a multiple entry visa which costs £70 (subject to change). Anyone requiring this type of visa should contact Classic Challenge (020 7619 0066) for further information.

Classic Challenge requires the visa number for each participant prior to the event

## CURRENCY

Currency: Vietnamese dong (VND)

Exchange Rate: (June 2018) £1 = 30328.22 Vietnamese dong (VND)

US \$1 = 22, 983.10 Vietnamese dong (VND)

- Ask your bank to confirm whether your card will work in Vietnam. Most ATMs accept Plus (Visa) debit and credit cards. ATMs that accept Cirrus and Maestro (MasterCard) are less common. Chip-and-pin ATMs are rare in Vietnam. Make sure your card has a magnetic stripe on the back, as a chip-and-pin only card probably won't work.
- Many Vietnamese banks charge ATM fees. Fees vary from bank to bank, but you can expect to be charged between VND 30000 and VND 55000 per withdrawal.
- Approximately £150 is recommended for souvenirs, sightseeing, tips and optional tours.

### EXTRAS FOR CONSIDERATION

**Single Room Supplement:** £300 for 5 nights (subject to availability)

**Flight Upgrades** – available once the group seats have been booked

**Ground only** – you can meet the group in Vietnam and arrange your own flights.

**Extending your stay** - £40 administration fee to amend your return flight date (approx.) plus any charges levied by the airline

### USEFUL REFERENCES

[www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com) or [www.travel-guides.com](http://www.travel-guides.com) (country information)

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) (travel advice from the Foreign Office)

[www.travelhealthpro.org.uk](http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk) (vaccination and health advice)

# SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

## CLOTHING

- Cycle helmet - essential
- Cycling shorts (padded) - 2-3 pairs and suitable shoes for cycling that dry quickly
- Fingerless cycling gloves - one pair with gel pads (essential)
- T-shirts - one for cycling and one for evening per day
- Socks - one pair per day plus spares and extra for evenings
- Scarf - to cover back of neck (to avoid sun burn) and cap to cover head when not wearing helmet & sunglasses
- Spare trainers / sandals for general walking
- Waterproof jacket / bicycle poncho
- Casual wear for most of week i.e. sweatshirt, tracksuit, fleeces
- Loose fitting trousers to wear over cycle shorts in case of extra sensitivity to the sun due to malaria tablets
- Something slightly smarter for the celebration dinner
- Swimming outfit – dependant on final accommodation used, recheck before final mailing

## EQUIPMENT

- 1 water bottle for bike - ideally with a cover on top to prevent dust/mud from getting into the drinking nozzle. A more hygienic alternative is a "camel pack" which is worn on the back.
- Saddle – your own saddle or a gel seat cover (optional) – do not bring the seat pole
- Bum bag - for carrying small items while cycling e.g. camera, sun cream, tissues etc.
- Small 'day' bag which can be used for extra items and transported on support vehicle
- Towels – 1
- Torch and spare batteries
- Ear plugs (sharing with noisy room mates can prevent sleep!)
- Carrier bags/bin bags - useful for dirty washing or wet clothing
- Camera and memory card/s
- Insurance policy / passport / visa (and photocopies, kept separate from originals)

## SMALL PERSONAL MEDICAL KIT

- Antiseptic ointment, plasters, knee support, bandage, pain killers, sting relief, Diareze, Dioralyte, Malaria tablets (as prescribed by GP), isotonic powders (if used during pre-departure training), insect repellent containing DEET, sting relief, Vaseline or sudacrem, energy bars
- Lip salve and sun block (minimum factor 30), tissues, Wet wipes and Toilet paper and Anti bacterial hand gel
- Contact lens wearers should bring spare glasses and prescription sunglasses
- Ladies are advised to take tampons regardless of timing

Pack as lightly as possible. Preferably use in a soft, robust bag as all luggage is transported together each day in a truck and needs to be durable. We strongly recommend against hard suitcases. Take a lock for added security.