



# **Suzanne Smy in Vietnam, Cambodia & Thailand: a travelogue**

*Suzanne Smy, Bob MacCallum*

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Yet again disappointed in love, Suzanne decides to “wash that man right outta my hair” by fulfilling a long-time ambition to travel to the Far East – on her own. Follow her solo adventures as she explores Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand in all their modern, and ancient, glories. Determined to enjoy her 2 month long summer holiday from her teaching job, Scots girl, Suzanne eventually enjoys the delights of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Phnom Penh, Bangkok and their hidden hinterlands. She even walks over the bridge on the river Kwai, in the company of a young Japanese photographer.

As well as visiting ancient sites redolent in human history and religion such as Angkor Wat, she experiences the darker side of humanity in trips to the Killing Fields of Cambodia and the infamous death camp, Security Prison 21, once run by the murderous regime of Pol Pot. Suzanne recounts her time with fascinating fellow backpackers such as the ex-nun, Anna-Marie, Wim Washing Machine, Madame Lola, Lawrence of London, the Buddhist monks supporting Manchester Utd or Liverpool, the Ladyboys of Bangkok and the girls of the Patpong Ping Pong Parlour. She also describes her brief encounters with some weird and wonderful creatures like the giant frogs of Cambodia, Sam the Snake, a fighting cock and some of the residents of an elephant sanctuary and a crocodile farm.

Her trip, however, isn't all positive. She is robbed by the pirates of Halong Bay, caught up in a typhoon in the Gulf of Thailand and finds herself eating (inadvertently) roast dog and deliberately, deep-fried crickets. She is also involved in a bus crash, is trapped in a lift, imagines she is being kidnapped by a tuk-tuk driver and is squeezed in a Cambodian river boat in the company of a giant pig. She is also bitten by bugs she didn't know existed, suffers from cold sores by the dozen and, thanks to piles, has to enlist the aid of an inflatable rubber ring in order to sit on just about anything.

Rather than being presented as a traditional diary, Suzanne's travelogue has been arranged into 4 main sections, covering: her various modes of transport, the people she met, the weird and wonderful creatures she encountered, and her various ailments along the way.

By the end of her 2 month sojourn, Suzanne reflects on her experience and decides that, despite the occasional negative, she has taken far more positives from her time in the Orient. She realises how basically friendly and helpful the people are, even the poorest of the poor, while showing a resilience strengthened by an optimism for the future that meant, on returning home, men had well and truly been washed out of her hair.

About the co-authors

Suzanne Smy lives in Maryhill, a northern suburb of Glasgow and is a teacher of Business Studies / Guidance in neighbouring Bearsden at Boclair Academy where she has taught since she qualified as a teacher. She has travelled extensively but still harbours ambitions to visit even more far-flung parts of the globe.

Bob MacCallum is a friend and former colleague of Suzanne at Boclair Academy where he taught English for over 20 years. Since retiring in 2000 due to ill-health he has had 5 books published about his favourite football club, Rangers.

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