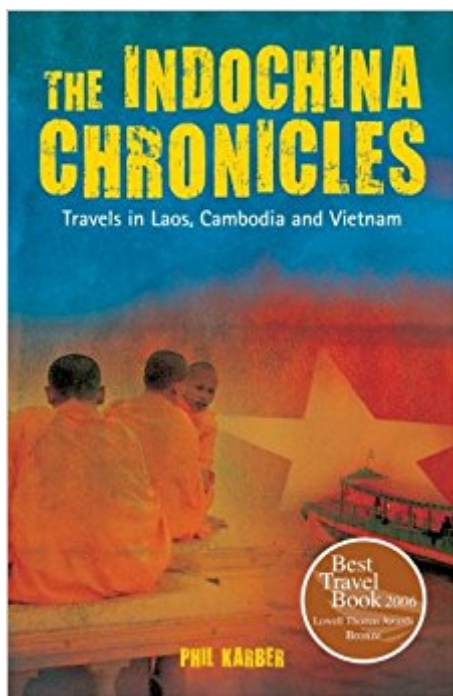


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# The Indochina Chronicles: Travels In Laos, Cambodia And Vietnam



## Synopsis

In this insightful travelogue, American war veteran Phil Karber takes you on a journey down the roads, rivers and rails of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. He writes insightfully about the political effect of the Vietnam War on the people and places, adding a whole new perspective on the region's history and culture. Accompanied by a friend, London artist Simon Redington, they follow the Mekong River from China to Saigon, to the infamous Tiger Cages on Con Son Island, and to the city sidewalks of Hanoi, where the author lived for five years. Along the way, the stories will capture your imagination and transport you to a beautiful region, undaunted by war and poverty. Indeed, this book brings to life the harsh realities of the region's history, culture, politics and people. Together with its unforgettable images of locals, veterans and expatriates, this transcends normal expectations of travel literature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"The Indochina Chronicles" is a rare blend of history, war remembrance and modern observation driven by a deep desire to understand the culture, needs and desires of the nations that suffered the tragic consequences from a lack of understanding. --- Kay Johnson, Vietnam correspondent, Time magazine. From old Viet Cong guerrillas to the new tycoons of Saigon, from hookers and highwaymen to bartenders and ambassadors, Phil Karber has met them all and has a drink with most. Nobody knows the red states of Indochina better than Phil Karber. His new book is sweeping, provocative and poignant. --Mark McDonald, Foreign Correspondent, Knight Ridder Phil Karber's wonderful book is intimate, informed, colorful, and, most of all, real, a marvelous tour, literal and

figurative, of the Southeast Asian landscape. --Richard Bernstein, Berlin Bureau Chief, New York Times

Phil Karber was born in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas on Halloween, 1951. In late 1998, he was residing in Hanoi, Vietnam, where he took five years to write this book, *The Indochina Chronicles*. He is married to Joellen Lambiotte, who works in international reproductive health, has two grown children, Maggie and Wes, and a grandchild, Parker. Following a successful career in business, and sending the children off to university, he joined Joellen in Nairobi, Kenya in the mid-nineties. While living there he wrote his first book, *Yak Pizza to Go!* He now divides his time between his residence in Bangkok, Thailand, and the developing world destinations to which he frequently travels.

Karber, a veteran writes accurate portrayals of the people of Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam as he travels by rail and decrepit Russian motorcycles. The horrors of Pol Pot and The American military and what they did to the people is stunning and would turn any decent human being into being anti war. But what makes this book special is how Karber shows the reader that the people have gone on with their lives in spite of the politicians and the military. I smiled many times while reading this book at the unconquerable human spirit.

As my wife and I are planning for a vacation in Thailand we found this book more than helpful. Mr. Karber has that rare ability to transport you, with his words, to a beautiful country with beautiful people. Not that they haven't suffered from the Viet-Nam war. His travels and the juxtaposition of various experiences make this an entertaining as well as informative book. A must read for anyone traveling to Asia.

Perfect shopping experience: This book is very interesting and it was exactly how it was described online, the price was fair and the delivery was on time. Thank you. I'm 100% satisfied with this purchase.

i bought this book prior to my own visit to vietnam,cambodia, and laos. i wanted a travel book to give me a first hand look at modern day indochina and i felt rewarded for my efforts. He does a good job of portraying contemporary indochina as well as providing little historical antidotes that help illuminate the narrative. I recommend this book.

While the book appears to suggest that it follows the authors actual travels and purports to report on actual events , I question the truth of many things , however it does do a great job of describing many historical events and places, particularly Laos and the plane of Jars.

A hodgepodge of travelogue, history, "boys on their own", and memoir, this didn't compel me to read it. I finished it, but barely. Not a great read.

Phil Karber's travelogue begins, more or less, and ends, more or less, in Hanoi -- the city in which he was living as an ex-pat at the time he wrote the book. His journey takes him and his companion down the Mekong from northern China into and through Laos and Cambodia to Phnom Penh, from there into and through Vietnam's delta country to Saigon, and from there north back to Hanoi. Karber is an American who was enlisted during the Vietnam War and spent some time overseas. He returned alive. Some of his friends, however, were not so fortunate and returned to the Ozark towns in which they were raised, affected. The memories of Tuck Freeman and others yield a palor upon what might otherwise might have been an amusing romp down the Mekong, and give the otherwise college-level prose a more deeply haunted feel. The ambivalence of Americans toward the war in Vietnam has been exploded many times, but this book stands apart because the author is interpolating his memories and the Southeast Asian landscape at the same time. The book may also someday be seen as a kind of a Hanoi period piece for its depictions of ex-pat life there, and certainly some of the more notorious characters living in the city at the time. This is not the kind of book to read and reread for the sake of its marvelous English prose -- indeed, often I found myself frustrated for wishing a better writer had taken on this subject, but it should not go un-read by anyone interested in travelling the Mekong and Vietnam, and their hosts friendly and unfriendly characters. In spite of its shortcomings, the vibe of the book has remained with me for several days after I finished it, and I do hope Mr Karber continues to publish his adventures.

Karber is the real deal, visiting the Indochina peninsula with an open and curious mind, eager to meet people, hear their stories, eat the food, and follow his own well educated instincts. As a Vietnam Vet, he shows great courage in facing the legacy of Vietnam's "American" war, especially during his visit to the infamous Plain of Jars. As for 'pattilou's comment about this book being a typical 'boys on a road trip' story, it seems to me that Karber's overt and unapologetic loyalty--despite many opportunities--to his wife rules out such a stereotypical response. Rather, Karber embodies the kind of traveller who approaches new cultures with respect, knowledge and

humility. He skillfully weaves together his personal history, the history of Indochina, and the daily experiences of his trip.

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