

**Vietnam Hands-on
9 days – 8 nights
Ho Chi Minh City, Da-Nang, Hoi-An, Hanoi, Ha-Long Bay
Culture, Discovery, Adventure, History**

**This program may be operated for individuals or for groups
This is a suggested itinerary**

Vietnam is a splendid country whose geographical silhouette draws the shape of a dragon, symbol of strength and benefits in the Far East. There, not all is rice fields drowned in the sun, bamboo hedges and conical hats, images of an eternal Asia, miraculously preserved, vibrant and authentic. From Hạ Long Bay to the Mekong Delta, from Hanoi, the capital with preserved colonial architecture, to Hồ Chí Minh City, the great city of the South, it is an exciting discovery. If you are looking for clichés and ease, Vietnam is not for you. However, everything is currently changing very quickly, in a kind of impatience, even imprudence, wanting to make up for lost time. Despite rapid economic growth, Vietnam has not sold its soul to the devils of progress. Is Vietnam at the dawn of a new destiny? Better than that, he's already immersed in it!

Day 1: Ho Chi Minh City

As soon as you deplane at Tan Son Nhat airport, our representative will meet you at the end of the jet bridge or at the entrance of the terminal, to assist you with immigration procedures. For those applying for a visa on arrival, the estimated wait time for the visa is usually 30 minutes. After clearing immigration and customs, you'll be introduced to your guide who will drive you to the hotel. The rest of the day is free to rest and relax.

With over eight million inhabitants and four million motorbikes, Saigon is truly a city that never sleeps. Despite its modernity, Saigon maintains a strong link to the past and our city tour takes in some of Saigon's most historic landmarks including the Notre Dame Cathedral, a red brick edifice with twin spires constructed from materials imported from France (entrance is only permitted when no services are being performed). Then head across the square to the Central Post Office, completed in 1897. A short drive away is the former Presidential Palace, the headquarters of the Saigon Government during the American War. Continue to the War Remnants Museum for a vivid perspective of the American War through the eyes of the Vietnamese. (Please note that some of the displays are very graphic.) Experience Saigon's famed street coffee culture while your guide provides a brief language lesson as well as insights into daily life of a Saigonese

Day 2: Ho Chi Minh City (Cu Chi Tunnels & City Highlights)

From Saigon, take a 2hr drive northwest to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels, an immense network of connecting underground tunnels started in 1948 to protect the Viet Cong guerrillas from the French air and ground sweeps. The tunnels also served as living quarters, communication and supply routes, and housed hospitals, food and weapons caches. Touring the underground compounds will provide a better understanding of the history of the tunnels, the hardship of life in the tunnels and the Vietnamese resilience during combat. Have a lunch at local restaurant and return to Saigon by private boat. Before returning to your hotel, in the evening, you're free explore the night market, night life and shopping or to take optional tours. Guests ride on a pillion behind an experienced driver. Accommodation: In Saigon as per option [B/L]

Option: Food delights on vintage Vespa

The darker the night gets the more vivid Saigon becomes! Get ready for a fascinating ride by vintage Vespa tonight to discover busy Saigon after dark, together with delightful local food tasting in the most authentic local restaurants. It's such a great chance for you to experience the Southern Vietnam specialties. Then continue to zig zag through the hustle and bustle of the streets. End up your night at a cozy speak easy bar to taste some signature cocktails (or mocktails for your children) and have a chat with people here. Get back to your hotel and call it a night.

Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City (Ben Tre in depth)

Depart Saigon for a 1.5 hours' drive to Ben Tre Province in the Mekong Delta, famous for its tropical fruit gardens and traditional products made of coconuts. Visit a brick factory to learn how bricks are made by hand using centuries-old traditional methods before boarding your private local boat and cruising along the waterways to observe the way of life on the river. Shore excursions include a coconut workshop where almost every part of the coconut is used for candies and crafts, and a family-run mat workshop where you can try your hand at weaving the ubiquitous straw sleeping mats. A 3km (2 miles) ride by tuk-tuk or bicycle* takes you to the home of a fruit farmer where you can sample tropical fruits. After a visit to a chopstick workshop (optional) and lunch at a local restaurant, board a rowing sampan for close up views of the water palm-lined waterways of the Delta. Travel back to the Hung Vuong pier by boat before transferring by car back to Saigon. Accommodation: In Saigon. [B/L]

*Advance notice required if using local bicycle. Biking distance: approx. 3km (2 miles)

Day 4: Ho Chi Minh City, Da-Nang, Hoi-An

In the morning, transfer from your accommodation to the airport (with guide). Upon arrival at Da-Nang Airport, your guide will come to meet you up and transfer you to the hotel in Hoi-An. Lunch at local restaurant en-route. Hoi-An's narrow lanes are ideal for a guided walking tour of its many atmospheric sights including: the old merchant houses with influences from Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese architecture; the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge, first built in the 1590s by the Japanese community to link them with the Chinese quarters across the stream; the Assembly Hall of the Chaozhou Chinese Congregation with its intricate woodcarvings. Not only an highlight, the tour also takes you off the beaten path to get a unique glimpse into the daily life of this lovely city and discover some unforgettable cultural and historical attractions along with interesting and tasty street food. Stroll through zigzagging alleys to explore real neighborhoods and indulge in Hoi-An's best foods at places which have been making these delicacies for generations. We'll try foods such as white rose, bread, and banana sweet soup and coconut pancakes. Next, go to the local Hoi-An market and roam around the food stalls where you can find amazing "Cao Lau" noodles and much more. Finally, gather at a local house for a home-hosted dinner. Then walk to the heart of Hoi-An ancient town, sit on a local boat cruising along Hoai River and enjoy the view of Hoi-An at night while floating lanterns are released. Accommodation: In Hoi-An. [B/L/D]

Note: *The Hoi-An entrance ticket is valid for entry to 5 sightseeing spots in Hoi-An including merchant houses, the Japanese Covered Bridge, museums, pagodas and assembly halls for 24 hours. It also provides entry into Hoi-An Ancient Town for as long as you are in Hoi-An. Please keep the entrance ticket with you at all times should you independently visit Hoi-An later in the evening or on another day.*

Option: Making Lanterns with Mr. Huyhn Van Trung

Silk lanterns, the simple yet colorful handicraft is now an essential part of Hoi-An culture. The lantern is inspired and hand-made by local artisans and is meant to bring good fortune. It has really made a comeback thanks to an experienced man - Mr. Huynh Van Trung who was born in a traditional lantern making family. Trung inherits valuable skills in making lanterns from his father - the well-known artisan Huynh Van Ba. Chat with him for a brief introduction to the history, shape, and color of the lanterns as well as the stages of production. Try creating your own lantern and take it home as a souvenir.

Venue location: *Doi Temple - 10 minutes from Hoi-An Center.*

Day 5: Hoi-An (Organic Farm visit & Cooking Class)

Cam Thanh Village is now an urban ward of Hoi-An city. It is known for dense water coconut jungles and immense rice fields. During the Vietnam war, Cam Thanh was a shelter for local people and soldiers. Nowadays, this place supplies seafood, vegetables and rice for the area. This morning, meet your guide and transfer to the picturesque Co Co river for a bamboo basket-boat ride to Thanh Dong

village which is the first and only organic farm in Hoi-An. Get a glimpse about the history and customs of this charming village before venturing into the garden and getting your hands dirty – You may like to borrow the farmers' clothing provided by the villagers and learn how cultivate vegetables without chemicals before harvesting vegetables for your cooking class. Continue a short bamboo basket-boat ride through the peaceful water coconut forest to a riverbank restaurant looking out rice fields. On arrival, enjoy a welcome drink, take part in traditional Vietnamese folk games as balance Bamboo Bridge, pot smashing then join-in a hands-on cooking class. After the cooking class, savor the dishes you have prepared. Bid farewell to the chef before transferring back your hotel. [B/L]

Cooking Class Lunch Menu:

- ⌘ Crispy eggplant rolls with meat *
 - ⌘ Moringa salad with shrimp *
 - ⌘ Grilled basa fish in banana leaves *
 - ⌘ Stir fried chicken with garlic
 - ⌘ Stir fried mix vegetables
 - ⌘ Steamed rice
 - ⌘ Homemade yoghurt
- (*) *Cooking class*

Day 6: Hoi-An, Da-Nang, Hanoi (Water Puppet Show)

Free time in the morning until being transferred to Da-Nang airport (with guide).

Upon arrival at Noi Bai Airport, your guide will come to meet you up and transfer you to hotel.

Early evening transfer from your hotel to a public theatre for a water puppet performance, a uniquely northern Vietnamese art form said to have originated in the flooded rice fields of the Red River Delta where villagers entertained themselves by manipulating puppets over the water. Modern performers stand chest-deep in water behind a screen and use long rods to move the colorful wooden puppets in a life-like way to depict scenes based on Vietnamese folklore. The skits are set to traditional music using drums, wooden bells, horns, bamboo flutes and cymbals. Scenes may also be accompanied by operatic songs narrating the action. After the show, transfer for nice dinner restaurant in town. Accommodation: In Hanoi. [B/D]

Day 7: Hanoi (City Tour by Cyclo)

Experience serene Hanoi as the city begins to rouse by taking a cyclo ride to Ba Dinh Square to witness the daily flag raising ceremony. The square is also the historic site where President Ho Chi Minh famously read the Proclamation of Independence of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam on September 2, 1945. Continue your ride along some of Hanoi's most beautiful boulevards lined with ancient trees and classical French villas passing by the 1932 Cua Bac Cathedral, a fine example of European and Vietnamese architectural elements. Enjoy the sights and scents at the colorful Quang Ba flower market east of West Lake which peaks between 02:00 and sunrise. The largest flower market in Hanoi, the colorful market trades in fresh flowers shipped here daily from all over Vietnam. Along the way, observe typical early morning activities such as tai chi exercise and local residents enjoying their street side coffee. The tour concludes at the famous Pho Bat Dan, Hanoi's oldest and regarded by many as the best, traditional beef noodle soup, known for its hearty broth. Join the queue for a seat at this establishment that has been operating continuously since the 1960s. Return to hotel for breakfast. Visit the historic Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, an imposing monument of marble and granite built to house the preserved body of beloved revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh, affectionately known to the Vietnamese as "Uncle Ho". Tour the One Pillar Pagoda, a Buddhist temple built in 1049 of wood in the shape of a lotus blossom and set on a single stone pillar, considered by many to be one of Vietnam's most iconic pagodas. Visit Ho Chi Minh's House nearby, a simple wooden house in a tranquil setting where Ho Chi Minh lived and worked. Some of his belongings are on display and visitors can walk up the steps to see his bedroom. Continue on to the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first national university built in the late 11th century. The picturesque temple is an example of well-preserved traditional Vietnamese architecture and is featured on the back of the 100,000 Vietnamese dong banknote. [B]

Note: *The Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed every Monday & Friday, all afternoons and from September to December).*

Day 8: Hanoi, Ha-Long Bay

In the morning, private transfer to Tuan Chau island for boarding the cruise

12:00 pm: Arrive at Tuan Chau island

- 12:45 pm: Board the boat and start your journey. Enjoy welcome drinks during the itinerary and safety briefing from Cruise Manager.
 - 1:00 pm: Let the vacation begin with a set lunch as the boat cruises towards the southeast of Ha-Long Bay, passing Chicken Rock and Finger Islet, Chicken Islet, Bo Nau cave
 - 1:45 pm: Kayaking or using bamboo boat to explore "Luon" cave with the cliffs stretch vertically out of the pure blue and smooth water. (Optional activities)
 - 4:00 pm: Swim or hike on Titov Island.
 - 5:00 pm: Optional onboard activities traditional spa (chargeable), sunbathing on board.
 - 5:30 pm: Bar opens for happy hour with buy one get one free on drinks. While boat passing Turtle islet, Human-face islet, Back-horse islet to overnight area.
 - 6:00 pm: MasterChef Competition show and fruit carving demonstration on sundeck (or in the restaurant in case of inclement weather) while boat cruises to overnight anchorage area.
 - 7:30 pm: Set menu dinner is served in the restaurant.
 - 9:00 pm: Relax in your cabin or join our staff at the reception for squid fishing. Overnight on board.
- Accommodation: On overnight cruise [B/L/D]



Note: the timing and itinerary could be changed without prior notice depends on weather conditions and cruise option

Day 9: Ha-Long Bay, Hanoi, USA

Continue on your cruise towards Hanoi.

- 6:15 am: Start your day with a Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck.
 - 7:00 am: Light breakfast is served. The vessel weighs the anchor to cruise through Trong cave, Trinh nu cave, Monster Island and Me Cung cave to reach "Sung Sot" cave our destination for today.
 - 8:00 am: Discover "Sung Sot" cave - the biggest cave in Halong Bay with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites.
 - 9:00 am: Check out, settle bill at reception desk.
 - 9:15 am: Brunch is served in the restaurant while the boat heads back to the harbor. Our boat passing Dam Nam Island, Van Boi Island, Hoa Cuong cave, Ba Ha village.
 - 10:30 am: Disembark at Tuan Chau Marina.
- Transfer to the airport to board your flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [B/L] = Breakfast and Lunch | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner



Your Tour includes:

- Private arrival and departure transfers
- Special assistance service on arrival
- 8 nights' accommodation:
 - Saigon – 3 nights
 - Hoi-An – 2 nights
 - Hanoi – 2 nights
 - Halong – 1 night
- Meals
 - 8 breakfast daily
 - 5 lunches
- Visit of Cu Chi Tunnels
- Saigon city tour
- Tour of the Mekong Delta in depth
- Sightseeing of Hoi-An
- Boat cruising along Hoai River
- Organic Farm visit
- Cooking Class
- Water puppet performance
- Cyclo tour of Hanoi
- Noodle soup at Pho Bat Dan
- Hanoi city tour
- Visit the historic Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum
- One day Halong Bay cruise
- Tai Chi lesson

- Local English-speaking guides (one guide in each city)
- Entrance fees and boat rides
- Private A/C transportation on tour
- Water puppet show
- Cold towels and water on sightseeing days
- All hotel taxes and service charges

Tour does not Include:

- International or Domestic airfares
- Any taxes and surcharges relating to airfares
- Travel insurance
- Entry Visa and visa fees
- Wi-Fi at hotels except as indicated
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks except as indicated
- Other meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Extras and gratuities
- Early check-in, late check-out (Most hotels begin check-in around 2:00pm).
- Expenses of personal nature
- Porterage at airport and hotels
- Optional tours and activities
- Any service not specifically listed under "included"

Recommended Hotels in your Tour:

| City | Hotel Name | Tripadvisor |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| First Class | | |
| Ho Chi Minh | Liberty Central Saigon Riverside | 4.5 |
| Hoi-An | Santana Boutique Hotel | 5 |
| Hanoi | Hanoi La Siesta Central Hotel | 5 |
| Ha-Long Bay | Paradise Suites | 4.5 |
| Deluxe | | |
| Ho Chi Minh | Mia Saigon Luxury Boutique Hotel | 5 |
| Hoi-An | Hotel Royal Hoi An - MGallery | 4.5 |
| Hanoi | Sofitel Legend Metropole | 5 |
| Ha-Long Bay | Vinpearl Resort & Spa | 4.5 |

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

Tour Prices:

These programs can be customized for individuals and groups. Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

• **Airfare**

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

• **Program**

- You may add or remove;
- Trip days
 - Cities and sites

- Meals
- **Other options**
 - The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
 - If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.
- **Quotation**

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

Tour Code: VT03SGN20TE

Options:

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

Group Quotations

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the land journey.
- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.