



## Vietnam Essentials – exclusive group tour

11 Days / 10 Nights in Vietnam plus overnight flights both directions.

Flight information:

London Heathrow/Hanoi on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018,  
Vietnam Airlines departing at 1100/0510.

Returning Saigon/London on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2018  
departing at 0035(check in 20<sup>th</sup> March) arriving  
0715.

Flights operated by Vietnam Airlines, scheduled  
non-stop Boeing 787 service.





## Itinerary in brief with Day One arrival into Hanoi

<b>Day 1</b>	Arrival in Hanoi
<b>Day 2</b>	Hanoi, original city tour
<b>Day 3</b>	Hanoi – Halong bay
<b>Day 4</b>	Halong – Hanoi – Hue
<b>Day 5</b>	Hue, heritage and people
<b>Day 6</b>	Hue – Tam Giang – Hoi An
<b>Day 7</b>	Hoi An
<b>Day 8</b>	Hoi An – Saigon
<b>Day 9</b>	Saigon – Sadec – Cai Be
<b>Day 10</b>	Cai Be – Saigon
<b>Day 11</b>	Departure transfer late evening to airport for mid night flight

Experience the heart of Vietnam. Find yourself at the feet of Vietnam’s famed and iconic spots, and be enchanted with travels off the beaten track with this ultimate exclusive experience.

With over 2000 miles of coastline, Vietnam is vast and the scenery, regional influences and cuisine are ever-changing. On this tour you will be starting in the north, working your way through the central area before ending in the extreme south, experiencing the true diversity of this country.

English is widely spoken in hotels, and although less so in some areas such as markets, the traders you encounter will always try to find a way to make your experience pleasurable. Shopping is excellent with clothing, paintings and ceramics popular purchases.

### HOTEL LIST

City	Hotel	Room Type	Website
Hanoi	Apricot Hotel	Sketch Room	<a href="http://apricothotels.com/">http://apricothotels.com/</a>
Ha Long	Bhaya Classic	Premium Balcony Cabin	<a href="https://www.bhayacruises.com/">https://www.bhayacruises.com/</a>
Hue	Pilgrimage Village	Deluxe Room	<a href="http://www.pilgrimagevillage.com/">http://www.pilgrimagevillage.com/</a>
Hoi An	Maison Vy	Deluxe Pool View Room	<a href="http://www.maisonvy.com/">http://www.maisonvy.com/</a>
Saigon	Villa Song	Sanctuary Room	<a href="https://villasong.com/">https://villasong.com/</a>
Mekong	Mekong Riverside Boutique	Riverview Room	<a href="http://mekongriversideresort.vn/">http://mekongriversideresort.vn/</a>

## Itinerary in full details

### Day 1 – 10 Mar 18: Arrival in Hanoi (-/-/-)

Driver and guide will welcome you at the airport and drive you to your hotel in the city centre. After dropping off luggage and taking the time to refresh yourself, get ready for our first dive into Hanoi's bubbling atmosphere. We will **go for a walk** around the **36 streets of the Old Quarter**, pass by the big **Dong Xuan covered market**, witness the crafting and trading activities around each street's specificity, visit **temples** and **communal houses** to finally reach **Hoan Kiem Lake**.



### Day 2 – 11 Mar 18: Hanoi, classics and offbeat spots (B/L/-)

**Hanoi** is a fascinating city to explore. Slower paced than the commercial heartbeat of Saigon, here you will find several parks with lakes, attractive boulevards and small side-streets, along with some incredible sightseeing including the famous Opera House.

The guide will meet you in the **hotel's lobby at 9am**. We will then head to the **southern edge of the ancient citadel** (today the headquarters of the Ministry of Defence) where our walk starts. First, encounter **a mobile street market** where merchants display an impressive array of fruit and vegetables. We will then enter Hanoi's **unique "food street"**, the only place in town where food shops are allowed to stay opened 24/24. After reaching the **railway** and witnessing the impressive scenes of life by the rails we will stop at the **temple of literature**, a masterpiece of architecture. In the afternoon, stop to enjoy lunch exclusive of Hanoi: **a bun cha**, consisting of flame grilled minced pork served with sticky rice noodles and spring rolls. Explore the garden of the **Presidential Palace** featuring giant mango trees, the **one-pillar pagoda** and the teak **house on stilts** where Ho Chi Minh spent his last years. Then, hop on an **electric cart** that will take us around the **largest lake of Hanoi**, providing a tranquil escape from the bustle. End the day with a **slice of authentic Hanoian daily life**: a cool beer and fresh peanuts at a popular **bia hoi** - a large outdoor space where people gather after work to enjoy a drink in a relaxed atmosphere.



### Day 3 – 12 Mar 18: Hanoi – Halong bay (B/L/D)

Depart from Hanoi around **8.30am**. Driving across the **Red River Delta**, we'll reach the coast little before noon. Embark on a beautifully crafted wooden junk for an overnight cruise in the legendary seascape of **Halong**. Once on board, unwind with a delicious seafood-based buffet lunch, while staggering limestone rocks pass you by. Stopping in a less travelled area, take time to relax, swim and kayak. The program is not fixed and depends on the time of the year and weather. End the day on the sundeck with an aperitif while the sun sets, or attend a cooking demonstration before dinner. Stay overnight in a comfortable private cabin with en-suite bathroom. In March you will experience atmospheric, misty and maybe chilly mornings, often with blue skies in the day and cool evenings.



### Day 4 – 13 Mar 18: Halong – Hanoi – Hue (B/Brunch/D)

While cruising back to the pier, brunch is served. Take the opportunity for an early **Tai Chi** session, and coffee and tea is served early as well for the early birds wishing to see the beautiful lights of sunrise. We also have the chance to visit a cave before starting our way back to the coast. After disembarking, we'll drive to Hanoi's airport to take a flight to **Hue**. You will be greeted at Hue's airport and driven to a tranquil nature resort a little out of town, where a specially set up for dinner will be waiting for us.

**Hue** is famous for its history going back over many centuries, plus it was one of the major battle sites in the Independence war against the USA and its coalition partners, with much of the fiercest fighting taking place around the Citadel.



## Day 5 – 14 Mar 18: Hue, heritage and people (B/L/D)

Today's tour begins from the hotel's lobby at **8am**. We will visit the beautiful **Tu Hieu pagoda** and the **Emperor Tu Duc's tomb**, before straying off the common path to go for an **easy cycling ride** around the village of the Mandarins. Here, you can discover centuries-old houses set in beautiful orchard-gardens, meet the Mandarins' descendants, and experience lunch at a local house. In the afternoon we will cross the **Perfume River** on a **boat** and dive into the scene of ancient feudality, the **imperial citadel**, and stop to visit the nearby workshop and gallery of **Truc Chi artist** - a contemporary artist who creates his art based on bamboo paper carving. In the late afternoon, enjoy leisurely time back at the hotel. For dinner, we'll be **hopping on cyclo** and going to explore some of the best **streetfood cuisine** of the ancient imperial capital.



## Days 6 – 15 Mar 18: Hue – Tam Giang Lagoon – Hoi An (B/L/-)

In the morning, we will be picked up by our driver and guide, departing for a fun ride starting with the *road of tombs* that leads us to the **Northern edge of the longest lagoon** of the country. When we reach a **small fishing village**, a little gem that very few know about, we will **embark on a local boat** for a short escape on the lagoon to discover the ancestral fishing techniques. A fresh seafood lunch from the morning will be served at the house of our boatman. We'll then hit the road again, driving on the coastal strip to the South until we reach the **Lang Co bay**. The highlight of the day will arrive as we drive up the **Hai Van pass** with its breath-taking vistas over the sea. Our route passes Danang and we'll arrive late afternoon in **Cam Thanh mangrove** nested between the beach and the ancient port town. Here, we'll **hop on a boat** and enjoy a **fresh sunset cocktail** as we move slowly on the **Thu Bon River**. The best way to witness the beauty of Hoi An ancient architecture is from the waterways – as the lanterns light up and the riverside gets busy.

**Danang** and **Hoi An** are two resort areas that run into each other, rather like Brighton and Hove! Danang is much more developed and is a working port as well as lively resort area. It was the landing stage of the US troops during the Independence war as well as being one of the busiest bases, some of which can still be seen. Hoi An is more traditional and the village area is one of the most photographed – wonderful during the day but even more impressive at night when it is candlelit.



## Day 7 – 16 Mar 18: Hoi An at leisure (B/-/-)

Today is a full day at leisure. Several half-day optional tours are available and could be inserted in the program including a cookery class, kayaking or **Stand-Up paddling** in the mangrove of Cam Thanh, **bamboo bike rides** on the back roads of Hoi An and a **Jeep expedition** to Son Tra peninsula!



## Day 8 – 17 Mar 18: Hoi An - Danang – Saigon (B/L/-)

Enjoy an easy morning on your own, before we drive to the airport in the mid-morning to catch a flight to **Saigon**. On arrival, we will transfer to the hotel located on the bank of the Saigon River where a late lunch will be served. Later on, we'll hop on a boat and glide down the river to reach the city centre. There we will go on an **orientation walk** around the ancient colonial landmarks that give to the city its very unique character. End the day **sipping a cocktail** from one of the **highest rooftops** in town, over Saigon's skyline.

*Saigon is also known as Ho Chi Ming City ( HCMC ) . Government officials and those from the north like to use HCMC , those born in the south still prefer Saigon . It is one of the most exciting cities , with tremendous energy – just crossing the road here can be an experience . Great shopping , sightseeing , total contrasts everywhere from grand old French colonial buildings to modern towers . Lively markets and ultra-modern malls.*



## Day 9 – 18 Mar 18: Saigon – Mekong Delta (B/L/D)

Today the guide will meet you at **7am** in the hotel lobby. We will make our way out of Saigon and reach the doorstep of the **Mekong Delta**. Leaving the touristy places behind, we keep driving to **Sadec town**, a charming little town with canals, narrow streets and flower fields. There will be time to explore and enjoy all these sights. From here, we will **embark on a boat** on the mighty river, having lunch while cruising along its arroyos. We will reach a less travelled area near **Cai Be** in the mid-afternoon. Here, there are opportunities to cycle the rural lanes of the area, meet locals, discover their crafting or cooking skills and wander through their lush orchards. In the late afternoon we will be transferred to our lodge, and spend the rest of the day by the pool before dinner is served!



## Day 10 – 19 Mar 18: Mekong Delta – Saigon (B/L/D)

Spend the morning exploring further the surroundings of the lodge by walking, cycling or boating. Or, take advantage of some time to simply relax by the swimming pool. We will have lunch here before driving back to **Saigon**. Upon arrival, there will be time to freshen up at the hotel before gleaming vintage **Vespa scooters** arrive to pick us up! Get ready for an evening of fun and delicious food, riding these pieces of history around the lesser known places of the metropolis.



## Day 11 – 20 Mar 18: Departure (B/-/-)

The final day of our trip is at leisure until we pick you up to drive you to the airport. There will be an evening transfer to airport, to check in for flight departing just after midnight on the 21<sup>st</sup> March.

## TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 9 nights shared Accommodation in twin/double room with daily breakfast at the indicated room types (see hotel category list). Includes rooms for early arrival Hanoi (0900) and late check out (1700) in Saigon.
- 2 days/1 night cruise on boat in Ha Long Bay (shared cabin on shared boat)
- All transfers and transportation with air-con vehicles
- Local **ENGLISH** speaking guides
  - North (Hanoi – Halong Bay): 1 guide
  - Centre (Hue – Da Nang – Hoi An): 1 guide
  - South (Ho Chi Minh – Mekong Delta): 1 guide
- All entrance fees as program
- Private boat trip in Hue, Vinh Long, Hoi An
- Meals (B/L/D) (Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner) as indicated in the program (Local food)
- 2 bottles of mineral water per person per day on bus, days of transfer and sightseeing
- 1 Tour Leader Free Of Charge based on single room (exclusive of airfares and other surcharges)

## TOUR PRICE EXCLUDES

- Meals (other than mentioned in the program)
- Drinks
- Visas to Vietnam (See note below – UK exempt)
- Mineral water beyond that supplied
- Tips
- Early check in or late check out
- Insurances
- Optional excursions and activities
- Additional transfer required due to any emergency situation
- Items of a personal nature (phone calls, laundry, beverages, etc)
- Peak season surcharges if any

## Travel Documentation

UK Passport holders have 14 day visit visa exemption for Vietnam (current as of 05 May 2017) but passports must have a minimum validity of 6 months from date of return to UK. This is under review by the Vietnam Government but given the success in 2017 we have no reason to think it will not be extended into 2018. Please note this applies to UK nationals , differing conditions may apply to other nationalities.

## Insurance

All clients should ensure they have comprehensive insurance, specifically including medical expenses. This may need to be shown on arrival. If clients are not able to prove they have sufficient insurance, Vietnam Immigration might require purchase of a local medical insurance.

## Clothing

Light weight , casual clothes will be required. Shorts are fine for days, and long trousers/ polo type shirts are suggested for the evenings, but tailored shorts are equally suitable. In the north (Hanoi/ Halong) it will be cooler so a warm jumper is advised for early morning/ evenings.

## Vaccinations

None are compulsory but we suggest speaking to your GP for specific guidance.



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