

BEST OF VIETNAM & CAMBODIA NATURE, CULTURE & WONDERS 12 DAYS/11 NIGHTS - *(Monthly Group Departure on 6th)*

Day 01: Hanoi Arrival (D)

Your first stop in Vietnam is Noi Bai airport, where your tour guide waits outside the gate to bring you to your lovely hotel downtown... now your journey can really begin! Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, is one thousand years old and known for its peaceful lakes, French styled buildings, old quarter streets, tree lined boulevards, and brightly painted temples and pagodas. The afternoon is free at your leisure. We would recommend some walking around Hanoi's Old Quarter if your arrival time is earlier. You will enjoy a welcome dinner at a nice local restaurant looking over the beautiful Hoan Kiem Lake.

Day 02: Hanoi Sights/Capital of Culture (B)

Today is an unforgettable day for Hanoi. You will start with a nice buffet breakfast at your hotel, where you can enjoy some Vietnamese coffee, if you are a coffee lover. The first stop is Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, where Uncle Ho-Father of the Vietnamese, is laid out in state. Here we also visit the Presidential Palace where Ho refused to live, choosing instead a small stilt house beside a lake. Close by is the One Pillar Pagoda. A tour around the beautiful West Lake then takes us to the venerable Temple of Literature. After lunch, The Vietnam Museum of Ethnology, with its art and artifacts from the 54 different ethnic groups that inhabit the country, is a must for all visitors. See examples of the traditional clothing and way of life, as well as reconstructions of traditional longhouses, cemeteries and other distinctive ethnic buildings. Another highlight of today is Hoa Lo Prison, built by the French during their colonial period in Vietnam. The sightseeing today ends with an interesting discovery of Hanoi's Old Quarter (also called "36 streets") by Xich Lo, a local transport similar to the Tuk Tuk in Thailand. Be fascinated by the narrow alleys and shop houses. Finally, in the evening you can enjoy a traditional water puppet show, before tucking in to your hotel for the night.

Day 03: Hanoi – Halong Bay – Bay of 1600 islands (B, L, D)

Today you'll head out on the 3.5-hour scenic drive to Halong Bay, a World Heritage Site since 1994. Halong Bay, in the Gulf of Tonkin, includes some 1,600 islands and islets, forming a spectacular seascape of limestone pillars. Because of their precipitous nature, most of the islands are uninhabited and unaffected by human presence. The site's outstanding scenic beauty is complemented by its great biological interest. You will enjoy a welcome coffee upon arrival in Halong Bay before boarding for the overnight boat trip. Enjoy your great seafood lunch on boat then beginning your fantastic cruise on Halong Bay. The scenery is truly breathtaking and is continuously changing. This includes a visit to Sung Sot Cave, round over Tuan Chau Island, Dinh Huong Island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Sail Island and a swim at Titop beach. Dinner will then be had on board while watching the sunset. This evening is for you to enjoy the local entertainment or just relax. Watch a classic Vietnamese film or just lay out on the sundeck and enjoying the fresh air on the calm water.

Day 04: Halong Bay – Hanoi – Da Nang – Hoi An (B, L)

Wake up early if you would like to enjoy a Tai Chi Exercise on the sundeck while admiring the magnificent scenery of the sunrise over the Bay. For the early riser, complimentary tea, coffee and breakfast will be served. You can then visit Luon cave on small bamboo paddle boat manned by our staff and enjoy the quiet atmosphere enclosed by high islets and mountains before being returned to our Huong Hai Junk boat. You will sail past rock formations, the Finger islet, the Hoa Cuong fishing village area called Ga Choi, Fighting Cock islet, Dinh Huong Islet, and Little Dog islet. Enjoy the tranquil scenery as the boat meanders its way through the bay on the way back to Ha Long city. Enjoy lunch as your boat weaves through strange-shaped limestone rock formations. Our guide will take you to Noi Bai airport (3.5h) to board the afternoon flight to Danang (1h). Upon arrival, your local guide in Hoi An will meet you at the airport and take you to a Hoi An Ancient Town. Enjoy an evening in Hoi An or Cua Dai beach at your leisure before heading back to your hotel for the night.

Day 05: Hoi An Old Town (B)

Hoi An is ranked as one of the top 10 most beloved spots in Asia, but do not mistake it to be a touristic city. She is beloved by most travelers coming to Vietnam for her naive beauty and sweet characteristics. Imagine you are in a very small ancient town by a peaceful river. Walk along old streets filled with old houses and lanterns; cycle along the riverside to the vegetable gardens; lie lazily on the untouched white sand beaches; sit at a riverview cafe filled with great music; dress up in a suit or a surprisingly beautiful dress tailored by one of the many local tailor shops at a great price; eat awesome street food... this is how your tour starts. Visit an old merchant home, still lived in by descendents of the original merchant, see the Japanese Bridge, Hoi An market and the Quang Dong communal house. This afternoon is free for you to do your own exploring. Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 06: Hoi An free at leisure (B)

Optional Cooking Class (Lunch)

Today is your day of leisure to free explore Hoian your own ways.

Or if you love cuisine, our optional Cooking Class would be your great chance to experience the local cuisine. First enjoy a buffet breakfast filled with various kinds of local foods, while overlooking the beach and the river. Then continue on with a short bike ride to Tra Que Organic Village, where you can walk through the market gardens which are worked by local farmers using the traditional methods from hundreds of years ago - no electrical machinery here. You will pick fresh saw-tooth coriander and Vietnamese mint for our cooking lesson later, before trying a special herbal drink at a local home. Next it's off to the local village market with shopping list in hand to purchase a range of local ingredients, including star anise, cardamom, sesame rice paper, water spinach and banana flower. Arrive at the Cooking School where you have a chance to freshen up before beginning your class. Working together with your chef you will learn the traditional ways of preparing and cooking Vietnamese food from scratch. Using the freshest ingredients and traditional Vietnamese utensils (still in use today) you will cook 4 famous dishes, including the national dish „Pho“. After the class you will have a chance to savour the dishes you have prepared. Then you will enjoy a leisurely cruise (25 minutes) along the Thu Bon River back to central Hoi An. The evening is free for you to explore a Hoi An night on your own way.

Day 07: Hoi An – Da Nang – Saigon (B)

This morning you will say goodbye to the beloved Hoi An town and drive to Danang for a flight to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). As the largest of Vietnam's cities, the hustle and bustle of life co-exists with 300 years of timeless traditions and the beauty of a mixed colonialorient culture. Saigon will attract you from the first moment. If the former Presidential Palace gives you an idea of how those Presidents lived during French war, the War Remnants Museum helps you understand more about Vietnam during the American War. If the imposing Notre Dame Cathedral and the French style central Post Office are appealing with their colonial beauty, then Cholon, the Chinatown of Saigon where we see the huge Binh Tay wholesale market and the sacred Thien Hau Pagoda, will give you an oriental impression. Overnight in Saigon.

Day 08: Saigon – Cu Chi Tunnels – Saigon (B)

In the morning take an excursion to the famous underground system of Cu Chi Tunnels, an important base during the Wars because of its strategic location & special design. The VC built an elaborate 200km long network of tunnels connecting command posts, hospitals, shelters and weapons factories. Dug of hard laterite by hand tools without the use of cement, this amazing network of tunnels was never discovered by their enemies. Explore the tunnel by walking deeply into the long and winding underground system, even crawling sometimes because it's so narrow. The afternoon is free for you to stroll the interesting district 1 of Saigon. Late evening could be a nice experience for you on one of our roof top bars.

Day 09: Explore the Mekong Delta (B)

Just two hours by road from Ho Chi Minh"s bustling streets, you'll start venturing into the watery world of the Mekong Delta. As a highlight of the trip, we take a cruise along the narrow waterways through the lush vegetation to an orchard garden where we have the

opportunity to visit local homes as well as enjoy a lunch followed with seasonal fruits and a local folk song performance. Stop at a coconut mill and the Vinh Trang Pagoda on the way back to Saigon. Optional fun for the evening is a Vespa Tour through the city where you can enjoy the street food spots and some great live music at a local bar or cafe (not included in the package price).

Day 10: Saigon – Siem Reap (B)

Say farewell to Saigon before boarding your morning flight to Siem Reap, home to the famous Angkor Wat, one of the greatest cultural monuments in the world. Siem Reap is a small town filled with resorts and hotels, but do not mistake it with a touristic bustling town like Phuket. Its peaceful environment covers all houses which are not allowed to be taller than Angkor towers. You won't have to wait long as you start your Angkor Wat sightseeing right away after landing. Built to honor the Hindu god Vishnu, Angkor Wat took nearly 40 years to complete. Inside the outer walls the structure rises over three levels to a central core topped by five pineapple-shaped towers. Virtually every surface in the maze of chambers and courtyards is richly decorated with low-relief scenes of legends, wars and everyday life, and is enhanced by carvings of nearly 2,000 celestial dancers. It is much more than just sightseeing, it's feeling the wonder of culture, of time, and of the people who created it. Another highlight of the day is the view of the sunset on Angkor from Phnom Bakheng hill, an unforgettable sight. Overnight in Siem Reap.

Day 11: Angkor Thom & Bayon Temple (B)

You have an early wake-up call as your tour guide will take you to Angkor Wat for an amazing view of the sunrise on the tower temples. Remember to prepare your camera for some of the greatest shots ever in your life. Then you will head back to the hotel for breakfast. Today is another day for experiencing great heritages in Siem Reap, which has not only Angkor Wat but a lot more. You start with the famous old palace, Angkor Thom (this last capital was indeed a 'Great City' as its name implies, and it served as the religious and administrative center of the vast and powerful Khmer Empire. It was grander than any city in Europe at that time and supported a considerable population as high as one million). Within Angkor Thom are Bayon (the giant stone faces of Bayon have become one of the most recognizable images connected to classic Khmer art and architecture. There are 37 standing towers, most but not all sporting four carved faces oriented toward the cardinal points), Baphoun, Terrace of Elephant, Phemean Akas, Terrace of Leper King. Then head back to Siem Reap Town and visit Takeo, Ta Prom Temple in the afternoon. Dinner will be at a local restaurant with Khmer food.

Day 12: Siem Reap Departure (B)

Any fantastic trip will come to an end, but the memories will remain in your heart forever. Therefore though you will bid farewell to Cambodia today and board the flight home, your sweet trip will fly home with you. See you next time!

SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Accommodation at hotels as listed, all good location, sharing twin/double room
- Private transfer by modern car, brands such as Toyota, Mercedes, Ford
- Buffet breakfasts at hotel daily
- Lunches & Dinners as described in the program at local restaurant
- Experienced English speaking guide (other languages on request: German, French, Italian, Spanish)
- All entrance fees as described in the program & Boat trip as program & Handmade gifts
- Mineral water on bus daily: 2 bottle/pax/day
- Internal Tourist insurance (Vietnam, Cambodia only)

SERVICES EXCLUDE:

- Visa fees
- Visa upon arrival is easy and available for an extra fees of 25USD/pax, all we need is passport copies)
- Cooking class in HoiAn: 35USD/pax, Bicycle renting & Air tickets
- Peak tourist season and special event rates & Anything not mentioned in the paragraph "Services Include"

HOTEL LIST AS BELOW OR SIMILAR:

Destinations Hotel 3*

Hanoi - Noble Boutique Hotel - <http://www.nobleboutiquehotel.com/>
Halong Bay Cruise - Phoenix Cruise - <http://www.halongphoenixcruiser.com/>
Hoi An Vinh Hung 2 City Hotel - <http://www.vinhhungcityhotel.com/>
Saigon - Elios Saigon Hotel - <http://www.elioshotel.vn/>
Siem Reap - Sokha Roth Hotel - <http://www.sokharothhotel.com/>

Destinations 4* Stars

Hanoi - Boss Legend Hotel - <http://bosslegendhotel.com/>
Ha Long Bay - LaFairy Sails - <http://www.lafairysails.com/>
Hoi An - La Residencia Hotel - <http://www.laresidenciahotel.com/>
Saigon - Eden Saigon Hotel - <http://www.edensaigonhotel.com/>
Siam Reap - Saem Siem Reap Hotel - <http://www.saemsiemreaphotel.com/>

Destinations 5* Hotels

Hanoi - Hanoi de L'Opera - <http://hoteldelopera.com/>
Ha Long Bay - Indochina Sails - <http://www.indochinasails.com/>
Hoi An - Palm Garden Resort - <http://palmgardenresort.com.vn/>
Saigon - Renaissance Saigon Riverside - [http://www.marriott.com/hotels - /travel/sgnbr-renaissanceriverside-hotel-saigon/](http://www.marriott.com/hotels-/travel/sgnbr-renaissanceriverside-hotel-saigon/)
Siem Reap - Sokha Angkor Hotel - <http://www.sokhahotels.com/>