

VN1A**10 days**

Created on: 15 Jul 2025

Day 1 ***Arrival in Hanoi***

Today we arrive in Hanoi.

Hanoi is an attractive city with lakes, fine boulevards, and flourishing parks, as well as a public centre that is an architectural museum piece. Hanoi is situated on the right bank of the Red River (Song Hong) which is spanned by two bridges, the old Long Bien Bridge and the new Chuong Duong bridge.

Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 2 ***Hanoi - Halong Bay***

This morning we start on a half day of sightseeing in Hanoi, including the Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, a site of pilgrimage (the building has been closed to visitors of late; outside visit only). The building was constructed from materials gathered from all over Vietnam. Modelled closely on Lenin's Mausoleum, Ho Chi Minh lies at rest in this Vietnamese version. We will also admire the elegance of the One Pillar Pagoda, originally built in 1049. The temple is lotus-shaped and is situated in the middle of a water-lily pond. We will visit the Ho Chi Minh Museum, with displays dedicated to the public and private side of Ho Chi Minh's life.

In the afternoon we depart for Halong Bay. The route today, via Haiphong, will be our first opportunity to see rural Vietnam. We will arrive at Halong Bay in late afternoon. Halong Bay, located in the Gulf of Tonkin, covers an area of 1500 square km. With more than a thousand limestone peaks soaring from its crystalline emerald water this area is one of the natural wonders of Vietnam and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The islands are dotted with innumerable white sandy beaches and grottoes created by wind and waves. The name Halong means "where the dragon descends into the sea". Legend has it that the islands of Halong Bay were created by a great dragon who lived in the mountains.

Overnight in Halong.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 3 ***Halong Bay Junk Cruise - Hanoi***

Fishermen at Halong mount fan-shaped Chinese junk sails on their boats, the same sort of sails once deployed by pirates in these waters. Junks have been used for centuries by the Chinese, Japanese and Javanese for fishing and transportation, and often as living quarters; a junk commonly includes a deck, high masts, and several cotton sails. Halong is one of the last places where junk sails are still handmade by families of sailmakers. Coarse cotton panels are sewn together with silk thread -- every seam sewn by hand. To discourage rot and mildew, the completed sail is dipped in a liquid that comes from a beetroot-like member of the yam family. The sail is dipped and dried three or four times; a process that gives its dark red-tan colour.

After breakfast this morning, we will board our Junk cruise boat for a 6 hours cruise to visit Dinh Huong Island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Sail Island, and visit Sung Sot Cave, with a chance to swim at Titov Beach. We end our cruise after lunch at around 2pm, and depart for Hanoi.

Overnight in Hanoi.

Meal Plan: Breakfast and Lunch

Day 4 *Hanoi - Da Nang - Hoi An*

Today we fly to Da Nang and then driving to one of the most charming towns in Vietnam -- Hoi An. The ancient town of Hoi An (formerly Faifo) lies 32 km (20 miles) south of Da Nang on the banks of the Thu Bon River.

This afternoon we will be able to soak in the atmosphere of this small town on a cyclo bicycle rickshaw tour. The unique architecture, the temples, the market and the Japanese covered bridge will be some of the highlights of your trip. The Japanese covered bridge was built in the 16th century, perhaps even earlier. On its north side there is a pagoda, Japanese in style, which protects sailors. Its popular name, Japanese Covered Bridge, reflects a long-standing belief that it was built by the Japanese, although no documentary evidence exists to support this. At the Tran Family Temple we will see the fusion between both the Chinese and Japanese styles. This temple has survived for 15 generations.

Overnight in Hoi An.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 5 *Hoi An - Da Nang - Hue*

Today we travel from Hoi An to Da Nang by motor coach. Da Nang is situated on a peninsula at the point where the Han River flows into the South China Sea. In Da Nang we visit the Cham Museum which houses the largest display of Cham art anywhere in the world. Later, we continue on our drive to Hue. En route we will pass through the Truong Son Mountains, the former border between North Vietnam and South Vietnam. Hai Van Pass, or literally "Pass of the Ocean Clouds" offers spectacular scenery.

Hue was the capital of the old Nguyen dynasty and traditionally one of Vietnam's cultural, religious and educational centres. Here there are splendid tombs of the emperors, several stunning pagodas and the citadel which houses the forbidden Purple City. The city is situated on the banks of the Perfume River.

Overnight in Hue.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 6 *Hue Touring*

The tranquil city of Hue is known for its important historical and cultural significance. We tour the Citadel, a fortress surrounded by a moat that has a 10 km (6 mile) perimeter. At the Forbidden Purple City we can see the remains of the former home of the emperors. We begin our day by motorised boat down the Perfume River to visit the delightful Thien Mu Pagoda,* considered to be the finest pagoda in Hue. It was built in 1601 after an old woman appeared to Nguyen Hoang, the governor of Hue, and said that the site had supernatural significance.

Later this afternoon we travel by road to Emperor's Tu Duc's tomb, located in the rural area of Hue and set amidst the pine woods.

* Though the pagoda has been under restoration and might be partially or totally obscured by scaffolding, the journey is still worth it for the pleasantness of the boat trip and the interesting historical background that we will gain on our tour of the pagoda and its surrounds.

Overnight in Hue.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 7 *Hue - Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)*

This morning we travel by road back to Da Nang for our flight to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), the business and tourist centre of Vietnam.

This afternoon we visit some of the city's highlights, including the Reunification Hall, formerly the site of Norodom Palace, the residence of the French governor-general of Indochina. On 30 April 1975, NVA tanks smashed down the first gates and took control of Saigon. We then proceed to Cholon, or Chinatown, an area inhabited by Vietnamese of Chinese origin. Despite being home to many oppressed people, this area is one of the most vibrant in the city.

Overnight in Saigon.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 8 ***Saigon: City Tour***

Today we tour the highlights of Saigon, including a drive past the Notre Dame Cathedral and adjacent Post Office. Both of these buildings were constructed by the French in the 1880s and display architectural characteristics typical of that time period. We visit the well known Cu Chi Tunnels and the War Remnants Museum (formerly the War Crimes Museum), a sobering experience with its countless photographs and exhibits.

Overnight in Saigon.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 9 ***Saigon - Mekong Delta boat trip - Saigon***

On our way to the Mekong Delta, we may stop at one of the many Cao Dai temples. This hybrid religion took root in southern Vietnam during the 1920's after Ngo Van Chieu, a civil servant, was visited by 'Cao Dai' or the 'Supreme Being'. The Cao Dai later told Ngo in a seance that he was to be symbolized by a giant eye. Being a humanist religion, it quickly gained support of a large following of dispossessed peasants. Today there is thought to be about 2,000,000 adherents and 1,000 Cao Dai temples.

A drive south takes us to the fertile delta of the meandering Mekong River, the southernmost region of Vietnam. Often referred to as the rice bowl of Vietnam, producing three crops of rice per year, the fertile Mekong Delta is also famous for its tropical fruits and flowers. The Delta area is the end of a 4500 km / 2,812 mi journey the Mekong River makes after traveling through six countries. Traditional transportation in the Delta is by boat along a vast network of canals and channels. Boating along these canals and visiting the floating markets always proves to be a fascinating experience for all visitors.

Return to Saigon.

Overnight in Saigon.

Meal Plan: Breakfast

Day 10 ***Departure***

Departure from Saigon.

HEN GAP LAI!

Meal Plan: Breakfast