Beyond Halong & the Mekong 14 days

Discover the highlights and hidden gems of Vietnam. From the hustle and bustle of Hanoi and Saigon, to rural retreats in Mai Chau, Hoi An and along the Mekong. Meet ethnic minority people, farmers and fisherman, spend a night with a local family, take a cookig lesson and cruise around the islands of spectacular Halong Bay!

TOUR DETAILS:

- Starts in: Hanoi / Ends in: Saigon
- Departs: Any day of the year
- No local payment required
- Breakfast:12, Lunch: 7, Dinner: 3
- Hotel Rating: 4 star. 3 & 5 star options are also available
- Tour Guide: Yes - for all scheduled sightseeing

ONLINE RESOURCES:

- For a detailed GO GUIDE - click here
- To book this trip - click here
- To enquire about this trip - click here

TOUR MAP:

QUICK WEB LINKS

Prices ::: Why Us? ::: Useful Info ::: Top Spots ::: Best Time to Travel ::: Group Tour Hotels ::: Tailor-made Hotels ::: FAQ's ::: Visa Info ::: Photo Gallery

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Day 1: Hanoi

Welcome to Hanoi - the 'Paris of the Orient'. Upon arrival at the airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Spend the remains of the day at leisure. Overnight - Hanoi

Day 2:

Spend this morning at leisure in Vietnam's charming capital city. This afternoon enjoy a half day city tour of Hanoi's essential sites. Sightseeing includes the Museum of Ethnology, which is widely acknowledged as the best in the country, containing an extensive display of life-size structures dedicated to Vietnam's 54 ethnic minority peoples. Also visit Ngoc Son Temple on Hoan Kiem Lake in the heart of the city - the temple has a fascinating history dating back to the 13th century. Then enjoy a one-hour cyclo tour through the narrow, chaotic streets of the Old Quarter - a must for any visitor to Hanoi! After exploring the Old Quarter watch a traditional performance of the famous Vietnamese water puppets. Please note: Museum of Ethonology is closed on a Monday. Overnight - Hanoi

Day 3: Mai Chau

Hanoi - Mai Chau. Mai Chau is only four hours drive from bustling Hanoi but feels worlds apart. This morning transfer into the lush mountains, which are home to remote hill tribes, such as the White Thai, H'mong, Zao, Muong, Tay, Hoa and Viet, and visited by surprisingly few tourists. Arriving at your lodge at noon, check-in and have lunch. Mai Chau offers incredible panoramic views of the lush, picturesque valley, which is dotted with stilt houses. This afternoon there is an optional cycling tour through the valley or you can simply relax and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Back at the lodge, enjoy a tasty dinner and a traditional dance performance. Overnight - Mai Chau

Day 4:

Mai Chau - Hanoi. After breakfast, you can take a walk to two nearby Thai villages - Pom Coong and Lac, to see traditional village life and meet the locals who are warm and welcoming, and famous for their handicrafts - particularly embroidery. Lunch is served back at the lodge before returning to Hanoi late afternoon. Overnight - Hanoi

Day 5: Halong Bay Cruising

Hanoi - Halong Bay. This morning transfer from your hotel in Hanoi to Halong City, the drive takes about 4 hours, stopping off for a refreshment break en route. Upon arrival meet the crew of your traditional Junk boat at the dock and embark upon a scenic cruise to the famous limestone peaked islands of Halong Bay and on to Bai Tu Long Bay which is every bit as beautiful as Halong. Aside from the cave visit and swimming, there is also a chance to explore this stunning area by sea kayak. Returning back to the Junk for a scrumptious dinner. Overnight - Halong Bay Junk boat

Day 6:

Halong Bay - Hoi An. Wake up to spectacular views of the bay. Cruise through Bai Tu Long and visit the floating fishing village of Vong Vieng, where you can gain a fascinating insight into everyday life on the bay. Cruise back to the dock arriving in Halong around noon and transfer back to Hanoi airport for your flight to Danang. Upon arrival in Danang, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in Hoi An. Overnight - Hoi An

Day 7: Hoi An

From the 16th to 18th centuries, Hoi An was a thriving international commercial port for Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Arab merchants. Today, Hoi An is a quaint riverside town, renowned for its silk and popular with tourists for its eclectic architecture, tailors shops and numerous cafes. Some of the buildings in the narrow streets have remained unchanged for more than a century and much of the town is now UNESCO heritage-listed. This morning enjoy a half day walking tour through the narrow winding streets of the Ancient Quarter visiting Chua Ong Pagoda, Assembly Hall, 200-year-old Tam Ky house and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Spend the remains of the day at leisure in this charming town. Overnight - Hoi An

Day 8:

Enjoy an exciting full day tour which provides an insight into the lives of the farming and fishing communities in this beautiful region of Vietnam. Begin your adventure by cycling out into the countryside through emerald green rice paddies. After a short ride arrive at the village of Tra Que, a charming little settlement, on the edge of Hoi An. Tra Que is famous for its sweet scented green vegetables that spice up Hoi An's famous delicacies such Cao Lau and Mi Quang. On arrival you will be introduced to the history of the village and the cultivation of the vegetables. Continue with a walk around the vegetable garden and join the farmers in preparing the land and planting some crops. Finish off your village experience with a fun cooking demonstration. Later, return to Hoi An and board the Eco Tour boat for a river cruise to meet and engage with local fisherman. You are sure to enjoy the hands on experience of river net fishing with the locals. There is also the opportunity to paddle a unique bamboo basket boat, known as a coracle, as you explore the area's coconut palmed waterways. Overnight - Hoi An

Days 9 - 10: Saigon & Cu Chi Tunnels

Hanoi - Saigon. On day 9 transfer to the airport in Danang and take a flight to Saigon. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Enjoy the remains of the day at leisure in this vibrant and historic city.

Enjoy a full day of touring on day 10. In the morning travel north west of the city to visit the historic Cu Chi Tunnels which were a key battleground in the Vietnam War. The vast expanse of underground tunnels were used by Viet Cong guerrillas, as a communication and supply route into Saigon, they also served as living quarters for the fighters. Upon arrival watch a short introductory video on the construction of the tunnels before spending an hour exploring the maze of tunnels, accompanied by a guide. Also on display are various mantraps and the remains of an American tank as well as numerous bomb craters made by 500-pound bombs from B52 bombers.

Returning to Saigon City early afternoon and enjoy lunch before embarking on a city tour. Major attractions include the Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Remnants Museum. Overnight - Saigon

Day 11:

Understanding the food is a great way to experience the culture of this fascinating country. Vietnamese food is healthy, simple to cook and delicious. Today enjoy a half day cooking class, which includes a hands-on lesson on how to shop for and cook authentic Vietnamese cuisine. The day begins with a visit to Ben Thanh Market with your chef. Ben Thanh is centrally located and known as one of liveliest and busiest in Saigon. Here you will learn more about the ingredients, Vietnamese herbs and spices and start collecting vegetables for your lesson.

After the market visit, transfer to "Mai Home" (Saigon Culinary Art Centre); where you will learn the secrets of Vietnamese cuisine during a cooking class. After you have completed your lesson, you can sit down and enjoy the tasty fruits of your labour! Overnight - Saigon

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Day 12: Mekong Delta Homestay

Saigon - Vinh Long. The morning begins with a drive through the beautiful Mekong Delta to the town of Cai Be, famous for its floating markets. After touring the markets, board a private boat and cruise along the maze of waterways and canals to Vinh Long. Here, enjoy a sumptuous Delta lunch including the popular 'Elephant ear fish' at the home of a Bonsai gardener, before continuing to explore the tributaries and canals of the Delta. Towards the end of the day, arrive at the home of a local family where you will spend the night. The evening is spent with the family, learning about life in the Delta. Overnight - Vinh Long Homestay

Day 13:

Vinh Long - Saigon. Rising to the sounds of life on the Delta, have an early breakfast before boarding a riverboat to cruise to Vinh Long town, stopping along the way to visit local cottage industries. Then, transfer by vehicle to the town of My Tho to visit the Vinh Trang pagoda, before returning to Saigon. Spend your final evening at leisure and perhaps sample one of the city's many gourmet restaurants. Overnight - Saigon

Day 14: Saigon

Your Vietnam adventure comes to an end after breakfast and hotel check out today. Included transfer to Saigon Airport for your onward flight home.

WHAT YOU SEE AND WHAT YOU GET:

Below is a list of key highlights and what is included on this tour. Further, where appropriate, we have listed the items that are not included in the tour price.

Trip Highlights

- Vietnamese Water Puppet Show in Hanoi
- Hanoi - the 'Paris of the Orient' and capital of Vietnam; Cyclo tour around the Old Quarter, Hoan Kiem Lake and Ngoc Son Temple, Museum of Ethnology
- Halong Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay - UNESCO Listed region with thousands of beautiful limestone peaks and islets
- Mai Chau - beautiful valley surrounded by mountains. Pom Coong and Lac Thai villages
- Tra Que - rural farming village outside Hoi An
- Hoi An - UNESCO Listed former merchant trading post, famed for its beautifully preserved architecture
- Saigon - Cosmopolitan and commercial hub of Vietnam; Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Remnants Museum
- Cu Chi Tunnels - vast underground network of tunnels used by the Viet Cong
- Mekong Delta - one of the world's greatest river regions. Cai Be Floating Market, Mekong Delta river cruise, Vinh Long rural life and Vinh Trang Pagoda
- Saigon Cooking School and Ben Thanh Market

What's Included

- 11 nights 4 star hotels (3 or 5 star options are available)
- 1 night aboard a Halong Bay Junk boat
- 1 night at a homestay in Vinh Long (Mekong Delta
- 13 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 3 dinner
- 2 domestic economy flights: Hanoi to Dan Nang and Da Nang to Saigon
- Airport arrival and departure transfer
- All transfers and transportation in private air conditioned vehicles
- Services of an English speaking guide for all scheduled sightseeing
- Guided tour of Hanoi, Hoi An, Cu Chi Tunnels and Saigon
- Tra Que village experience including bike ride
- Vietnamese Water Puppet Performance in Hanoi
- Halong Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay overnight Junk boat cruise
- Mekong Delta - private boat cruise and visit to floating markets
- Mai Chau - village walk and dance performance
- Saigon Vietnamese Cooking lesson

What's Not Included

- International flights and visas. Vietnam visa letter included - stamping fee required upon arrival
- Tipping - an entirely personal gesture

BOLT-ONS:

Make the most of your time away! Listed below are the optional activities that are available on this trip. Please note that you will need to book these prior to travel as we cannot always guarantee availability of these activities once you are on holiday.

Bangkok City Stay - 3 days - USD $499

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Take a break in the bustling metropolis of Bangkok, a steamy and cosmopolitan city of contrasts that guarantees to be a feast for all the senses. From gleaming skyscrapers, exquisite golden palaces and ornate temples, to eclectic markets, picturesque canals and bustling streets filled with hawkers and horn honking tuk tuks.

PRICES AND DATES: from USD $2,599

Prices shown are 'per person', based on a travelling party of at least 2 adults. The single supplement price needs to be added to the twin/double price if single rooms are required. If travelling solo, an additional '1-person' supplement will apply Prices are indicative and will vary depending on your chosen hotels, room availability as well as time of travel. Please bear this in mind if comparing prices as we always aim to deliver exceptional value. Please note that discounts will apply if there are more 4 our more people in your travelling party, since fixed costs like transportation and guiding are shared across the group.

Date	Price/Person	Single Supp.