

Classic Vietnam

10 days | Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City



PRIVATE TOUR: In 10 memorable days, see the best of vibrant Vietnam. Explore Hanoi's enchanting Old Quarter and the Imperial city of Hue. Experience life in the fast lane in Ho Chi Minh City and take time out in Hoi An. Spend a night aboard a Junk in breathtaking Halong Bay, cruise the scenic Mekong Delta and more on this exciting Southeast Asian adventure!

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Hanoi, 'Paris of the Orient' and capital of Vietnam - Ho Chi Minh's house of stilts, One Pillar Pagoda, Temple of Literature and the Ancient Quarter
- Halong Bay - UNESCO Listed region with thousands of stunning limestone peaks and islets
- Hue - The Perfume River, Imperial City and ancient walled Citadel and the Royal Tombs
- Hoi An - UNESCO Listed former merchant trading post, famed for its beautifully preserved architecture
- Danang - Cham Museum

- Saigon, the Cosmopolitan and commercial hub of Vietnam - Notre Dame Cathedral, Post Office Building, Dong Khoi Street and China Town
- My Son - Tombs from the Kingdom of Champa
- Cruising on the Mekong Delta - One of the world's greatest river regions

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 5 lunches and 1 dinner
- 8 nights superior hotels. (standard & deluxe prices available, please enquire) Accommodation rating - See Trip Notes for details
- 1 night aboard deluxe junk boat in Halong Bay (private en suite cabin)
- Guided sightseeing - Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City
- Sampan cruise on the Mekong Delta
- Water Puppets Performance in Hanoi
- Boat trip on the Perfume River in Hue
- 2 economy class flights: Hanoi to Hue and Da Nang to Ho Chi Minh City
- Entrance fees to all included sights
- Local English speaking specialist guides for all sightseeing
- An airport arrival transfer day 1 and a departure transfer day 10
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles

What's Not Included

- International flights and visa
- Tipping - An entirely personal gesture

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Hanoi

Welcome to Hanoi! Upon arrival at Hanoi Airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel. The afternoon can be spent exploring the wide, tree-lined streets of Hanoi, resplendent with French colonial architecture and the scenic Hoan Kiem Lake. This evening attend a traditional Vietnamese water puppet performance. **Overnight - Hanoi**

Day 2 : Hanoi City Tour



This morning there is an optional 'Good Morning Hanoi' excursion that can be booked locally. On this excursion start the day sampling a traditional

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Vietnamese breakfast, with a bowl of steaming Pho at one of Hanoi's most popular eateries. After enjoying the national dish take a stroll around Hoan Kiem Lake, a focal point for many of the local residents who gather there each day to practice Tai Chi, play badminton and do aerobics. End the excursion with a visit a local coffee shop to observe how Hanoi locals enjoy sipping Vietnamese bitter sweet coffee at Café Giang.

Take in the highlights of Hanoi on a guided tour today, including the Temple of Literature – Vietnam's first university dating to 1070, Ho Chi Minh's humble "stilt house", the French colonial Governor's Palace and the 11th century One-Pillar Pagoda. A short drive into the countryside takes you to Van Giang village, where you'll enjoy a cooking demonstration hosted by a local family. After a delicious lunch return to Hanoi and embark on a cyclo (rickshaw) tour of the winding alleys that make up the atmospheric Ancient Quarter, otherwise known as the 36 Streets of Hanoi.

The remainder of today is at your leisure, alternatively you can book an optional "Taste of Hanoi" walking tour of the city to discover the unique flavours of Vietnamese cuisine.

Overnight - Hanoi (B, L)

Day 3 : Cruising on Halong Bay



Hanoi – Halong Bay. Early this morning journey north to Halong Bay (approx 4 hours drive), stopping for a refreshment break en route. UNESCO Listed Halong Bay is undoubtedly one of Vietnam's most spectacular regions. Thousands

of karst limestone and jungle covered peaks and isles, rise dramatically out of the emerald waters of the bay. Spend the day cruising around the islands onboard a traditional junk boat. Stopping to explore caves and coves and to swim in the emerald waters. Enjoy a cooking demonstration on board and tuck into a scrumptious lunch and dinner.

Please note: the cruise itinerary and schedule is subject to change and dependent upon weather conditions.

Overnight – Halong Bay Junk (B, L, D)

Day 4 : Halong Bay to Hue

Halong Bay – Hue. Enjoy the fresh air and the gentle breeze from the top deck this morning as you relax onboard the junk and cruise around different parts of the bay. Brunch is served onboard.

Check out at around noon time and transfer back to Hanoi airport, stopping en route in Bac Ninh to visit Dong Ho Village. Dong Ho Village is famous for its long-preserved art of making pictures. Visit a studio in village where you can watch the procedure of carving and printing these paintings and learn about the local folk tales represented in the paintings. Onward to Hanoi Airport for your evening flight to Hue in central Vietnam. Upon arrival you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

Overnight – Hue (B)

Day 5 : Hue & the Perfume River



Enjoy a full day tour of Hue including a boat trip on Perfume River (Huong River) to Thien Mu Pagoda and Minh

Mang tomb. Thien Mu Pagoda is an octagonal tower of seven tiers that rises majestically over the Perfume River. Continue to the mausoleum of Emperor Minh Mang, an incredible complex which consists of 40 palaces, temples and pavilions, designed on a symmetrical axis. Later, visit the Imperial Citadel and Forbidden City which was created in the 19th century for the Emperors of the Nguyen Dynasty. Enjoy free time for some "retail therapy" at Dong Ba Market before transferring back to the hotel. **Overnight - Hue (B, L)**

Day 6 : Ancient Hoi An

Hue – Hoi An. This morning continue your journey by road to Hoi An via spectacular Cloudy Pass. A stop is made in Danang to visit the Cham Museum, once centre of the ancient Cham civilization. UNESCO Listed Hoi An is a former merchant trading post, famed for its beautifully preserved Chinese, Japanese and European architecture. Picturesque Hoi An has managed to retain its traditional character and charm, with its cobbled streets, markets and row upon row of tailors shops. This afternoon, enjoy a walking tour around the cobbled streets of this ancient town, which was once of the busiest trading ports in Asia. **Overnight – Hoi An (B)**

Day 7 : Free day in Hoi An



Spend a day at leisure in this enchanting riverside town or head to the nearby An Bang beach.

Alternatively there's an optional cooking class or a half day excursion to My Son, the holiest and evocative of

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Vietnam's Cham sites. Here at the ancient Kingdom of Champa you can see the burial tombs of the Cham royals and national heroes. **Overnight - Hoi An (B)**

Day 8 : Ho Chi Minh City



Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh City. Fly to Ho Chi Minh City today and transfer to your hotel. Ho Chi Minh City, though still referred to as Saigon to all but city officials is Vietnam's most lively, modern and cosmopolitan city. In the afternoon discover the highlights of the city on a guided tour, taking in the Notre Dame Cathedral (outside only as renovating), the Central Post Office and Chinatown. End the day with a visit to the sobering War Remnants Museum. **Overnight - Ho Chi Minh City (B)**

Day 9 : The Mekong Delta



Ho Chi Minh City - Mekong Delta - Can Tho. Explore the beautiful Mekong Delta today! Early this morning drive to Ben Tre and board a traditional Sampan boat at around 10:00am to explore the peaceful waterways. During the boat trip, visit a local cottage industries making bricks, producing rice paper and Mr. Sau Khanh's house - who has been collecting antiques which include ancient and valuable ceramics, pottery pieces like bowls, dishes and vases, to

ceiling lights, sculptures and Buddha statues. In the afternoon we travel onto Can Tho for the night.

Overnight - Can Tho (B, L)

Day 10 : Ho Chi Minh City

Can Tho - Ho Chi Minh City. Morning cruise along the Mekong's small and picturesque tributaries where we will visit the bustling Cai Rang Floating Market. Take in the beautiful scenery and watch the locals going about their daily lives along the Mekong canals. Then return to Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to the airport in time for your international flight.

If you'd like to extend your stay in Ho Chi Minh City we recommend exploring the Reunification Palace and taking a day trip to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels.(B, L)

BEFORE YOU GO

Optional Excursions

The following optional excursions are available to book and pay for locally. Prices are based upon two people booking the excursion.

Optional Excursions

- Good Morning Hanoi \$39 pp
- Taste of Hanoi \$51 pp
- Water Puppet show (with guide & car) \$16 pp
- Water Puppet show (ticket only) \$9 pp
- My Son sanctuary \$52 pp
- My Lai Full day \$88 pp
- Cu Chi tunnels \$55 pp

Please note: all prices are approximate and subject to change.

Accommodation ratings

On our Private trips, you can often choose your style of accommodation. The price quoted on our website is reflective of the included accommodation, please see the "included" section on the first page of this document for details. Should you opt for an alternative hotel category,

this will be confirmed in writing with the respective price on your invoice.

For further details about the indicative hotels, please see the "hotels" tab on our website. Here we rank hotel's in their respective country (REGIONAL CATEGORY) - but we also tell you how it ranks by Western standards (OUR CATEGORY).

STANDARD - Equates to a Western 3-star standard, always featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant.
SUPERIOR - Equates to a Western 4-star standard, featuring en-suite rooms and usually a restaurant and often a swimming pool and/or a fitness centre.
DELUXE - Equates to a Western 5-star standard, usually featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, excellent service and customer care.

LUXURY - Equates to a Western 5-star plus standard - the creme de la creme. Featuring spacious, en-suite rooms, a restaurant, swimming pool and fitness centre and an array of amenities, this accommodation is a cut above the rest. Sheer opulence!

What to pack

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit www.worldclimate.com to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your holiday.

- Lightweight cotton garments. Ladies may need to have their shoulders and legs (to below the knee) covered when visiting certain sites, so please pack accordingly
- Comfortable walking shoes in addition to flip flogs/thongs
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Electrical adaptors. A universal adaptor is best!
- Lightweight, fold up raincoat/poncho/umbrella

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- Your Travel Voucher and two spare passport photos and a photocopy of your passport
- A small daypack for your day-to-day needs
- Sunglasses, hat, sunscreen, swimming costume and torch

Tipping

Tipping is an essential part of the culture. For a job well done, we would suggest for your tour guide: USD \$3-6 per traveller, for each day of sightseeing.

For your driver and On The Go Representative we'd recommend USD\$2-3 per traveller for each day of service. Tipping is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Vietnam Country Guide

Visas & passports

Visa requirements are subject to change and visa procurement is the responsibility of the traveller and not On The Go Tours. Please also ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months from your planned date of departure from Vietnam.

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book all services. Please be advised visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel. For information about visas, head to www.onthegotours.com/Vietnam/Visas

Health requirements & water

You should seek medical advice for vaccinations and about medications before travelling.

Water

The tap water in Vietnam is generally considered safe to drink, but as a precaution against stomach upsets

you may want to drink bottled mineral water, which is readily available from shops, hotels and restaurants.

What to expect in Vietnam

Please visit www.onthegotours.com/Vietnam/Travel-tips-and-useful-info for local customs, currency, WiFi and other helpful information to prepare you for an enjoyable holiday.

Airline luggage allowance

If your tour includes international or domestic flights within the region please be mindful that the free baggage allowance for Economy class travel is strictly 20kg and 1 piece of hand luggage up to 6kg. Any additional weight is charged at a per kilo rate. You may wish to bear this in mind whilst shopping.

Trains in Vietnam

It's not the Orient Express, but Vietnam's Reunification Express. On a number of our group tours we include an overnight train journey on the Reunification Express Railway Line between Hanoi and Hue and on our budget Essentials Range tours we include a second overnight train journey from Danang to Mui Ne. The particular SE series train that we use is the highest class of train available in Vietnam. It's titled as being the nation's fastest train; though by international standards it's quite the opposite. Nevertheless, our journey between Hanoi and Hue takes approximately 14 hours and travellers are accommodated in 4 berth 'Soft Sleeper' cabins.

Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise of 4 bunks per compartment. 4 persons of mixed sex share one compartment. You may be sharing with people from your tour group, other tourists or Vietnamese people. Who you will share your cabin with is ultimately dependent upon how the Vietnamese Railways Corporation configures the bookings.

Cabins onboard are comfortable though not comparable to European standards. A western style toilet (with a varying degree of cleanliness) is located at either end of the wagon. Air-conditioning (not always operational in the summer) and lighting are controlled from inside the cabin, which is also lockable. Luggage can be stored in a compartment under the bottom bunk. Linen and a pillow are provided though we strongly recommend that you bring your own sleep sheet (easily purchased in Hanoi at a cost of USD \$5). The cleanliness of the train varies according to wagons assigned to the journey for that particular day. Some wagons are spotlessly clean whilst others can be unclean and should have been decommissioned long ago. Irrespective of the particular wagon, they all have large clear glass windows that allow for uninterrupted views of stunning landscapes and never ending rice paddy fields.

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