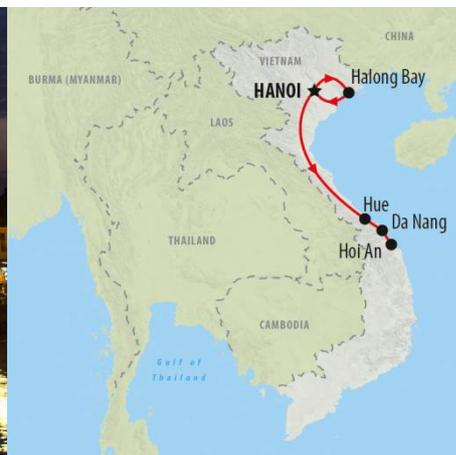


# Full Moon Festival Express

8 days | Hanoi to Hoi An



*Celebrate Vietnam's enchanting Full Moon Festival (aka the Mid-Autumn Festival) in the picturesque riverside town of Hoi An, on this special 8 day tour which also takes in the highlights of Hanoi, heavenly Halong Bay and imperial Hue. Festivities are at their best in Hoi An where we'll enjoy the wonderful spectacle of thousands of lanterns being released into the night sky or cast adrift down the river.*

## HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

### Trip Highlights

- Full Moon Festival – Celebrate this unique experience with the locals and release lanterns into the night sky
- Halong Bay – Cruise around the beautiful bay onboard a traditional junk boat and explore the remarkable caves
- Hanoi – Ride on rickshaws to see highlights of the city and stroll through the '36 Streets' of the Old Quarter
- Hoi An – See the highlights of the city including the famous Japanese Bridge and take a stroll along My Khe Beach
- Tra Que Village – Cycle into the countryside for a hands-on farming

experience and enjoy a fun cooking lesson

- Hue – Discover the ancient walled Citadel, the Purple Palace and the iconic seven story Thien Mu Pagoda

### What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 3 lunches and 1 dinner
- 5 nights 4 star and special class hotels and 1 night aboard deluxe junk boat (private en suite cabin)
- 1 overnight sleeper train Hanoi to Hue in basic 4 berth cabin (or opt to fly - see Add-ons for details)
- Lantern making in the home of the Ha Linh family in Hoi An and releasing our lanterns onto the river
- Guided sightseeing - Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue and Hoi An
- Halong Bay Junk boat cruise - opt to swim, kayak and explore caves
- Bicycle ride to Tra Que village and cooking demonstration
- Airport arrival transfer day 1 and departure transfer day 8
- Escorted by an English speaking Vietnamese tour guide
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles

### What's Not Included

- Tipping Kitty: USD\$25-35pp, paid in USD or VND

- Entrance Fees: USD\$30-40pp, paid in USD or VND
- International flights and visa
- Tip for your tour guide. We recommend you allow USD\$3-6 per day, per traveller. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture

## DETAILED ITINERARY

### Day 1 : Hanoi

Friday 25th September 2020. Welcome to Hanoi, perhaps the most graceful, atmospheric and exotic capital city in Asia. Airport to hotel arrival transfer. This morning offers free time for you to explore the wide tree lined avenues, beautiful lakes and ancient pagoda's and thriving old city. Meeting with our guide at 2pm we set off on foot to explore Hanoi's charming Old Quarter known as the '36 streets of the old Hanoi'. There is Silver Street, Silk Street, Comb Street, Paper Street and importantly Hang Ma street where we'll browse and learn about the history and traditions of Vietnam's Full Moon Festival. There may even be deliciously sweet traditional Mooncakes to be shared.

#### Overnight - Hanoi

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# Full Moon Festival Express

## Day 2 : UNESCO-listed Halong Bay



Hanoi – Halong Bay. After breakfast this morning we leave Hanoi and transfer to the crown in Vietnam's scenic crown - the incredibly beautiful Halong Bay. We'll explore the jade waters studded with karst islands aboard a traditional wooden junk boat and after embarkation there's time for lunch soaking up the views.

This afternoon we will visit the spectacular Tien Ong Cave which was opened to the public in 2010, with its stunning stalagmites and stalactites. Later this evening back on board, watch a Vietnamese cooking demonstration held on the sundeck before settling down for a sumptuous seafood dinner.

**Please note:** the itinerary in Halong Bay can vary dependent upon the cruise we use and weather conditions. **Overnight - Halong Bay, Deluxe Junk Boat (B, L, D)**

## Day 3 : Floating villages and cyclo rides



Halong Bay - Hanoi - Hue. Early birds can start the day with a relaxing Tai Chi class on the sundeck or a traditional massage - the perfect way to start the day. Before heading back to port we'll explore by kayak the Floating Village of Cua Van, which is home to generations of fishing families. Here

we'll see the traditional and colourful floating wooden houses and the locals going about their daily lives.

On arrival back into Hanoi mid-afternoon we'll explore the maze of streets in the French Quarter on our very only cyclo (rickshaws), taking in highlights such as the Opera house and Ly Thai To park. We then swap our wheels for a leisurely walk through '36 streets of the old quarter', named after the numerous guilds that once set up shop on a particular street from silk tailors to traditional medicine shops.

Time will be given to freshen up before boarding our train (4 berth sleeper cabin, basic standard) on the 'Reunification Express' railway line to Hue.

If you've booked our Hanoi - Hue flight add-on you'll be transferred to the airport early this evening and touch down in Hue an hour later. **Overnight - Hue Hotel.** Tomorrow you will rendezvous with your guide and group (arriving off the overnight train) in the hotel upon at approx 10am. **Overnight - Sleeper train (B)**

## Day 4 : Imperial citadel of Hue



Breakfast boxes will be served on the train. Arriving to Hue, we disembark and drive to our hotel. If rooms are ready we can check in, if not we'll depart shortly after on a guided sightseeing tour of the 19th-century Nguyen empire capital. We visit the Thien Mu Pagoda, home to the oldest monastery in the city, whose 21m high tower has become something of a symbol for Hue and the citadel. Within the citadel is the Imperial Purple Palace, an exact copy of the Forbidden City in Beijing, with its impressive ramparts, formal moats and imperial palaces, some of which lay in ruin.

In the countryside lies the Royal Tombs of the Nguyen kings, here we'll view the elaborate mausoleum of Emperor Tu Duc. As the sun sets there is an optional cruise in a long boat along the gentle Perfume River (pay locally) or you can enjoy some retail therapy at the ever lively Dong Ba Market, a few minutes' walk from our hotel. **Overnight - Hue (B, L)**

## Day 5 : Charming Hoi An



Hue - Road of the Ocean Clouds - Hoi An. This morning we continue our journey, driving via the Hai Van Pass (Road of the Ocean Clouds) along the coast to Hoi An. We stop en route for a walk along My Khe beach, nicknamed 'China Beach' by the Americans during the war, the beach featured in Francis Ford Coppola's film 'Apocalypse Now'.

This afternoon we arrive into the historic riverside town of Hoi An. Hoi An is best explored on foot and a short walking tour introduces us to this enchanting town with highlights including the Chua Ong Pagoda, Chinese Assembly Hall, 200-year-old Tam Ky house, former merchants' homes and the 400 year-old Japanese Covered Bridge.

For those that have pre booked the optional Hoi An Street Eats add-on, your guide will inform you today which evening this will take place on, during your stay in Hoi An. **Overnight - Hoi An (B)**

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# Full Moon Festival Express

## Day 6 : Full Moon Festival



Today marks the height of the Full Moon Festival and we will be celebrating with the locals. This morning we take rickshaws to a local home on the outskirts of Hoi An where we learn about the family's long tradition of lantern-making and handcraft our own lanterns for tonight's festivities. Heading back into town we explore the local market stalls and authentic lantern shops. The rest of the day is free for you to relax and explore the town and its wonderful array of shops. Consider getting some clothes made at one of the many great tailor shops, take a row boat down the river or spend the afternoon relaxing by the hotel swimming pool.

Tonight we make our way to the water's edge with hundreds of locals to release our lanterns and enjoy the spellbinding spectacle of hundreds of sparkling lights sailing down the river and lighting up the night sky.

**Overnight - Hoi An (B)**

## Day 7 : Tra Que farming experience



This morning we take a scenic bike ride through the countryside to Tra Que village where we learn all about the age old farming techniques and assist with tending the fields. It's a hands on experience and after we've tested our farming skills we enjoy a fun and

interactive cooking demonstration. Make sure you follow the chef's instructions carefully because you'll be eating the food that you prepare for lunch!

**Overnight - Hoi An (B, L)**

## Day 8 : Hoi An

Friday 2nd October 2020. Today marks the end of your time in Vietnam. A departure transfer will be provided to take you to Danang airport in time for your onward flight. (B)

### HOTELS

Highlighted below are some of the hotels which we frequently use on this tour, though we reserve the right to substitute these hotels to ones of a similar standard.

**Please refer to your Tour Voucher for your confirmed arrival hotel and further arrival information.**

### Sunway Hotel

This ambient, boutique hotel combines traditional appeal with modern pleasures. Rooms are furnished in a contemporary fashion with an array of amenities for added comfort. Its restaurant provides a great variety of Vietnamese cuisine and you are welcome to enjoy cocktails and live music in the Jazz Bar or relax in the hotel's health spa.



### Sleeper train - 4 berth cabin

Cabins on board are comfortable though not comparable to European standards. Aboard each wagon are 9 compartments that comprise of 4 bunks per compartment shared by mixed sexes. 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.



### Bhaya Classic I Junk Boat

This premier cruise boat offers 18 well appointed cabins with en suite amenities. Cabins are contemporary in design, whilst the finer touches have a distinct oriental influence. All cabins feature large windows creating a bright and airy atmosphere as well as scenic views. Facilities and services onboard include a dining room and bar, a sunbathing area on-deck, masseur and small library.



### Syrena Junk Boat

A tradition hand crafted boat, the Syrena Junk Boat offers superb en suite air conditioned cabins with comfortable interiors and balconies. The on board Lotus Restaurant serves up a delicious array of Vietnamese and International cuisine. Complimentary Wi-Fi is available in the public areas. Swimming, kayaking and tai chi are all offered on board and movie nights are also very popular.



### Mondial Hotel

Just a 5 minute walk from the Ho Chi Minh museum, the Mondial Hotel is a contemporary hotel with excellent amenities. Guest rooms benefit from spacious interiors, comfortable beds and lots of mod-cons.

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# Full Moon Festival Express

There is complimentary Wi-Fi for guests, an outdoor pool and onsite spa - perfect for a relaxing massage. As well as the delicious Huong Xuan Restaurant there is also the Lobby Lounge - great for cocktails before dinner!



## ÉMM Hotel

Situated in the heart of the former imperial capital, ÉMM Hotel is the perfect base from which to explore Hue's UNESCO World Heritage-listed sights. Completely renovated in 2016, the guestrooms are generously-sized and complete with modern amenities. The imperial jade and royal purple colour scheme was inspired by ancient Hue itself and guests can take advantage of the mini-gym, pool-side bar and a spacious reading area. Enjoy delicious Vietnamese and international cuisine in the contemporary restaurant after a day of exploring.



## River Green Hotel

Set next to the Hoai River, the River Green Hotel is just a five-minute walk from the iconic Japanese Bridge. Guestrooms offer city or river views, alongside all the amenities you'd expect of a contemporary hotel. There's an outdoor pool, perfect for a refreshing swim, and an on-site restaurant where you can enjoy a variety of international flavours. Complimentary WiFi, bicycle hire and a fitness centre add to this hotel's list of facilities, making it a great base for exploring historic Hoi An.



## Vinh Hung Riverside Resort

Situated right on the banks of the Thu Bon River, this upscale hotel is just a 10-minute walk from the ancient town of Hoi An. Combining Vietnamese tradition with modern facilities, its guestrooms are set in coconut tree-shaded gardens beside the water. They're well-equipped, with free WiFi and air conditioning, as well as private balconies. The hotel also offers a riverside restaurant, serving local specialties and western dishes on the outdoor terrace. This hotel's highlight, however, is its pool and fabulous swim up bar, which is the perfect place to enjoy a pre-dinner cocktail.



## Thanh Binh Riverside hotel

Boasting a beautiful outdoor swimming pool, the Thanh Binh Riverside offers excellent accommodation in a great location. Guest rooms benefit from garden or river views and all come full air-conditioned, with stunning hardwood floors and all mod-cons. The onsite restaurant offers a great selection of Vietnamese and International dishes and the town centre is just a mere 200m walk away. Why not grab a cocktail and relax by the pool in the afternoon - a great way to refresh yourself from the Vietnam heat.



**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

## Entrance Fees

Entrance fees to most sites are not included, although reasonably priced. The entrance fee amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document and a breakdown of the entrance fees is provided upon arrival in your Welcome Letter.

For tours starting in Vietnam and Myanmar we collect from all tour participants the entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour. All funds collected in Vietnam are payable in either US dollars (USD) or Vietnamese dong (VND).

Multi-country tours starting in Laos: Please note if you are travelling on our Laos to Vietnam, Inside Indochina or Indochina Discovery tour your entrance fees will be split into two separate payments. Entrance fees for Laos will be collected on day 2 of the tour in Vientiane and entrance fees for Vietnam/Cambodia/Thailand will be collected on day 8 in Hanoi.

## Tipping Kitty

At the start of your tour, we collect from all tour participants a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions on page one of this document). This kitty covers tips throughout your holiday and saves you the hassle of knowing when and how much to tip bellhops, luggage handlers, bus drivers, train conductors and other support staff throughout the tour.

This amount does not include a tip for your tour guide/s. For a job well done, we would suggest USD \$3-6 per traveller, per day. Tipping your guide is an entirely personal gesture and ultimately the amount is up to you.

Multi country tours starting in Laos: Please note if you are travelling on our Laos to Vietnam, Inside Indochina or Indochina Discovery tour your tipping kitty will be split into two separate payments. The tipping kitty for the Laos section of your tour will be collected on day 2 of the tour in Vientiane. Then, on day 8 in Hanoi the Vietnam/Cambodia/Thailand tipping kitty will be collected for these onward touring arrangements.

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# Full Moon Festival Express

## Groups & guides

The longest *Signature Range* tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our *Indochina Discovery 23 day tour*. All other *Signature Range* tours we offer (with the exception of the family tours) are sectors of this larger tour.

The longest *Essentials Range* tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our *Hanoi to Bangkok 19 day tour*, all other *Essentials Range* tours are sectors of this longer tour.

As our tours are modular, travellers may join you part way through your holiday, for example in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City or Phnom Penh on our *Signature Range* tours, or in Ho Chi Minh City our *Essentials Range* tours. There will also be travellers who end their tour when you continue on.

### Myanmar:

Our longest tour in *Myanmar is Best of Myanmar & Beach - 14 day tour*. All other tours in Myanmar are sectors of this longer tour. All our Myanmar trips operate together from day 1 - day 7, then from day 7 some in your tour group may leave and others continue on. Our *Yangon City Stay* travellers will also join our tour arrangements of day 1 and day 2.

### Guides:

In Laos, a Lao national guide escorts our tours from Vientiane through to Luang Prabang.

In Vietnam a Vietnamese national guide escorts our tours from Hanoi through to Ho Chi Minh City.

In Cambodia, our tours have two guides, a Cambodian national guide in Phnom Penh and a specialist regional guide in Siem Reap.

Our tours that end in Bangkok are not fully escorted for the Thailand sector. On our *Signature Range* tours there is a local Thai guide for the Bangkok city tour. If you are travelling on one of our *Essentials Range* tours, a local guide will meet you at the Cambodia border and escort you to the hotel, the remainder of your Bangkok stay is unescorted with free time to independently explore.

## What to pack

Please check local temperatures so you can pack accordingly. Visit [www.worldclimate.com](http://www.worldclimate.com) to get an idea of what the weather will be like on your tour.

- 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 flops/thongs
- DEET based mosquito repellent and antihistamine cream
- Electrical adaptors. A universal adaptor is best!
- Lightweight, fold up raincoat/poncho/umbrella
- 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
- Sleep sheet if taking an overnight sleeper train in Vietnam. These also can be easily purchased in Hanoi at an approx. cost of USD \$5
- An overnight bag, if your tour includes a night aboard a Junk boat in Halong Bay. As we will be returning to Hanoi, it is not essential that you take your big bag/suitcase with you

## It's not like home

Travel to far-flung corners of the earth involves lifestyles and conditions that are sometimes very different from what you are used to back home. You must come prepared to cope with unusual situations, local inadequacies and unpredictable events, as and when they occur. Foreign travel is definitely not suitable for people who expect or demand everything to go exactly as planned. With the greatest respect and in the interest of your ultimate enjoyment you must understand this. Things can and do change in foreign countries.

## Shopping experiences on your tour

All shopping experiences on your tour have been noted in the itinerary and they have been carefully selected based upon positive feedback from On The Go travellers. You

are under no obligation to partake in a listed shopping experience and you are most welcome to wait inside or outside the premises.

In the tourism industry it's common practice for commission to be offered in exchange for recommending particular shops or suppliers. This can become an issue when clients feel obliged to purchase goods. We do our best to avoid this by monitoring all shopping experiences offered.

Although we only visit reputable retailers, please note that we cannot explicitly guarantee the quality of their products. All purchases made whilst on holiday with us are at your own discretion. Please make sure that you are completely happy with your purchase. On The Go cannot be held responsible for any items that you buy if they fail to meet expectation, or any shipping arrangements. Proceed with caution.

## Vietnam Country Guide

### Welcome to Vietnam - Arrival transfer

A complimentary airport arrival transfer is provided on our *Signature Range Tours*, *Private Tours* and *Short Stays* if you are arriving on day 1 or you have booked pre tour accommodation with us. An arrival transfer is not included on our *Essentials Range tours*\*.

Arrival procedure for Hanoi - Noi Bai International Airport and Ho Chi Minh City - Tan Son Nhat International Airport. Upon arrival, please proceed to the immigration counter and pay the visa stamping fee of USD\$25 (if applicable). After collecting your luggage proceed to the arrival hall and go to the meeting point detailed on your *Tour Voucher*.

**If, for any reason you have trouble locating our representative** (after waiting 20 minutes) or your flight is delayed, please call or send a text message (standard text message, not Messenger or WhatsApp) to the emergency contact number as stated on your *Tour Voucher*.

## Full Moon Festival Express - 8 days

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# Full Moon Festival Express

**Please note:** If arriving prior to 9am on day 1 (essentially on a flight that arrives very, very early in the morning) you will need to purchase a night of pre-tour accommodation to save you waiting until standard hotel check in time which is generally 2pm. Breakfast is included with our pre tour accommodation rates.

**\*Essentials Tours: Please note, airport transfers are NOT included on our budget Essentials Range of tours, please make your own way to the start hotel noted on your Tour Voucher.** Transfers can be booked upon request for an additional fee, please contact us for rates.

## Visas & passports

After booking your holiday, please provide us with your passport details as soon as possible so that we can proceed to book any train and flights tickets (where applicable).

UK passport holders do not need a visa to visit Vietnam for up to 15 days. At customs you will need show your return airline ticket/ E ticket as proof of your date of departure. If you're exiting Vietnam via a land border we will provide UK passport holders with a transfer voucher which can be presented at the airport, along with your tour voucher and tour itinerary (Trip Notes) so please have these available to show to border police if requested. A visa is required for stays of 16 days or longer and if you are planning to return to Vietnam within 30 days of your last departure you will also need a visa.

Most other nationalities including Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, South African and USA passport holders require a tourist visa to visit Vietnam. Travellers can apply for a 30 day tourist visa (single or multiple entry) from the nearest Vietnamese Embassy or via the more convenient method of applying online for an E Visa. The cost is approx USD\$20. After submitting an application you will receive a confirmation number, then upon arrival into Vietnam you will receive the actual visa and have to pay an additional stamping fee of USD\$25. The stamping fee for a multiple entry visa, for entries within one month is approximately USD\$50.

Applying in advance and then collecting your tourist visa upon arrival is available to all travellers entering the country via Hanoi - Noi Bai International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City - Tan Son Nhat International Airport and Danang International Airport.

PLEASE NOTE: Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your departure date, if it is not you may be refused entry into the country. Visa requirements are subject to change, therefore it is essential that you check current visa requirements with the embassy before travel.

## 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.

## Currency

The official currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong.

Euro, GBP, USD and other major currencies can be exchanged locally at the airport, bureau de changes or banks. US Dollar notes are widely accepted and shopkeepers use both currencies interchangeably. You can often pay for items in USD and receive your change in USD notes and coins in VND. Make sure that your USD bills are crisp and clean so you will have no problem using them. ATMs can be found in all major cities though it is not common to pay with a credit card in restaurants, cafes or shops for purchases. It's advisable to request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes. Traveller's Cheques are not recommended as they're often difficult to exchange and incur high fees.

## 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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