

Hanoi & Halong Bay

5 days | Starts/Ends: Hanoi



See northern Vietnam's most captivating destinations with a 5 day break that covers the best of Hanoi from the Old Quarter to Ba Dinh Square with a night spent on a traditional junk boat cruising around Halong Bay.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Hanoi - Vietnam's charming capital with French colonial glamour and Asian spirit
- Ba Dinh Square - Home to Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and the One Pillar Pagoda
- Museum of Ethnology - Fascinating displays of Vietnam's colourful ethnic groups
- Old Quarter - Atmospheric narrow streets with traditional shop fronts and busy cafes
- Halong Bay - UNESCO Listed region with thousands of stunning limestone peaks and islets
- Junk boat cruising - Spend a night on board with time to relax on the sundeck

What's Included

- Breakfast daily, 1 lunch and 1 dinner
- Guided sightseeing on day 2 conducted by a local English speaking specialist guide

- 3 nights 4 star hotel (3 and 5 star hotel options available - please enquire) and 1 night on board a traditional junk boat in Halong Bay (private en suite cabin)
- Activities on days 3 and 4 on shared basis on a shared junk boat
- Airport arrival transfer on day 1 and departure transfer on day 5
- All relevant transfers and transportation in private air-conditioned vehicles
- Entrance fees to all included sites

What's Not Included

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

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : Welcome to Vietnam

Welcome to Hanoi, one of southeast Asia's most charismatic cities with just the right amount of colonial charm and modern commotion with mopeds zipping along narrow streets lined with traditional houses and shopfronts. On your arrival at Hanoi's international airport you will be met and transferred to your hotel for check in (available from 2pm onwards). The remainder of the day is at leisure so you may wish to head out and explore Hoan Kiem Lake. **Overnight - Hanoi**

Day 2 : Hanoi City Tour



Today's sightseeing tour takes in the best of Hanoi, kicking off with Ba Dinh Square where the squat granite mausoleum of Vietnam's most famous leader - Ho Chi Minh - is laid to rest. Close by is the attractive and well-preserved stilted house where Ho once lived, now surrounded by well-tended gardens. Next up on the itinerary is the historic Buddhist temple known as the One Pillar Pagoda.

Touring continues with the Temple of Literature, the first university to have been built in Vietnam back in the 11th century. The complex features pagodas, courtyards, ponds and ancient trees making it a lovely spot for a little wander. Get to know Vietnam's colourful ethnic groups at the absorbing Museum of Ethnology. A highlight of your visit is sure to be the full-scale village houses arranged in the garden of the grounds.

Later this evening discover Hanoi's historic heart and soul as you head out on a walking tour of the Old Quarter where you can sample

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some of the city's tastiest snacks and street food from noodles to pancakes. The final stop of the day is the lively 'international corner' where locals and visitors alike gather to enjoy a cold beverage watching city scenes play out in front of them.

PLEASE NOTE: Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum only opens in the morning for a few hours and is closed all day on Mondays & Fridays as well as throughout the months of September and October for annual maintenance. Ho Chi Minh's house-on-stilts is closed on Monday and Friday afternoon and all museums are closed on Monday.

Overnight - Hanoi (B)

Day 3 : Cruising Halong Bay



This morning depart Hanoi and transfer to Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the jewel in Vietnam's scenic crown. Board a traditional junk boat for a cruise among the karst islands, carpeted with vegetation and rising dramatically from the vivid green waters of the bay. During your cruise you'll pass striking rock formations and sample a delicious lunch of freshly caught fish and seafood.

In the afternoon there will be the chance to swim in the waters, watch a cooking demonstration out on deck or simply relax on one of the loungers enjoying the incredible vistas. The day ends with a gastronomic feast with the other guests on board. **Overnight - Halong Bay (B, L, D)**

Day 4 : Tai Chi and Caves



Start the day with a calming Tai Chi lesson, often accompanied by an amazing sunrise and the quiet breathtaking beauty of the bay's landscape. It's the perfect way to start your day. On the way back to the harbour the boat will pass many beautiful spots, stopping for the chance to explore Surprise Cave, one of the bay's many impressive caves that have been illuminated with neon lights to reveal a magical landscape of mineral formations.

Returning back to dock you will be met and transferred back to Hanoi by car where the remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight - Hanoi (B)

Day 5 : Depart Hanoi

Today marks the end of your touring arrangements with a departure transfer to the airport in time for your onward departure 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.

Lan Vien Hotel

A warm welcome awaits guests at the Lan Vien Hotel. The hotel offers spacious rooms with luxury hard wood flooring and excellent marble en suite facilities. Wi-Fi is available throughout and the sumptuous buffet breakfast on the 11th floor restaurant affording fantastic views across the city is a wonderful way to start the day.



The Ann Hotel

In the centre of Hanoi sits the contemporary and sophisticated The Ann hotel. Guest rooms are spacious and well appointed with delightful en suite facilities including bath and shower. The hotel boasts both a bar and restaurant. The swanky A lounge offers a wonderful selection of beverages and diners can enjoy the Onyx house for delicious local and international dishes on A la carte or buffet style. Our top tip is to head to the roof top pool for a refreshing dip and wonderful views across the city.



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Sunway Hotel

This ambient, boutique hotel combines traditional appeal with modern pleasures. Rooms are furnished in a contemporary

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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.



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.



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 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

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.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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.

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

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

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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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