

Vietnam Family Holiday

8 days | Hanoi to Hoi An



VIETNAM FAMILY TOUR (for children aged 5 years and above): Discover the highlights of Vietnam on this 8 day group tour for families. See Ho Chi Minh's famous house and the '36 Streets' of Hanoi, cruise between stunning limestone islets in Halong Bay and enjoy a fun farming experience at Cam Thanh. With plenty of free time to relax by the pool or at the beach in enchanting Hoi An.

HIGHLIGHTS AND INCLUSIONS

Trip Highlights

- Hanoi – cyclo ride around the '36 Streets' of the capital's charming Old Quarter
- Halong Bay – cruise around beautiful limestone peaks, spend the night onboard a junk boat, kayak, swim and explore the beautiful caves
- Hoi An – swim in the sea at 'China Beach' and enjoy some R&R in this enchanting riverside town with its cobbled streets, lanterns and iconic Japanese Bridge
- Cam Thanh – cycle through the countryside to a local farm, learn how to tend the fields and cook a delicious Vietnamese lunch before crafting a bamboo product at a local workshop

What's Included

- 7 breakfasts, 4 lunches and 1 dinner
- 6 nights 4 star hotels and 1 night deluxe junk boat
- Economy class flight - Hanoi to Da Nang
- Halong Bay Junk boat cruise - opt to swim, kayak and explore caves
- Bicycle ride to Cam Thanh Village, farm experience and cooking demonstration
- Airport arrival transfer day 1 and departure transfer day 8
- Guided sightseeing - Hanoi, Halong Bay and Hoi An
- 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\$15-25pp, 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 : Welcome to Hanoi

Sunday. Xin Chao! Welcome to Vietnam and the start of your family holiday. You'll be met by our representative at the airport and transferred to our hotel for check-in. The rest of the day is free for you and your family to explore the city, with its picturesque tree-lined avenues, scenic lakes, ancient pagodas and bustling old town, all of which are easily accessible by foot.

At 6pm there will be a Welcome Meeting in the hotel lobby. For those who arrive late and are not able to attend the meeting, the guide will arrange time on the next day to brief you about the tour details. **Overnight - Hanoi**

Day 2 : Hanoi sightseeing

After breakfast, we head out to explore the Vietnamese capital, starting at the Ho Chi Minh complex. Here we take in Ho's mausoleum and the former leader's simple house on stilts, where he chose to live throughout the Vietnam War.

We also enjoy a guided walking tour of the Old Quarter of Hanoi with its '36 Streets', where skilled craftsmen and artisan guilds set up shop in what was once the beating heart of the city. After our tour, we enjoy a delicious lunch before returning to the hotel. The afternoon is

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free to relax or further explore independently.

Overnight - Hanoi (B, L)

Day 3 : Cruising Halong Bay



Hanoi - Halong Bay. Leaving Hanoi, we transfer to perhaps the jewel in Vietnam's crown - pristine Halong Bay. Here karst limestone islets dappled with green vegetation rise out of the emerald water. We'll be exploring the bay on an overnight cruise aboard a deluxe junk boat, which are based on a traditional design, combining oriental style with modern luxury.

This afternoon we visit Trinh Nu Cave to marvel at the stalactites and stalagmites. You can also go kayaking or enjoy a refreshing swim in the bay. This evening there's a Vietnamese cooking demonstration back onboard and we tuck in to a tasty seafood dinner.

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

Day 4 : Fly to Hoi An



Halong Bay - Da Nang - Hoi An. Early risers can join a Tai Chi class on the sundeck at sunrise. There's also time to explore the beautiful Sung Sot Cave, which consists of two cavernous chambers that are big enough to hold thousands of people. After visiting the

cave, we disembark our junk boat and transfer to Hanoi airport for our flight to Da Nang. From Da Nang we transfer to Hoi An, where the evening is free to relax or explore this enchanting waterfront town. **Overnight - Hoi An** (B)

Day 5 : Hoi An walking tour



Hoi An is a charming, old-world trading port, home to quaint cobbled streets, traditional Vietnamese houses and tiny shops - the perfect place to lose yourself in a bygone era. On a short walking tour we take in the Chua Ong Pagoda, Chinese Assembly Hall, 200-year old Tam Ky house and the even older Japanese Bridge. The rest of the day is free to relax at the hotel with your family or further explore this endearing town your way. Boutique restaurants, hip cafes along the waterfront, delightful craft shops and artisans including some of Asia's best bespoke tailors (whose services come at a nominal price), can all be found here. **Overnight - Hoi An** (B, L)

Day 6 : Cam Thanh farming experience



Today we enjoy a leisurely bicycle ride past rice paddies, local orchards and rural farm workers to Cam Thanh village. Meeting local farmers, we enjoy a fun, hands-on farming experience. Get stuck in as we help the farmers with their daily works, including

spreading organic manure, creating organic pesticides and cultivating the soil.

Our hard work deserves its rewards and after the gardening, we use some of the farms organic produce to cook a delicious lunch. Eat your meal out in the garden before we continue on our bicycles to a bamboo workshop. Here we work with a talented craftsman to make our own bamboo sculptures and products. We then transfer back to the hotel. **Overnight - Hoi An** (B, L)

Day 7 : Free time in Hoi An

Today is completely free of scheduled activities so that you can relax with your family or further explore however you like. Hoi An is great for shopping and there are many fantastic restaurants that foodies may wish to visit, alternatively consider heading to the beach for the day. **Overnight - Hoi An** (B)

Day 8 : Hoi An

Hoi An - Da Nang. Today our Vietnamese family adventure comes to an end. There's an included departure transfer to Da Nang Airport for your onward flight home. (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.

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La Casa Hotel

Set in the tranquil French Quarter of Hanoi, La Casa Hotel offers a comfortable stay in Vietnam's bustling capital. Each guestroom features free high-speed WiFi and individually controlled air conditioning, alongside the other amenities you'd expect of a modern hotel. Guests can enjoy Asian cuisine in the on-site restaurant as well as a range of beverages in the bar. The gym boasts fantastic views over the city, however, if you're looking to unwind, you can take a dip in the fountain swimming pool or head to the hotel's spa center.



Bhaya Classic

These premier cruise boats, known as junks, combine contemporary luxury with oriental style. Cabins are well-appointed with large windows to create a bright and airy atmosphere. Facilities and services onboard include a dining room and bar, a sunbathing area on-deck, masseur and small library.



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.



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.



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 on the Welcome Letter.

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

For tours starting in Laos or Cambodia, we collect entrance fees on Day 2 of the tour and the entrance fees are payable in USD.

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 will be collected on day 8 in Hanoi.

Tipping Kitty

At the start of your tour, we take a small tipping kitty (the amount is noted under exclusions) from all tour participants to cover tips throughout your holiday. This 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 guides. For a job well done, we would suggest USD \$3 - 6 per person 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. Tips for Laos will be collected on day 2 of the tour in Vientiane and tips for Vietnam/Cambodia will be collected on day 8 in Hanoi.

Groups & Guides

The longest Signature Tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our Indochina Discovery 23 day tour. All other Signature Tours we offer (with the exception of the family tours) are sectors of this larger tour. The longest Budget Tour we offer in Southeast Asia is our Hanoi to Bangkok Tour 19 day tour, all other Budget Tours are sectors of this longer tour. As our tours are modular you may have travellers join you part way through your holiday (in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City or Phnom Penh on Signature Tours or in Ho Chi Minh City our Budget Tours). There will also be travellers who end their tour when you continue on.

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Guides:

In Laos a Lao national guide escorts our tours from Vientiane through to Luang Prabang and 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 Tours there is a local Thai guide for the Bangkok city tour. If you are travelling on a Budget Tour a local guide will meet you at the Cambodia border and escort you to our hotel, then you will be unescorted for the rest of your stay in Bangkok.

What to Pack

- 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 & antihistamine cream
- Electrical adaptors. A universal adaptor will cover all bases
- Lightweight, fold up raincoat/ poncho/ umbrella
- Two spare passport photos & 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 a cost of USD\$5
- An overnight bag, if your tour includes a night board 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.

Vietnam Country Guide

Vietnam Arrival Transfers

An airport arrival transfer is provided on all Signature Tours, Private Tours and Short Stays if you are arriving on day 1 or you have booked pre tour accommodation with us.

Arrival Procedure for Hanoi - Noi Bai International Airport and Ho Chi Minh City - Tan Son Nhat International Airport. Upon arrival 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 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.

Budget Tours - please note airport transfers are NOT included on our Budget 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

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.

Health Requirements

You should seek medical advice before travelling to Vietnam from your local health practitioner and ensure that you receive all of the appropriate vaccinations. As a guide Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Typhoid and Tetanus are strongly recommended.

Malaria in Vietnam

Areas with malaria: Rural only, except none in the Red River Delta and the coast north of Nha Trang. Rare cases in the Mekong Delta. None in Da Nang, Haiphong, Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Nha Trang, and Qui Nhon. Estimated relative risk of malaria for travellers: Low

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.

Climate

Vietnam has a varied climate due to its geography. The south is hot year round and has two seasons: The wet season lasts from May to October, with brief, daily showers. The dry season from November to April is generally sunny and humid. In the north, the summer months (May to October) are hot and there is the occasional burst of heavy rain. In the winter (December to February)

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temperatures drop in the north and it can be damp. The coastal region of central Vietnam is blessed with long months of sunshine, although there is rainfall in November and December. At this time there can also be some typhoon activity in the central coastal region.

Time & Voltage

The voltage in Vietnam is 220v. In Vietnam 3 types of plugs are commonly accepted: 2 flat prong plugs (type A), the 2 round pin plug (type C) and many of the new 4 and 5 star hotels use the British standard 3-pin plug (type G). To cover all bases, it is best to pack an international travel adaptor!

Vietnam is 7 hours ahead of GMT and does not observe daylight saving.

Currency

The official currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong.

Euro, British Pounds, US Dollars 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 and you will have no problem using or exchanging these throughout your stay. ATM machines can be found in all major cities though it is not common to pay with 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 and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases and gratuities.

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 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. Never the less, 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 train you take, 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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