



Vietnam – ‘Hanoi to Saigon’

All year round: 17D/16N ex London or 15D/14N Hanoi to Saigon

A great introduction to Vietnam, this varied trip combines essential sites & hidden places: Hanoi, Halong Bay, Saigon, World Heritage Hue, charming Hoi An, the rarely visited and spectacular Pu Luong National Park, the dramatic scenery of Ninh Binh province and picturesque Mekong Delta. Discover the country's past and present: – ruined temples of the Cham Empire, glorious pagodas & royal tombs of the Nguyen Dynasty, the more recent, tragic sites of the Vietnam War & the friendly people, exotic cuisine, fantastic landscapes & exciting cities of Hanoi & Saigon.



Day 1 Depart from the UK.

Day 2 Arrival in Hanoi, check-in to a downtown hotel in the heart of the Old City with the afternoon free to relax or explore the area, before an evening trip to see the unique water-puppet show.

Day 3 Day tour of some of this beautiful old City, with it's French colonial ambience. Sites include Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum, the 11th century University, Hoan Kiem Lake and a stroll through the bustling back streets of the old quarter.

Day 4 Departure for Halong Port where we'll board the Bai Tho Junk for a journey through the dramatic limestone scenery of the World Heritage Halong Bay. Local fishermen over the years have given names to the various isles, caves and coves that make up the Bay of the Descending Dragon. Amongst other sites, you'll visit the Monster Head and Teapot Islands, Oan Lagoon, Titop Beach and Surprise Cave. Explore the islands, visit the grottoes and swim on the beaches, before dinner on board and overnight on the junk. (Traditional wooden style, yet now equipped for visitors with air con and en-suite cabins).

Day 5 Early rise for dawn over Halong Bay before continuing the visit with stops at Man's Head and Tortoise Islands, plus a tour of one of the picturesque lagoons by local rowing boat. Return to Halong Port via Bai Tu Long Bay and transfer to Hanoi.



Day 6 Leaving the capital we'll head into the scenic mountainous region of Hoa Binh Province where we'll continue to Pu Luong – one of Vietnam's remotest and most spectacular national parks. Afternoon hike to discover the regions amazing flora and fauna and overnight in the ethnic White Tai village of Mai Chau.

Day 7 Scenic drive through the lush paddy fields and jagged limestone escarpments of this region, sometimes known as the 'Halong of the rice fields', to the remarkable cave system of the [Trang An Grottoes](#). Rowing boats will take us through the labyrinth of caves, tunnels and emerald streams for a fascinating visit before continuing to Ninh Binh Town to board the night sleeper train.

Day 8 Morning arrival at Dong Ha and a chance to discover the country's more recent history with a day trip to the infamous DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) to visit some of the key sites of the Vietnam War. Sites to include the Vietcong tunnels at Vinh Moc, Hien Luong Bridge on the 17th parallel which marked the border between former South and North Vietnam, and Khe Sanh Combat Base - scene of some of the most intense fighting of the war. Overnight in Hue.

Day 9 Time to check out the numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites of this historic city and former imperial capital. Morning cruise by dragon boat along the Perfume River to visit some of the majestic tombs of the former emperors and afternoon walk around the ancient citadel.



Day 10 Short, scenic drive to nearby [Hoi An Town](#) with a stop on the way at the beautiful and spectacular beach at Lang Co, and an afternoon tour of the old town and waterfront area. Well-preserved and charming, Hoi An (now UNESCO World Heritage Site) was one of Southeast Asia's most important ports during the 17th to 19th centuries.

Day 11 Morning trip to the atmospheric ruined temples of ancient My Son City – Vietnam's most important site of the former Cham Empire. The city was occupied from the 4th to 13th centuries, before succumbing to its powerful Khmer and Vietnamese neighbours. Return to Hoi An and a free afternoon to discover the picturesque old streets at your leisure, visit the bustling silk market or bicycle down to the nearby beach for a dip or massage.

Day 12 Time to explore some of the sites of the Danang region with a visit to the famous China Beach, Marble Mountain and the fascinating Cham Museum before an evening departure for Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City).



Day 13 Day tour of some of the City's sites including the bustling Ben Thanh Market, the War Museum, Jade Emperor Pagoda and Saigon's own Notre Dame Cathedral.

Day 14 Departure from Saigon for a visit to the fascinating Vietcong tunnel system at Cu Chi before continuing south to the scenic Delta town of Cai Be with some free time to explore the area. Overnight in Cai Be Town.

Day 15 Morning visit to Cai Be's traditional floating market from where we'll continue by boat through the Delta's myriad waterways with the opportunity to visit some of the region's cottage industries and fruit farms. Arrival in Vinh Long and head off for a canoe tour of the former Vietcong jungle base at [Xe Quit](#). After lunch we'll head for Can Tho – the Delta's most important commercial and administrative centre. Afternoon at leisure to explore this friendly riverside town or check-out the interesting Mekong Delta Museum.



Day 16 Early morning boat ride to the nearby [morning floating market](#), one of the busiest and most photogenic in the Delta, before returning to Saigon.

Day 17 Morning departure, and evening arrival in the UK.

Note: this tour is offered with or without flights London – Hanoi & Saigon - London. Those persons not wishing to take up the flight option should join the tour on day 2 in Hanoi and leave on day 16 in Saigon.

Highlights: Hanoi, Pu Luong National Park, Mai Chau, Trang An caves, Royal tombs of Hue, World Heritage, Hoi An, DMZ tour, ruined city of My Son, Saigon. Cu Chi Tunnels, Mekong Delta, Floating markets, Vietnamese food

Fitness: easy – hikes can be adjusted to any level

Accomm: hotel, cabins on the Bai Tho Junk, guesthouse in the White Tai village of Mai Chau. homestay in colonial period villa at Cai Bae

Transport: minibus, night sleeper train, flight, boat

Meals: full board except for lunch on days 2 & 11 and dinner on days 11, 15 & 16

							
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