

# Highlights of Vietnam



## Highlights

Mountainous, tropical, supporting huge biodiversity, and with over fifty distinct ethnic groups, Vietnam presents the traveller with a bewildering cornucopia of possibilities. For those wanting to get a feel for this rich and complex country, a twelve day guided tour of Vietnam, taking in some of its major highlights, both natural and cultural, might be just what you're looking for.

Vietnam is a feast for the senses. The ancient and the modern mix and mingle in a cultural melting-pot that has been simmering gently for centuries. Stunning limestone hills rise from the mist behind traditional villages where farmers still wear conical hats while tending rice by hand, while busy cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh are architectural patchworks, attesting to the complex history of a fertile nation repeatedly invaded.

On this tour of Vietnam, you'll explore the cosmopolitan city of Hanoi, Vietnam's modern capital, as well as the vibrant Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon. You'll get a feel for the ethnic diversity of the country when you visit Sapa, high in the Northern hills, a city with some extraordinary views of local scenery. The scenery just gets more incredible when you reach Halong Bay, with over a thousand limestone peaks scattered along a coast cloaked in thick forest, a landscape you'll be able to enjoy at its best from the deck of a Junk. You'll visit villages of the Hmong and Tay people in the surrounding hills, and experience traditional life, food and hospitality. In Hue, onetime capital, you'll be spoilt for choice at the sheer variety of historic monuments, including the "Forbidden City" old Imperial palace, now ruined.

This trip can be tailor-made to include homestays, beach extensions and more active excursions. Contact our Vietnam specialist Anna at [help@tourdust.com](mailto:help@tourdust.com) to discuss your itinerary.

## Is it for me?

If you're hungry for new experiences, this tour of Vietnam is full four-course meal! The itinerary allows some free time to relax and digest the previous courses before continuing to the next, so the overall pace isn't too hectic, but be prepared for some of the experiences to have an earthy, wholesome flavour: for several nights you'll stay in village homestays or community houses, which are definitely not five-star hotels, but are nevertheless comfortable, and offer the chance to really get a feel for the life of the country people. There's plenty of travelling to be done between destinations, but plenty of reason to do so. If you want a two-week holiday that positively fills you to bursting, this is a great choice.

## Accommodation

The accommodation used on this tour of Vietnam is really up to you. The price quoted is based on you staying in standard hotels, but you could choose to stay in a mixture of homestays, giving you a feel for authentic Vietnam, or in boutique hotels, giving you a little taste of luxury on your trip.

Breakfast is included each day and will be served at your hotel. This will generally be a buffet serving international and more traditional breakfasts. Lunch and dinner are sometime included, sometimes you will be left to your own devices. The food in Vietnam is delicious, with plenty of seafood to enjoy. The fusion of French and Asian cuisine means that the food is not quite as spicy as in Thailand, but serves menus with delicate flavours and complementing textures.. There are plenty of restaurants to sample in each of the locations, so be

Prices from

**654** GBP (12 days) per person

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sure to sample a variety. Try one of the more upmarket restaurants in Hoi An for a romantic meal, enjoy a traditional hot pot (a take on a fondue), a sea-food barbecue and be sure to perch in a plastic chair on a street corner in Hanoi and sample locally made beer - bia hoi.

## Itinerary

### Day 1: Hanoi

On arrival in Hanoi transfer to your hotel of choice.

### Day 2: Hanoi - Sapa

Enjoy a personally guided city tour where Hanoi's rich history will be unraveled and local life revealed, including a traditional cyclo tour through the narrow ancient streets of the exotic Old Quarter. In the evening board the overnight train to Lao Cai near the Chinese border. (B,L)

### Day 3: Sapa

Arrive early morning and head into the hills of Sapa. Navigate small paths into valleys and along rivers, passing through small ethnic minority hill tribes such as the Black H'mong. They are proud of their culture and still keep their traditions and way of living, including their own language and traditional indigo blue, embroidered clothing. This evening, either hike into Ta Van village and stay overnight with a local family or return to the comfort of a hotel in Sapa. (B,L)

### Day 4: Sapa - Hanoi

Today visit the Red Dao people, stopping at a waterfall along the way. The Red Dao women wear colourful red embroidery and coins on their clothing and red scarves on their heads. Some of the women have shaved off their eyebrows because of a Red Dao Legend. Afternoon at leisure in Sapa to explore local markets before boarding the overnight train back to Hanoi. (B)

### Day 5: Hanoi - Halong Bay

After an early traditional breakfast drive east to Halong Bay. With more than a thousand limestone peaks rising up from its emerald waters, this area is one of five World Heritage-listed sites in Vietnam. Spend the rest of the day exploring limestone caves, relaxing on the deck, swimming, or kayaking in secluded lagoons, followed by a seafood feast for dinner on board your junk. (B,L,D)

### Day 6: Halong Bay - Hanoi

Enjoy an early morning swim (during the summer), followed by breakfast as you cruise through more spectacular scenery. In the afternoon drive back to Hanoi, where you will have one more evening to sample its fabulous cuisine and explore the Old Quarter. (B,L)

### Day 7: Hanoi - Hue

In the morning, fly to the former Imperial Capital of Hue. This beautiful city is rich in history, culture and ancient temples. Spend the day exploring the Citadel, which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site, before relaxing on a sunset cruise on the Perfume River. (B,L)

### Day 8: Hue - Hoi An

Drive to Hoi An via the coastal Hai Van Pass, visiting the Cham museum along the way. Afternoon in Hoi An at leisure to shop at the tailors or relax on the beach. (B)

### Day 9: Hoi An

Get your walking shoes on for a guided tour through this World Heritage town, before experiencing a real culinary treat – a cooking class! Hoi An is renowned for its culinary delights and you will get to enjoy the fruits of your efforts! (B,L)

### Day 10: Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh City

After lunch fly to Ho Chi Minh City. Spend the afternoon in the bustling city taking in the highlights of Saigon. (B)

### Day 11: Mekong Delta

Delve into the heart of the Mekong Delta on a cruise on a traditional sampan, exploring the fascinating life on the Mekong River. Visit a floating market, a beautiful island and dine at a superb Indochine restaurant, an ideal way to spend the day on the Delta. (B,L)

### Day 12: Depart Ho Chi Minh City

You will be driven to the airport for your flight out of Vietnam. (B)

## Details

### Getting there

You need to get to Hanoi. There are flights to Noi Ba Airport from most major UK airports.

### Price includes

English speaking tour guide(s), all transfers and transportation, accommodation based on twin sharing with breakfast included, food as mentioned in the itinerary, domestic flight from Hoi An- Ho Chi Minh City, all guided sightseeing fees and entrance fees as per itinerary.

### Price details

This is a guide price depending of how many people are in your party and the standard hotel you would like to stay in. Please contact us for a more detailed quote.

**When is best**

The shape of Vietnam means that North has a very different climate to the south, so engineering a trip without any rain is not going to be easy! That said, rain tends to come in downpours, which can be an experience in itself! The times of year with the least chance of rain are April / May or October / November.

**Experience required**

A reasonable interest is all that is needed