

*Full Itinerary*

## HIGHLIGHTS OF VIETNAM



TALK TO OUR WELL  
TRAVELLED TEAM OF  
EXPERTS

Toll Free US and  
Canada:  
**1.855.624.4386**

Monday - Thursday 9:00am -  
8:00pm, Friday 9:00am - 5:30pm  
(London time)



### JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

**ACTIVITY LEVEL:**

Level 2

**DESTINATION:**

Highlights of Vietnam

**DURATION:**

11 days / 10 nights

**FLIGHT INFORMATION:**

Please arrange your flights to arrive at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [SGN] on Day 1 and to depart from Hanoi International Airport [HAN] on Day 11

**PICKUP LOCATION:**

Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City [SGN]

## OVERVIEW

Nov 6 - 16, 2024

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This wonderfully varied tour of Vietnam takes in the very best of the country's scenery, history and culture as we travel from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi

Explore Vietnam's Imperial past through the residences of ancient Emperors as well as its much more recent history at the Imperial War Museum and Cu Chi tunnels as we travel the country from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi.

Enjoy a walking tour of ancient town of Hoi An, and experience the sometimes dramatic beauty of the countryside. We travel through rice paddies, witnessing a more traditional, rural way of life and take a spectacular cruise in Halong Bay, 'The Bay of the Descending Dragon' in Vietnamese, a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This tour takes in much of Vietnam's rich cultural heritage, from travelling through Hanoi's Old Quarter by cyclo rickshaw to enjoying the uniquely Vietnamese water puppet theatre and much more. Join us as we head off in discovery of this fascinating country!

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1** - Welcome to Vietnam

**DAY 2** - Exploring the Mekong Delta

**DAY 3** - Discover Ho Chi Minh City & Evening Dinner Cruise

**DAY 4** - The Cu Chi Tunnels & Flight to Hoi An

**DAY 5** - Historic Hoi An

**DAY 6** - Visiting My Son

**DAY 7** - Discovering Hue & the Imperial Citadel

**DAY 8** - Dragon Boat on the Perfume River & Flight to Hanoi

**DAY 9** - Cruising Halong Bay

**DAY 10** - Bustling Hanoi & Water Puppet Show

**DAY 11** - Goodbye to Vietnam

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - WELCOME TO VIETNAM

Upon arrival, you will be met at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City and transferred to your hotel for check in.

Ho Chi Minh City is Vietnam at its most modern and vibrant, yet it has retained some of its past colonial feel.

Spend the afternoon at leisure, acclimatising to the hustle and bustle of this city before meeting your Big Journey Company Tour Director. In the evening you have the chance to meet other members and hear more about the trip ahead during our welcome dinner.

**Included meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City

### DAY 2 - EXPLORING THE MEKONG DELTA

After breakfast we travel out of the city by luxury speedboat, cruising through canals and along the Saigon River to the Mekong Delta. En route, we'll see how the local people live their lives along the river banks.

Upon arrival in Ben Tre province, don a conical hat to protect your from the sun and experience the peaceful atmosphere of this water region as you are rowed along the narrow canals in a small boat. Stopping off along the way, we call in at a coconut candy factory and the local bee farm.

We return to the mainland for our lunch at a local restaurant where we'll enjoy a traditional Vietnamese lunch with many delicious courses, such as the local delicacy of Elephant-Ear fish served in rice-paper with fish sauce.

After lunch, we head back to Ho Chi Minh City where you have the rest of the afternoon and evening free.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City

### DAY 3 - DISCOVER HO CHI MINH CITY & EVENING DINNER CRUISE

This morning, we head out to explore Ho Chi Minh City's major sights, taking in the French-inspired and aptly named Notre Dame Cathedral and City Hall.

There will be time for you to explore the sombre and very informative War Remnants Museum. You will find large exhibits such as US armoured vehicles, artillery pieces, bombs and infantry weapons in the courtyard, and inside, in the Propaganda and Photography galleries you can spend time quietly contemplating the history represented.

Later, we step off the beaten track to visit a traditional Vietnamese coffee house. The Vietnamese take their cà phê very seriously, as you might expect from a country which was once heavily influenced by French culture.

The rest of the afternoon will be spent at leisure for you to follow your own interests.

Back at our hotel we have little time to freshen up before dinner as this evening we head out again for a glittering evening river cruise on the River Saigon, giving us a great view of the city by night.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner Cruise

**Accommodation:** Grand Hotel Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City

### DAY 4 - THE CU CHI TUNNELS & FLIGHT TO HOI AN

This morning, we check out of our hotel and en route to the airport, make a stop on the way. It's hard to imagine as we drive through rice paddies and other typical rural scenes, that our next visit will be the Cu Chi tunnels, the infamous site where Viet Cong guerrillas built a labyrinth of narrow tunnels during the Vietnam War.

The local people were able to hide here during bombings and the labyrinth of tunnels also enabled them to stage surprise attacks. The determination, ingenuity and resilience of the Vietnamese people is evident here. The site visit includes a short talk and video about the history of the area, a tour of the tunnels and the opportunity to go underground yourself (very restricted access).

After our visit, we continue to the airport for our flight north to Danang, only a short drive from Hoi An. After checking into our hotel, enjoy the rest of the day at leisure to shop and explore Hoi An. This charming town, a protected UNESCO site, is noted for its hand sewn tailored clothing and beautiful white sand beaches.

Perhaps take a cyclo taxi or ask your Big Journey Company Tour Director to point you in the right direction to find somewhere to enjoy a cool drink at the side of the river in the old town. There is no better place to while away the rest of the day!

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Allegro Hoi An, Hoi An

## DAY 5 - HISTORIC HOI AN

Today we will enjoy a fascinating walking tour, discovering the beautiful and well-preserved ancient town of Hoi An, a historical port and trading town on the ancient Silk Road.

Hoi An has been frequented by merchants from as far afield as China to Portugal and Holland - these influences are evident as we explore the city. In the 16th century, Hoi An was one of the major trading centres of Southeast Asia. It's distinctive Chinese atmosphere with low, tiled-roof houses and narrow streets comes from this time.

The original structure of some of these streets is still virtually intact. Many of the houses were constructed of rare timbers and decorated with lacquer panels engraved with Chinese characters and pillars carved with ornamental design.

We visit a traditional house, the famous and much-photographed Japanese covered bridge and the Hoi An central market.

After lunch at a local restaurant, we return to the hotel and the rest of the day is free at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Allegro Hoi An, Hoi An

## DAY 6 - VISITING MY SON

In the morning, we go on an excursion to My Son - UNESCO World Heritage Site - to discover the rich ancient history of Central Vietnam.

My Son is the former capital of the ancient Kingdom of Champa and the site of Vietnam's most important Cham ruins. Most of the temples here were dedicated to Cham Kings and also served as a burial place for Cham monarchs. The towers here date from the 4th -13th century, and many of the brick structures are dedicated to Hindu gods or reflect Hindu mythology.

We return to Hoi An and enjoy lunch at a popular restaurant to sample some of the town's most famous dishes.

The afternoon and evening are free at your own leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Allegro Hoi An, Hoi An

## DAY 7 - DISCOVERING HUE & THE IMPERIAL CITADEL

We say a fond farewell to the town of Hoi An today and drive north along one of the most scenic hillside roads in Vietnam to the city of Hue.

Winding our way up the spectacular Hai Van Pass, we will see some of the military installations left from times of war, now almost hidden in amongst the lush forest. On the way, we also stop at the Cham Museum.

Hue is the intellectual capital of Vietnam, with 12 schools of higher learning. Hue followed a more traditional and imperial way of life long after the rest of Vietnam became more influenced by foreign ideals. After lunch at a local restaurant, we will explore the town itself by cyclo, taking in the tranquil gardens and buildings from street level.

We will spend a little time at Tran Dinh Son Museum, with its collection of everyday items belonging to kings of the past and experience how today's royal descendants are keeping the family's traditions alive.

We will also take a guided tour at the Imperial Citadel. Emperor Gia Long is famous in Vietnam for uniting many small kingdoms into the country that is now Vietnam. He built his capital in Hue more than 250 years ago, modelled this on the Forbidden City in Beijing, China. The



Imperial City of Hue was once an enormous complex full of all the executive and bureaucracy you would expect from a country's capital, enclosed within a square fortress with 10 ornate gates and a wide moat. It was built in this particularly picturesque location as local beliefs held that the Perfume River and mountains would protect the site physically and spiritually.

This evening we enjoy dinner together at a local restaurant.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Indochine Palace, Hue

## DAY 8 - DRAGON BOAT ON THE PERFUME RIVER & FLIGHT TO HANOI

After breakfast, we check out of our hotel, before we set off to board a Dragon Boat to the Thien Mu Pagoda on the banks of the Perfume River. This stunning Buddhist temple is the oldest monastery in Hue, dating back to the 17th century.

We enjoy lunch before making our way to Hue Airport to fly further north to Hanoi.

Upon arrival, we're transferred to our hotel where we will enjoy dinner together this evening. The rest of this evening will be spent at leisure, giving you the opportunity to step out into the 40 streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Silk Path Hanoi Hotel

## DAY 9 - CRUISING HALONG BAY

Today, we drive through spectacular scenery to Halong Bay.

Enjoy the seemingly endless scenery of green paddy fields with women in conical hats working in the rice fields with their water buffalo. We pass through farmland, local villages and busy markets, giving you plenty of opportunity to observe how Vietnamese people go about their daily lives.

The iconic scenery of Halong Bay, with thousands of steep-sided limestone islands jutting out from the emerald sea, awaits at the end of our journey. We will be welcomed aboard our boat and cruise whilst lunch is served.

After lunch, there will be opportunities to take a short trek to a nearby summit for a panoramic view of the bay, to swim or stroll on a quiet beach, or for sunbathing on the sundeck. Enjoy watching the sun set and unwind in time for our evening dinner together aboard the cruise

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Indochina Sails Cruise

## DAY 10 - BUSTLING HANOI & WATER PUPPET SHOW

This morning, there's time to see the limestone karsts close up before we depart Halong Bay and make our way back to Hanoi.

After our journey, we will enjoy lunch together in Hanoi before enjoying a truly Vietnamese experience - taking a cyclo ride through the bustling streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter and Hang Be market.

This evening, we will enjoy a traditional Vietnamese water puppet show, an entertaining live performance of this unique northern Vietnamese art form and a great way to end the tour of Hanoi. This evening, we will round off our fantastic tour of Vietnam with a farewell dinner together at a local restaurant.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Farewell Dinner

**Accommodation:** Silk Path Hanoi Hotel

## DAY 11 - GOODBYE TO VIETNAM

After breakfast in the hotel, you will be transferred to Hanoi Airport for your flights home.

Alternatively, why not extend your stay in Asia and join us on the tour extension to Cultural Cambodia and Angkor Thom. Further details can be found [HERE](#).

**Included meals:** Breakfast



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meet & Greet at Ho Chi Minh City Airport on arrival
- Transfers as detailed in the itinerary
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- 2 domestic flights: Ho Chi Minh City [SGN] - Danang [DAD]; Hue [HUI] - Hanoi [HAN]
- Transportation in air-conditioned vehicle
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- Experienced English speaking tour guides
- Tour Director from The Big Journey Company as well as the local tour guide (subject to minimum group size being reached)

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International flights arriving at Tan Son Nhat International Airport, Ho Chi Minh City [SGN] on Day 1 and departing from Hanoi International Airport [HAN] on Day 11
- Transfers on arrival or departure, to/from the airports, outside of the journey dates
- Drinks
- Gratuities
- Visas, travel or medical insurance
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above
- Any meals not mentioned in itinerary
- Any optional activities offered
- Any COVID tests or related entry & exit requirements

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Vaccinations are recommended for this tour. Please consult your doctor for advice.
- British and US Passport holders may require a visa for Vietnam.
- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.



## BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

*Choose from the list of dates below*

CASH ONLY OPTION	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2024	<b>FROM \$5,285 PER PERSON.</b>
100% CENTUM & CENTUM PLUS POINTS BENEFIT: \$5,285 PER PERSON = 26,425 POINTS PER PERSON REDEEMED AT \$0.20 PER POINT. APPLY A BOOKING TOTAL OF 52,850 POINTS FOR 2 PEOPLE SHARING A ROOM	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2024	<b>FROM \$5,285 PER PERSON.</b>
CENTUM & CENTUM PLUS MEMBERS: APPLY 5,285 POINTS PER PERSON AT \$0.40 PER POINT LEAVING A CASH REMAINDER OF \$3,171 PER PERSON	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2024	<b>FROM \$3,171 PER PERSON.</b>
CASH ONLY OPTION	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2025	<b>FROM \$5,569 PER PERSON.</b>
100% CENTUM & CENTUM PLUS POINTS BENEFIT: \$5569 PER PERSON = 27,845 POINTS PER PERSON REDEEMED AT \$0.20 PER POINT. APPLY A BOOKING TOTAL OF 55,690 POINTS FOR 2 PEOPLE SHARING A ROOM	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2025	<b>FROM \$5,569 PER PERSON.</b>
CENTUM & CENTUM PLUS MEMBERS: APPLY 5569 POINTS PER PERSON AT \$0.40 PER POINT LEAVING A CASH REMAINDER OF \$3,341 PER PERSON	06 NOV - 16 NOV 2025	<b>FROM \$3,341 PER PERSON.</b>

*Call to Book*

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