
National Geographic Award Winning Vietnam For the Family

- Highlights: Hanoi – Sapa – Lao Cai - Halong Bay, Hoi An – Hue, Ho Chi Minh City
- Duration: 14 Days/13 Nights

1. OVERVIEW

Beyond the scope and diversity lies a full insight, this cross-country Vietnam tour is all about for your beloved family. A cyclo tour through the famous Old Quarter will reveal the most elegant French colonial architectures, tucked away bustling streets, the Temple of Literature offers a true serenity of the first national university. Up north for experiencing culturally diverse of ethnic minorities and cloud-shrouded mountainous landscapes or down at sea for an overnight on a traditional junk boat in Halong Bay. In the former capital city of Hue, cycle along the gentle Perfume River and get deep insight to rural life. The peaceful ancient town of Hoi An with its exquisite architecture and inhabitants' colorful lifestyles will get you imagining how it became a convergence point of Asian cultures. Down south and be deeply touched in Ho Chi Minh City, see a stark contrast of a prosperous present and a painful yet glorious war-laden past. Enjoy the Mekong Delta with its vast landscape of flat islands, coconut-lined waterways and warm-hearted farmers. All promise to be a memorable journey!

2. ITINERARY:

DAY 1: HANOI ARRIVAL

Welcome to Vietnam! On arrival at airport, our guide and driver will meet you then transfer to hotel for check in. Located on the right bank of the Red River, Hanoi, Vietnam's capital with a thousand year old history is considered one of the most charming cities of Asia. Its fascinating beauty is the blend of shadowed boulevards, elegant French colonial architectures, numerous sacred pagodas, tree-fringed lakes and amazing cuisine besides the hustle and bustle of the country's second largest city.

Take pleasure in watching a traditional water puppet show followed by traditional Vietnamese dishes at a local restaurant.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hanoi Paradise Boutique Hotel (3)*

No.1 of TripAdvisor Hanoi B&B, 200m from Hoan Kiem lake, inside Old Quarter, Deluxe Cityview room

DAY 2: FULL DAY HANOI CITY TOUR

In the morning, your guide will meet you at hotel for a full day Hanoi city tour. Start by visiting the Ho Chi Minh complex which features the life of Ho Chi Minh, the nation's founder. Begin with Ba Dinh square where Ho Chi Minh delivered the Proclamation of Independence of Vietnam, the humble stilt house where Uncle Ho lived and worked and the nearby Ho Chi Minh museum. Next, visit the Governor's Residence, a fine example of the French architectures, followed by a stop at One Pillar Pagoda built in the 11th century dedication to Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara or Buddha of Compassion and reminiscent of a lotus blossom rising from a pond. Have lunch at a local restaurant. Continue to the Temple of Literature, known as the first university of Vietnam built in 1070 by the Ly Dynasty to honor Confucius, sages and outstanding Vietnamese scholars. Lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon, continue the tour to the southeast of Hanoi for visiting a traditional handicraft village of Bat Trang renowned for its ceramic products. Watch artisans forming, painting and glazing their products. End of the day with one hour cyclo ride through the crowded streets of the Old Quarter.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hanoi Paradise Boutique Hotel (3)*

No.1 of TripAdvisor Hanoi B&B, 200m from Hoan Kiem lake, inside Old Quarter, Deluxe Cityview room

DAY 3: HANOI

Your English speaking guide and bike will be waiting for you at the hotel. Getting up early at 5:00am, you will visit Ba Dinh historical square and have a chance to see the flag pulling ceremony with a parade and the national song, which is hugely popular amongst the locals. You will be biking about 10 kilometers

Today you will take a walking tour to the French Quarter to explore the legacies left in Hanoi from the French colonial culture. After visiting the most popular Buddhist pagoda on Quan Su Street, continue to Nha Tho Street to take a close look at the neo-gothic St. Joseph's Cathedral, the oldest church of Hanoi built in 1886 and resembling the Notre Dame de Paris. Walk the streets of Trang Thi, Hai Ba Trung, Hoa Lo and Tran Hung Dao and observe buildings that are footprints of colonial French architecture. End of the tour by sipping a cup of Vietnamese coffee. Time at leisure for dinner. After that, you will meet your diver then transfer to the train station for a night train to Sapa about 380 km North of Hanoi.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Sapaly Train (3)*

Note: 4-soft berth in one cabin, in case you don't want to share with other guests but only two of you, supplement will be US\$ 80 per person for two ways

DAY 4: LAO CAI – SAPA

Arrive at Lao Cai station, welcome by our diver and continue approximately one hour drive by car to Sapa town. At a 1,500 m elevation with a pleasing cool climate Sapa is compared to the Alps in Europe and used to be a French health resort. It boasts an amazing landscape of terrace paddy fields, lush vegetation, blooming flowers, foggy winding roads and cloud-shrouded mountains as well as elegant French architectural structures dating back to the early 1900s. The town also features cultural diversity, which is enriched by the indigenous tribal ethnic minorities inhabiting its surrounding areas and the French influence.

After check in hotel, you will be picked up to visit Silver Waterfall (best viewed in the rainy season from May to November). Take a walk by the fall, and enjoy great views of the surrounding jungle-covered mountains of the Hoang Lien National Park. Continue by car about up to Heaven's Gate, the region's vantage point which offers a full view of Fansipan Mountain dubbed as "the roof of Indochina" rising 3,143 meters into the sky.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Green Bamboo (3)*

DAY 5: SAPA

Today we will leave the town for Lao Chai village, a settlement of the Black Hmong ethnic minority. From your car, you can catch a fully magnificent view of cascading rice terraced field of Muong Hoa valley. Arrive at Lao Chai, you will discover sighting fields, streams and interact with villagers and learn more about their daily life. Afterward, take a walk from Lao Chai to the nearby Ta Van village which is clusters of rural houses embraced by the wavy curves of the terraced paddy fields of Giay minority. Here you will take a rest and enjoy a delicious lunch prepared by locals.

In the afternoon, continue to hike through bamboo forests with a break near a waterfall before entering Giang Ta Chai village, home to Red Dao ethnic minority people. Explore the village and observe villagers in their daily life activities. You will be picked up and return to Sapa by car.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Green Bamboo (3)*

DAY 6: SAPA – LAO CAI

Leave Sapa early morning to travel by car about 2.5 hours through winding mountain roads to Bac Ha Market. Arrive to discover the big outdoor market known as the venue for largest fairs in the region. Watch the colorful market lively with minorities of various groups buying and selling assorted goods including handicraft, working tools and livestock. Have lunch at a local restaurant. Continue to travel by car about one hour to Trung Do village, a settlement of the Tay ethnic minority people. Take a leisure ride on a cart pulled by a water buffalo around the village and observe hospitable villagers with their peaceful lifestyle. From the village, board a boat to cruise down the Chay River and enjoy sighting the magnificent mountainous landscape along the way.

Disembark and refresh with a cup of tea before returning by car to Sapa then transfer about one hour to Lao Cai railway station for night train to Hanoi.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Sapaly Train (3)*

DAY 7: HANOI – HALONG BAY

Arrive in Hanoi early morning. Our guide and driver will pick you up at the station. Time for relax before transfer by car about 160 km or 3.5 hours to Halong Bay. On the way, you will see some rural areas of the Red River Delta with plenty of chances to take photos of Vietnamese farmers working in paddy fields. Stop half way to visit a handicraft workshop of fine clothes and embroidered paintings. Arrive in Ha Long City around noon and check in aboard the booked junk right after the welcome drink is served.

Start cruising while having lunch on board and enjoy the mighty bay view. Ha Long Bay meaning Descending Dragon Bay in Vietnamese as legend has it that it was where a holly dragon landed down from sky. The bay, famous as one of the world's wonders and heritage sites whose formation dates back 500 million years, consists of around 2,000 karst islands and islets scattered over an area of 1,553 km². The bay cruise will continue with up close sighting of Dinh Huong Island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Sail Island, a visit to Sung Sot Cave and swimming stop at Titov Beach. Relax and enjoy the bay at sunset, have dinner, after that you can join night activities like squid fishing at 09:00 PM. Spend night on board.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Bai Tho Junk (3)*

DAY 8: HALONG BAY – HANOI – HOI AN

Early risers can refresh with a Tai Chi exercises demonstration on the sundeck at the break of dawn. Have tea and breakfast while continue exploring the bay and visit some of its major highlights. Disembark at 11:00 AM to transfer to Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi for flight to Da Nang. Fly from Hanoi to Da Nang. Flight time is approximately 1 hour and 15 minutes.

Arrive in Da Nang, welcome by our guide and transfer to Hoi An about 40 minutes. Hotel check-in and time at leisure

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Lantern Hotel (3)*

DAY 9: HOI AN

Once a bustling maritime commercial port of Asia between 15th and 19th centuries, Hoi An is now a peaceful town of exceptionally well-preserved architecture, lifestyles and traditions. The town exemplifies a fascinating fusion of cultures between Vietnam and the outside world including China, Japan...

Begin your Hoi An tour with your guide and bike are ready at your hotel then cycle through old streets to a lantern making family. Colorful lanterns are an unmistakable part of Hoi An's visual identity as the craft of lantern making has been passed down to present town dwellers from generations of their ancestors. Observe and learn how to make lanterns in the traditional way under the guidance of friendly and skilled hosts. You will practice all production steps including whittling bamboo into splints and bending them into a frame, cutting fabric to size and gluing it to the frame to complete a lantern. Next continue to a Hoi An cooking school, where you will learn to cook traditional Vietnamese food, have lunch and relax. After lunch, you will be shown how to decorate and pack your lantern and keep it as a souvenir. Say goodbye to the host and ride back to the hotel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Lantern Hotel (3)*

DAY 10: HOI AN – HUE

Morning, transfer about 2.5 hours to Hue via the Hai Van Pass. Enjoy a stunning headland-and-bay panoramic view from the pass, which for miles hugs the mountainside along the shoreline and overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Hue, the former Imperial Capital of Vietnam for the 1802-1945 periods marking the end of Vietnamese feudalism, is known as a city of poetic beauty. It exemplifies a unique blend of a scenic landscape characterized by the Perfume River and surrounding mountains and an extremely rich historical legacy typified by numerous relics such as citadel, tombs and pagodas. You will take a bike tour along the Perfume River and observe local life. Cycling toward to Vy Da village where you can enjoy Hue coffee and learn more about ancient architectures.

Later afternoon, if time permits us, we will get back to the city and take part in kite flying activities. Kite flying is a traditional festivity art and also a favorite pastime of inhabitants of Hue. You will be provided with a kite and instruction how to maneuver it with tactics of keeping it in balance in the sky by a handling string. It will be a special experience to fly your own kite up high in the sky in front of the old Hue Citadel.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Asia Hotel (3)*

DAY 11: HUE

Morning transfer 200 km by car to Quang Binh province to visit its top natural icon, the Phong Nha – Ke Bang national Park. The park recognized by UNESCO as a World Natural Heritage Site is one of the two world's largest limestone regions characterized by primitive tropical forests, rock formations and complex cave systems connected by long underground rivers all aged around 400 million years. Ride a boat along a meandering and mountain-flanked river to Phong Nha Cave, the park's second largest cave system that was discovered in 2009 by the British Caving Association. Enter the cave through its half-submerged entrance and start to discover what is said to be speleologists' heaven on earth. Return to Dong Hoi for lunch before driving back to Hue.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Asia Hotel (3*)

DAY 12: HUE – HO CHI MINH CITY

In the morning, transfer to airport for flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Arrive in Tan Son Nhat airport, welcome by your guide and driver then transfer to hotel for check in.

Formerly named Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city and economic center of Vietnam always bustling with activities of modern life. It is where businesses converge and shoppers indulge themselves into unlimited choices. However the city also carries with it a rich historical legacy in contrast with its dazzling glamor.

You will start the tour begin with a visit to Saigon Notre-Dame Basilica built by the colonial French with materials entirely imported from Marseilles and Saigon Central Post Office. Continue to Cholon – the city’s China town then Jade Emperor Temple (Phuoc Hai), a rare Taoist structure in Vietnam built in 1909.

In the evening, aboard a boat cruising through Saigon River and have dinner onboard

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Signature Saigon hotel (3*)

DAY 13: HO CHI MINH CITY

Morning, after breakfast, travel by road to the Mekong Delta, the world’s largest delta and Vietnam's largest rice bowl. On arrival in My Tho City, capital of Tien Giang Province, board a private boat and navigate through intricate canals while observing the local daily life up close as well as the landscape of waterways and lush islands. Land on Thoi Son Island to listen to the Southern traditional music performed by native artists.

Continue the tour with a paddleboat to cruise more canals before visiting households with traditional occupations of home-based coconut candy and rice-wine making. Switch back to a motorboat to go to a bee farm to enjoy fresh honey tea and fresh fruits. On the way back to My Tho, stop to visit Vinh Trang Pagoda, a prominent local Buddhist structure built in 1850 with a unique architectural mixture of Vietnamese, Roman, Chinese and Cambodian styles characterized by a highly ornate façade. Enjoy a lovely lunch at a local Vietnamese restaurant. End of the tour, return back to Ho Chi Minh City.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Signature Saigon hotel (3*)

DAY 14: HO CHI MINH CITY

Leisure time until meet your guide driver for an airport private transfer for flight departure.

Accommodation: Depart

3. EXTENSION TOURS:

3DAY PHU QUOC BEACH or add-on tours to neighbor countries; laos, cambodia, Thailand and Myanmar

Phu Quoc beach resort 3 Days

Group Size	2	3 – 4	5 – 6	Single supplement
Value (3 stars)	99	90	85	65

Inclusions: Private airport transfers in Phu Quoc (2-ways), 3-star hotels in Phu Quoc (Huong Bien hotel, Ngan Sao resort, Arcadia resort) with daily breakfast and private beach.

Exclusions: Round trip domestic airticket from Ho Chi Minh to Phu Quoc: USD 170 per pax

4. PRICE: All rates are per person sharing DBL or TWN/FB Basis, in US dollar, net and non-commissionable.

Group Size	2	3 - 4	5 - 6	Single supplement
Value (3 stars)	1,352	1,212	986	335

- **Supplement airticket:** the rate is subject to be changed without prior notice
 - Hanoi (HAN) to Danang (DAN): **US\$ 105 per person**
 - Hue (HUI) to Hochiminh (SGN): **US\$ 105 per person**

WHAT IS INCLUDED

- Accommodation in a double or twin room with daily breakfast
- One night cruise on a wooden junk in Halong Bay
- Services of a driver and private air-conditioned vehicle during all tours and transfers
- Experienced English-speaking guide during all tours and transfers
- Private board for sightseeing as mentioned in the program
- Round-trip train ticket from **Hanoi - Lao Cai - Hanoi by Express train** (4solf berth in one cabin)
- Entrance fees for all visits as mentioned in the itinerary
- Lunch or dinner as specified in the itinerary

WHAT IS NOT INCLUDED

- International & Domestic flight tickets
- Vietnam visa stamping fee at the airport
- Meals, if not specified in the itinerary
- Travel insurance (we highly recommend that you purchase adequate insurance)
- Gratuities for guides and drivers
- Personal expenses, such as laundry, telephone, drinks, etc.
- All other services not specified in the itinerary

5. HOTEL USED IN THIS TOUR:

Place	3star hotel	Website
Hanoi	Hanoi Paradise Boutique hotel <i>or similar</i>	www.hanoiparadisehotel.com
Halong	Bai Tho Junks <i>or similar</i>	www.baithojunks.com
Hoi An	Lantern hotel <i>or similar</i>	www.hoianlanternhotel.com
Hue	Asia hotel <i>or similar</i>	www.asiahotel.com.vn
Ho Chi Minh	Signature Saigon hotel <i>or similar</i>	www.signaturesaigonhotel.com

6. SERVICE DETAILS DURING THE TRIP:

IMPORTANT NOTE:

- All prices are quoted in USD/ per person, based on Double/Twin occupancy
- Supplement for standard Vietnamese menu meals: US\$ 10 for lunch & US\$ 15 for dinner
- Private services & daily departure
- Surcharge for Compulsory dinner for Xmas and New Year Eve
- Surcharge for booking during Chinese New Year from 18 - 24 Feb 2015: 25% of adult prices
- Surcharge for domestic flight tickets with taxes:

SPECIAL OFFER

- [Free] Mineral water is available **during transfers**
- [Free] Vietnam visa approval letter on arrival
- [Free] Vietnam Traditional Gifts