



ULTIMATE VIETNAM

13 Day / 12 Night Small Group Tour

This guided holiday gives you the chance to see the **best of Vietnam** in an easy-going **small group**, exploring the real Vietnam whilst staying in funky, **centrally located 3 star hotels**. See all the main sights at a leisurely pace with time to explore places of interest to you or just to shop. Our friendly English speaking Vietnamese guide looks after you throughout while revealing to you the fabric of Vietnamese life, history and culture.

Highlights Include..

- A cyclo ride around Hanoi's Old Quarter**
- Overnight cruise in Halong Bay aboard a traditional junk boat**
- Discovering local foods on a Street Food Tour**
- Supporting local communities**
- Tasting the variety of great, fresh and healthy cuisine**
- Great quality centrally located hotels**

Your tour includes all entrance fees and a careful selection of dining to showcase the vibrant and exciting cuisine. The Ultimate Vietnam tour represents **great value** for your travel dollar, here's why

- **No hidden extras – your tour is fully prepaid before you leave**
- **Includes 12 breakfasts, 6 lunches and 7 dinners**
- **Time at leisure for shopping or personal exploration**
- **No long days spent driving overland**
- **Includes 2 nights or more in every city**

Join us and experience the best of Vietnam!



ULTIMATE VIETNAM ITINERARY

Day 1 Hanoi (D)

Today you are welcome to arrive in Hanoi at any time. On arrival your English speaking guide will meet you as you exit the arrivals area at Hanoi airport for the **transfer** to your hotel.

Late afternoon you'll discover the bustling old quarter on a **cyclo** before **dinner** at a local restaurant for you to discover the cuisine and meet the rest of your tour group.

2 nights 3 star hotel in the old quarter near Hoan Kiem Lake.

Day 2 Hanoi (B, L)

An early start this morning to bring you a unique and magical insight into Vietnam's people on a "**Good Morning Hanoi**" tour. Hanoi'ites begin their day early with many taking part in exercise around the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake. Your walking tour visits the lake where you will see residents enjoying Tai Chi, exercise and meditation. You'll get to see the inner city 'old quarter' as its narrow streets begin to fill up with the bikes and people of Hanoi as their day starts – a fascinating look at two sides of the city and daily life

We then return to the hotel for breakfast and to freshen up. Then it's on to visit the cities main historical sites including a photo stop outside Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and a visit to Ho Chi Minh's house, where he preferred to live simply, which are splendid reminders of the great man who once led this country. Our last stop is to the Women's Museum for an insight into the cultural beliefs of Vietnam including the role women play in Vietnam's culture and its history and the traditional costumes of different ethnic communities.

We stop for **lunch at KOTO** – an opportunity for us to support a fantastic organisation, KOTO is a not-for-profit restaurant and vocational training program that is changing the lives of street and disadvantaged youth in Vietnam.

Late afternoon and evening is at leisure – you may wish to visit the Temple of Literature (opposite KOTO) or simply explore Hanoi's narrow streets and the fascinating old quarter - we recommend seeing a Water Puppet Show (not included) – a colourful form of traditional entertainment. Your guide can assist you with directions.

Day 3 Halong Bay (B, L, D)

Departing Hanoi this morning, we travel through rice fields and small towns to Halong Bay. Here we board a traditional junk boat for a boat trip through the magical seascape of **Halong Bay** which includes stops at various islands and caves.

Overnight is on board your cruise boat in air-conditioned cabins with dinner on board.



Day 4 Halong Bay to Hue (B, D)

Awake to the sunrise over Halong Bay for breakfast on the cruise back to Halong by late morning, where we head back to Hanoi with a stop to visit a local village popular for embroidery and textile products.

Late afternoon arrive Hanoi for an early **dinner** before transferring to Hanoi Airport for the evening **flight to Hue**. Transfer on arrival in Hue to your hotel.

2 nights 3 star boutique centrally located hotel.

Day 5 Hue (B, L)

Your **Historical Hue tour** begins with a boat trip along the beautiful river – Perfume River, to the Thien Mu Pagoda. Built more than 500 years ago the pagoda is widely recognized as one of the most beautiful religious buildings in the country. Here you will see the vehicle that the monk Thich Quang Duc drove to Saigon in before committing his act of self-immolation in protest against the government in 1963.

Returning to Hue you will visit the World Heritage listed Citadel. This impressive edifice has a 10,000m circumference and is made up of three ramparts; Kinh Thanh (Capital Citadel), Hoang Thanh (Royal Citadel) and Tu Camh Thanh (Forbidden Citadel). The main gate to Imperial Citadel is where the last king of Vietnam, Bao Dai, abdicated in August 30th, 1945.



Following your exploration of the Citadel you will enjoy lunch at a local pancake restaurant before a visit to the tomb of the Emperor Khai Dinh with its unique artwork and mosaics made from glass and ceramic fragments. During Khai Dinh's reign many western influences began to seep into the country and this is evidenced by the mixture of Western and Asian architecture of his tomb.

On the way back to your hotel, a stop at a roadside village to observe how locals make cinnamon incense as well as traditional conical hats which is most famous from Hue, with its distinctive high-quality bamboo leaves often interlaid with pink paper pictures and Vietnamese poems.

Day 6 Hai Van Pass (B, D)

This morning we travel over the spectacular **Hai Van Pass**, once rated by National Geographic as one of the 50 'must-do' journeys in the world. Stunning views await you of Lang Co Beach and out to the South China Sea as we take the winding mountain road.

Just after leaving Hue we make a brief stop at **Duc Son Pagoda**. Run by Buddhist Nun Thich Nu Minh Tu. The Temple not only gives shelter to disadvantaged children, including Orphans and the homeless, the nuns have also created favourable conditions for the children to attend classes and go on to higher education. A brief visit allows you to see the wonderful work and the temple. Active Asia supports causes around Asia including this orphanage.

Continuing on we traverse the spectacular Hai Van Pass with a photo stop at the top, and a stop at the location of China Beach, the famous TV series and home to the American forces R&R post during the war. Continue on to charming Hoi An.

During the 17th and 18th centuries Hoi An was a major Asian trading centre and is now one of the most popular places to visit in Vietnam with its charming cobblestone streets and old shop houses. A wonderful town for getting clothes tailor made or for buying art and souvenirs, Hoi An also boasts an excellent beach 5km from town, which can be reached by hiring a bicycle or grabbing a taxi.

Tonight experience some of the local specialities with **dinner** at a local restaurant.

3 nights in 3 star hotel within an easy walk to the old town.

Day 7 Hoi An / My Son (B, L)

Today begins with a tour to the ancient ruins of **My Son** – the home to the Cham people centuries ago. The Kingdom at My Son dates back to the 4th century and remained fully occupied through until the 13th century which makes it the longest occupied of all the major monuments of South East Asia. Today the ruins show testament to the Cham with its sculptures and buildings.

Returning to Hoi An, enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before a short **walking tour** takes you along the delightful streets of the ancient trading town of Hoi An. The World Heritage listed town has more than 1000 houses that are over 150 years old, 7 ancient wells not to mention the art & antique galleries, lantern shops and tailors everywhere!

The evening is at leisure to enjoy the delight of Hoi An ancient town at night.

Day 8 Hoi An (B)

Today is a day of choice – either relax and perhaps head to the nearby **beach** or your hotel pool, get clothes tailor made, or simply enjoy the ancient buildings filled with art and homewares or we offer some exciting optional tours (additional cost).

Optional Experiences:

Country Life Cycle Tour (Half day) *A half-day cycle tour through the flat country roads to traditional farms that grow the produce for the surrounding area – a fascinating insight into traditional growing methods.*

Ethnic Village (Bo Hoong) Jeep Tour (Full day) *Head off on a one-day tour inland by American Army Jeep through stunning countryside to an ethnic community still living in traditional ways.*



Cooking Class (Half day) Learn all about the delicious Vietnamese cuisine. Begin with a market visit and gain an understanding of the variety of produce used in the cuisine. At the cooking school you will participate and be shown how to make popular dishes which you will later sample.

Optional tours can be pre-paid before departure, or alternatively you are able to book directly with your tour guide at least a day prior to arriving in Hoi An.

Day 9 Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (B, D)

We transfer this morning to Danang Airport for the morning **flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)**, on arrival transfer to your hotel for check-in.

Discover this vibrant city's landmarks with a visit to the stunning Notre Dame Cathedral and the Ho Chi Minh Central Post Office, two major French colonial landmarks. Then visit the War Museum – a stark reminder of the US-Vietnam War. You will then visit a **traditional medicine museum** where you'll discover the use of natural herbs and traditional medicines.

Tonight we head out for a **street food tour** of Saigon's famous dishes, before enjoying dinner at a local BBQ restaurant.

2 nights in 3 star comfort with stunning city views

Day 10 Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (B, L)

Today we head out of Saigon to visit the **Cu Chi tunnels** one of the few intact monuments to the Vietnam War. Beneath the ground lie 200km of underground tunnels, dug by hand and inhabited by the Viet Minh during the US war. A video of the tunnels in use is shown, before walking around the area to view some of the tunnels, field kitchens and hospital. Crawl inside and experience life in the tunnels if you wish!

On the return to Saigon visit a lacquer ware workshop to view how this intricate art work is made, and stop for lunch at a local restaurant.

Late afternoon and evening is at leisure for you to enjoy the many cafes and markets.

Day 11 Mekong Delta (B, L, D)

Today embark on a **2-day Mekong Delta Tour**. A visit to the Mekong is one of the best ways to experience rural life. Driving through beautiful agricultural areas to the Mekong offers a great glimpse into local life.

At Cai Be town we board our boat to explore some of the myriad of estuaries and islands including home based industries such as coconut candy making, orchards and bonsai gardens where we get to sample the wonderful array of fruit.

We then transfer by boat to Vinh Long to the home of a local family. After arriving and checking in at the lodge, enjoy an optional bike ride for another chance to travel through the countryside.

Day 12 Mekong Delta – Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (B, D)

After breakfast a visit is made by boat to the **Cai Rang floating market**. The Mekong is a main tributary where the produce grown in the area is shipped and traded. Masses of boats ply their wares in the early morning by boat. Return to our coach late in the morning for the drive back to Saigon by road.

A farewell **dinner** tonight at a traditional Vietnamese restaurant, gives us the chance to share stories and celebrate our experiences.

1 night in 3 star comfort hotel with stunning city views

Day 13 Departure (B)

Sadly today is the end of your tour. We include a **transfer** to the airport for your outbound flight.

While you are here - extend your holiday!

Relax at stunning beaches are just a few hours' drive away

Explore the magnificent Angkor Temples in Cambodia

Embark on a River Cruise, select departures (*) connect with a Mekong River Cruise

Ask us for a personalized quote.



Ultimate Vietnam **13 Day / 12 Night Small Group Tour**

Small Group Tour \$2799 per person share twin

Single Supplement \$599 per person

We will happily room-share same-sex single travellers on request and where available. However we regret that should a rooming partner not become available the single supplement will apply.

This tour is **fully escorted** with local English-speaking guide.
Maximum group size 14. (Minimum 2)

Guaranteed Departure Dates:

2017 – 20 Mar, 06 Apr, 15 Apr, 08 May, 17 May, 29 May, 08 Jun, 19 Jun, 03 Jul*, 24 Jul, 31 Jul*, 14 Aug, 28 Aug*, 04 Sep, 18 Sep, 25 Sep*, 09 Oct*, 23 Oct*, 06 Nov* & 04 Dec*

2018 – 15 Jan* & 26 Feb*

*Dates connect with our **8 Day/7 Night River Cruise** from Saigon to Siem Reap in Cambodia. Contact us for latest specials and details.

Guaranteed Departure applies as soon as 2 people are booked on this tour.

NOTE: We welcome all travellers on our tour however we regret we do not accept children under 15 years old on our Ultimate Vietnam Group Tour. If you are travelling with young children please ask us to customise a special family holiday for you.

Price Includes: All accommodation in **quality 3 star hotels** (except Mekong Delta which is a home/village stay), one night aboard a Halong Bay traditional junk boat, daily breakfast, transfers and sightseeing tours as detailed including all entrance fees, local English speaking guide throughout, all domestic flights within Vietnam, all meals indicated (B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner), full pre-departure information and an emergency contact phone number in Vietnam

Price Excludes: International flights, Vietnam entry VISA, travel insurance, departure taxes (if applicable), beverages during lunches and dinners, personal expenses (laundry, phone calls, internet charges, mini-bar, etc) and gratuities (tips)

Agent Booking Code: ULTVIE

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