



DISCOVER VIETNAM & THE MEKONG WATERWAYS

21 Day / 20 Night Small Group Tour & Cruise

Designed to show the **best of Vietnam** at a **leisurely pace**, this amazing holiday combines our intimate small group tour of Vietnam with the majestic river cruise of the Mekong River into Cambodia.

Highlights Include...

- Tasting the best of the wonderful cuisine**
- Immersing yourself in the history and people of Vietnam**
- Several BONUS inclusions**
- Great quality centrally located 4 Star hotels**
- Supporting local communities**
- a luxury Mekong River Cruise**
- explore the stunning Angkor Wat**

Your tour includes all entrance fees and a careful selection of dining to show case the vibrant and exciting cuisine. Offering great value for your travel dollar, here's why

- **2 night stays throughout to ensure your holiday is leisurely and enjoyable**
- **Plus 4 nights in everyone's favourite spot – Hoi An!**
- **Cruise Halong Bay on a Superior junk style boat**
- **Quality 4 star centrally located Hotels & Resorts**
- **Our friendly helpful guide throughout your Vietnam tour**
- **An 8 day/7 night luxury Mekong River Cruise into Cambodia**
- **2 nights in Siem Reap Cambodia with a Best of Angkor Tour**



DISCOVER VIETNAM & THE MEKONG WATERWAYS ITINERARY

Day 1 Arrive Hanoi (D)

Arrive Hanoi where your local English speaking guide will meet you as you exit the arrivals hall of Hanoi Airport for the **transfer** to your hotel.

After checking in and time to freshen up, your guide will take the group on an afternoon **walking tour** of the fascinating old quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake. The Old Quarter in Hanoi is over a thousand years old yet retains much of the old flavour that made the area special in earlier times. Discover this fascinating old part of Hanoi comprised of narrow streets named after particular wares sold.



Tonight get to know the other tour members over a group **dinner** at a great restaurant – an introduction to the local cuisine.

2 night's quality, central 4 star hotel

Day 2 Hanoi (B, L)

This morning a **city tour** to visit Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum (photo stop outside) and tour his Historic House to learn more about the great man himself – Ho Chi Minh. Then tour Hoa Lo, the infamous prison nick named the Hanoi Hilton. Afterwards visit the Women's Museum, a fascinating insight into the Vietnamese culture and traditions including the women's role in supporting the family and country.

Then visit the Temple of Literature, built in 1070 it was Vietnam's first University and dedicated to Confucius. Your day concludes with **lunch at KOTO** a not-for-profit restaurant helping trouble youth learn life and culinary skills to bring them an education and a brighter future.

After lunch the afternoon is yours at leisure – you may wish explore one of the many other Museum's in Hanoi, enjoy Hoan Kiem Lake – or simply shop! Your guide is available to assist you if you wish.

Optional Experiences (additional cost):

Chocolate High Tea - The impressive and historic Hotel Metropole Hanoi built in 1901, offers an exquisite afternoon Chocolate High Tea. Your guide will transfer you to the hotel. Starts 3pm.

Street Food Tour - Sample the special flavours of Vietnam on this walking tour. Guided from 4pm – 7pm

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.

Day 3 Halong Bay (B, L, D)

After breakfast depart by road to the coast and Halong Bay. A legendary world just waiting to be explored. Here board your cruise boat which combines oriental style with contemporary comfort. Together they are the perfect recipe for an enchanting and relaxing holiday.

On arriving at **Halong Bay** around midday, board your cruise vessel for a delicious buffet lunch as it sets sails out amongst the stunning seascape towards Surprise Cave, one of the biggest caves in Halong Bay. Spend the afternoon cruising amongst the limestone islands with a stop to explore a floating village. Onboard enjoy optional activities including sunbathing, traditional massage (payable direct) and cooking demonstrations. Anchorage is made around sunset.

Overnight and dinner onboard – **Deluxe Cruise**

Your cabin offers all the amenities to feel comfortable: twin or queen-size bed, air-conditioner, fan, ensuite bathroom with shower and expansive windows providing memorable views.

Day 4 Halong Bay – Hoi An (B)

For the early risers you can join in with Tai Chi on the sundeck, feel the early morning salt water scent or watch the sun rising from behind the mountains.

As you cruise back to port, a buffet brunch is served. On disembarking your guide greets you for the return drive to Hanoi with a visit to a local village popular for embroidery and textile products.

Late afternoon arrive Hanoi airport for the short **flight to Danang** in Central Vietnam.

Bonus: *We have included access to the airport lounge for you to relax before your flight.*

On arrival, **transfer** to Hoi An and your seaside hotel.

4 nights in a 4 star boutique resort

Day 5 Hoi An (B)

After a leisurely breakfast, a later start this morning to allow you to relax and enjoy a leisurely breakfast or early morning swim, before visiting Hoi An historic town.

Begin with a **walking tour** inside and around the historic old buildings. Ancient shop houses line the streets, the Japanese covered bridge is a landmark and you'll discover the history of this ancient trading port.



Bonus: Your visit concludes with your chance to witness how the beautiful lanterns seen all around Hoi An are made – and give it a go yourself!

The afternoon is yours to spend at leisure. Hoi An is one of the most popular places to visit in Vietnam with its charming old town filled with art shops, home-wares, cafés and tailors. During the 17th and 18th centuries Hoi An was a major Asian trading centre, it is a wonderful town for getting clothes tailor-made or for buying souvenirs, Hoi An also boasts an excellent beach.

Optional Experience (additional cost):

BBQ Dinner - *Enjoy a special event with a BBQ dinner on a quiet beach, and what's more you will travel there in a restored American Army Jeep. Travel from your hotel through the country to a quiet beach, relax, explore or sit under the sala in a lounge chair while your butler prepares a light BBQ dinner.*

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.

Day 6 Hoi An (B)

This morning discover an insight into the ancient ruins of **My Son Holy Land**.

Between the 4th and 13th centuries a unique culture which owed its spiritual origins to Indian Hinduism developed on the coast of contemporary Viet Nam. This is graphically illustrated by the My Son remains of impressive towers located in a dramatic site that was the religious and political capital of the Champa Kingdom for most of its existence.

My Son is considered to be Vietnam's counterpart to the grand cities of other Asian civilizations such as Angkor (Cambodia), Bagan (Myanmar), Ayutthaya (Thailand), and Borobudur (Java).

You'll return to Hoi An **by boat** for a relaxing view of the surround area. Arriving into Hoi An town the afternoon and evening is yours to spend at leisure to enjoy Hoi An or return to your hotel and its beach side setting.

Day 7 Hoi An (B)

We have included a full day at **leisure** in Hoi an as it is the jewel in anyone's visit to Hoi An. Relax, explore, swim or shop – the choice is yours. Your guide is with you if you would like assistance or suggestions. To discover more we offer **optional tours** as follows (additional cost).

Optional Experiences:

Red Bridge Cooking Class – *Red Bridge offers one of the most professional and fun cooking classes in Vietnam. Begin with a market visit to purchase produce, followed by a boat trip to the school. Red Bridge will teach you how to create many of the popular Vietnamese dishes you will encounter on your holiday. Begins at 8.15am in Hoi An town.*

Countryside Village by Bike - *Using quality local bikes your guide will collect you from your hotel for a cycle through the countryside to a local village where the way of life remains as it has for generations. You'll see pottery making and visit the Tra Que farming Village, the fresh vegetable gardens and many of local farmers work at their fields using traditional methods. On the way see small handicrafts, such as rice paper making. Lunch is included of local food before biking back to your hotel. Fitness level: Average. Grade: Easy*

Ethnic Village by Jeep (Full Day, guided) – Travel by American Army Jeep for an exciting ride inland towards the Ho Chi Minh Trail, through stunning countryside to a traditional ethnic community still living the ways of their ancestors.

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

Day 8 Hai Van Pass (B)

This morning travel to Hue via the spectacular **Hai Van Pass**.

After leaving Hoi An the first stop is Marble Mountain, a whole village devoted to carving beautiful sculptures, then stop briefly at the Cham Museum filled with artefacts from the ancient Cham Kingdom, before heading over the pass.

Once rated by National Geographic as one of the 50 'must-do' journeys in the world. Stunning views await at the top of Lang Co Beach and out to the South China Sea. Continue on to arrive in Hue to check in and relax.

2 nights in a stunning 4 star hotel

Day 9 Hue (B, L, D)

Today explore the historical significance on a **city tour** of the small city of Hue – the former Imperial City.

Start the day with a boat trip along the Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda, built in 1601. Then continue by car to the Ancient Citadel, the capital of Vietnam from 1802-1945, where the last King of Vietnam – Bao Dai King – abdicated on 30 August, 1945.

After lunch at a delicious and popular local restaurant – visit the tomb of the Emperor Khai Dinh with its mix of Asian and Western architecture. On the return to your hotel a stop is made at a roadside village to observe how locals make incense and traditional conical hats.

Bonus: This evening you'll be pampered like Royalty as you discover the cuisine the Emperor's dined on at a special **Imperial Banquet dinner**.

Day 10 Hue to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (B)

This morning **transfer** to Hue airport for the **flight to Ho Chi Minh City** (Saigon).

On arrival **transfer** to your hotel for check-in and to freshen up, then **tour the main sights** in and around Saigon including a stop at the stunning Notre Dame Cathedral and Ho Chi Minh Central Post Office. We include a stop for lunch (own cost) and a visit to the War Museum – a stark reminder of the War. Then a special insight with a tour of a traditional medicine museum where you'll discover the use of natural herbs in traditional medicines, used in Asia dating back to the Stone Age. We end the day at a local boutique brewery for those who want to sample an ice cold beer to end their day!

Tip! Tonight enjoy the many restaurants and bars on offer in downtown Ho Chi Minh City. From French, Italian, vegetarian to traditional Vietnamese, Saigon offers great dining. For a special touch we recommend a drink (not included) at the 'Saigon Saigon' Bar on the top floor of the Caravelle Hotel across from the opera house. Reminiscent of Raffles in Singapore with its wooden bar and open shutters giving nice views out to the city.

2 nights in a central 4 star hotel

Day 11 Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) (B, D)

After breakfast at the hotel, transfer to the wharf for a magical speedboat trip up the River to visit the infamous **Cu Chi Tunnels**. Dug by hand the tunnels were home to the Viet Cong during the US war. A video shows their use and parts have been excavated for you to see inside.

Return to Saigon where the afternoon is yours **at leisure**. Shop or enjoy the cafés and bars.

Tip! For shopping enjoy the luxury brand names around downtown Saigon or head to Ben Thanh market to test your bartering skills.

Tonight we celebrate your tour with a **farewell dinner** on a stunning **evening cruise**.

Day 12 Cruise departure

(B, L, D)

Today, transfer to the departure point of your River Cruise. Say farewell to your local Vietnam guide and some tour guests here as you will be hosted and guided by the River Cruise Company.

The Lost Civilization Cruise – Saigon to Siem Reap (8 days/7 nights)

This classic Mekong river cruise, on board a luxury river cruise ship takes you on an amazing journey to places rarely visited as you travel from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap in Cambodia.

Bid farewell to the hustle and bustle of the city. Join other guests and transfer south 70 kilometres by land to My Tho to embark on the boutique ship.

Refreshing drinks and light lunch is served as the ship steadily glides off on your journey along the Mekong. Enjoy the sunset from your balcony followed by a briefing at the lounge. Later, a welcome dinner as the ship drops anchor. Overnight onboard at Cai Be.



On board, settle into your Superior Stateroom featuring bright tones with white wood furnishings and hand painted wall to ceiling décor.

Gracefully designed the good sized cabin has a private balcony with seating to watch the river flow past and a queen size bed. The in-cabin bathroom features a good sized shower and a partition separates the bed from a small desk and wardrobe.

Amenities: Air conditioner, hot water kettle, ILLY espresso machine, balcony with two chairs and table, mini bar, hair dryer, internal phone, desk, chairs, luggage rack, bath robe, sun hat, binocular, hand fan, sandals, in-room safe, music and cabin sound system.

Day 13 Cai Be, Mekong (Vietnam)

(B, L, D)

If you wish, join in the Tai Chi lesson on the sun deck. Today a visit is made to Cai Be, a main floating market, which you will visit onboard a smaller boat. The cruise will halt intermittently to allow you to observe how rice products are made including rice paper, rice cookies, rice pop, rice wine and coconut candies.

Witness local home life along the canals on the way back to the ship for lunch.

In the afternoon, cruise to Sa Dec. Upon arrival, tour Binh Thanh Island to visit an untouched village. The ship will moor midstream overnight near Tan Chau.

Day 14 Border Crossing

(B, L, D)

This morning a short excursion into Tan Chau, a pleasant town near the Cambodian border with sizeable Chinese, Kinh and Khmer community. Firstly, the journey takes you to the "evergreen" islands where you will be thrilled to learn the life of the locals with a stop to visit a fish farm located in the Tan Chau canal.

Continue by boat to Tan Chau pier, disembark here and stroll around this colourful local market with lots of regional products. Overnight we anchor midstream near Phnom Penh.

Day 15 Phnom Penh (Cambodia)

(B, L, D)

Sightseeing in the morning includes a tour to the Killing Field located just outside of Phnom Penh with a visit to the Genocide Museum (note: some images may disturb). You'll get to see the dazzling white and gold edifice of the Royal Palace and the Silver Pagoda, and exceptionally beautiful Khmer craft at the National Museum.

Return to the ship by "cyclo" then in the evening there is a comprehensive lecture on Cambodia's modern history onboard.

A BBQ dinner is served right after the lecture along with an Apsara dance performance. Overnight onboard in Phnom Penh.



Day 16 Angkor Ban – Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

(B, L, D)

The ship departs Phnom Penh before the break of dawn cruising on for a stop at a little known Silk island community. Then continue cruising on to pass by the Mekong's tranquil villages, exhilarating river life and sun-hardened fishermen on their shift boats.

A tour is made to the rural Angkor Ban village where time stands still. Be transported back a hundred years into an era unaffected by modernity. The houses here are truly rustic, made by hand and without any concrete. But most of all, feel the unbridled warmth of the villagers. You'll be invited to take part in the daily activities of the villagers to experience village life first hand. Then, back to the ship to cruise towards Kampong Cham. Overnight onboard in Kampong Cham.

Day 17 Kampong Cham (Cambodia)

(B, L, D)

Rise early for a truly energized land journey to the pre-Angkorian temple of Wat Hanchey. Choose from either a motor-taxi or climb the 303 steps to the top. You may well get to engage in light banter with some of the monks in the area.

Return to the ship to witness a blessing ceremony performed by orange-clad local monks.

Lunch on board. Then we cruise towards Kampong Cham to visit Wat Nokor, a Wat built within the ruins of an ancient temple which holds a timeless story. Overnight onboard in Kampong Cham.



Day 18 Kampong Chhnang (Cambodia)

(B, L, D)

Today the ship cruises on to Kampong Chhnang, Cambodia's "Water World" where everything is on stilts balanced on water rich soil- it's an awesome sight whilst practicing early morning Tai Chi on the deck.

Here take a minivan to see the Khmer-styled pottery at the Aundaung Russey village. Then, it is back to the river for an adventurous motorboat excursion to the wetlands, floating houses and fish farms in the region. The village has no electricity and has around 600 inhabitants.

Return to the ship for lunch while cruising the narrow and meandering Tonle Sap River. Come evening, a sumptuous dinner and for the big entertainment - bring along your dance shoes and learn to jiggle the Cambodian way with our staff doubling up as dance instructors!

Day 19 Siem Reap (Cambodia)

(B)

The Tonle Sap (The Great Lake) is the flowing heart of Cambodia, giving love and life to this nation. Enjoy the stillness of the water and the quiet tranquility on the way to Siem Reap. The water level varies a great deal according to the time of the year and the amount of rainfall recorded.

Your cruise comes to an end as you disembark for the transfer to Siem Reap*. Arrive at Siem Reap early - afternoon.

* Note: Departure point and transfer time varies between low and high water season.

Transfer by coach from Kampong Cham to Siem Reap can take between 2 to 4 hours depending on disembarkation point.

On arrival in Siem Reap, farewell your fellow cruise passengers as you check in for 2 nights at the Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa.

Day 20 Siem Reap - Angkor Wat

(B, L)

Best of Angkor - Discover the incredible key temples of the Angkor complex.

Today you have a private tour as your local English speaking Cambodian guide will collect you from your hotel to begin with Angkor Thom entering via the South Gate and the Bayon complex.

The vast area of the Angkor Thom ruins, over a mile on one side, contains many stone temples and other features to explore. The city has five monumental gates (one in each wall plus an extra in the eastern wall), each is 20m high and decorated with stone elephant trunks and the king's favourite motif, the four faces of Avalokiteshvara.

The Bayon Temple (circa 1190) is a Buddhist temple but retains elements of Hindu cosmology and imagery. Standing in the exact center of the walled city, it represents the intersection of heaven and earth. It is known for its enigmatic smiling faces of Avalokiteshvara and its extraordinary bas-reliefs.

Enjoy a break for lunch at a restaurant set in a garden setting close to the temples. Then continue to visit Angkor Wat, the jewel in the crown of Angkor.



Angkor Wat is the best preserved example of Khmer architecture in Cambodia and is so grand in design that some rank it among the Seven Wonders of the World. It appears on the Cambodian national flag, a very rare instance of a flag incorporating an image of a building. The "lost city" of Angkor first attracted the interest of Europeans in the 1800s after Cambodia was colonized by the French. Transfer back to hotel around 5pm.

Day 21 Departure

(B)

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

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Small Group Tour \$6790 per person twin share (Travel 01 Jun-19 Sep 2017)
 \$9250 per person twin share (Travel 17 Oct 2017 – 20 Feb 2018)

UPGRADE your cruise!

Ask us to upgrade your cabin to an Upper Deck Deluxe Cabin or a Suite – subject to availability.

This tour is **fully escorted** in Vietnam with a local English-speaking guide.

Maximum group size 14. (Minimum 2)

The cruise sector is hosted by crew on board your cruise with up to 26 passengers on board.

Guaranteed Departures Dates:

2017 – 27 Jun, 11 Jul, 25 Jul, 08 Aug, 22 Aug, 05 Sep, 19 Sep, 17 Oct, 31 Oct & 14 Nov

2018 – 23 Jan & 20 Feb

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

NOTE: We welcome all travelers on our tour however we regret we do not accept children under 15 years old on our Discover Vietnam & the Mekong Waterways Group Tour. If you are travelling with young children please ask us to customize a special family holiday for you.

Vietnam Tour Price Includes: Small group tour of Vietnam with local English speaking guide throughout tour including all accommodation in 4 star hotels, all transfers and sightseeing tours detailed including all entrance fees, all domestic flights in Vietnam, meals as indicated (B = Breakfast; L = Lunch, D = Dinner), full pre-departure information and an emergency contact phone number in Vietnam

Vietnam Tour Price excludes: International flights, Vietnam entry visa, travel insurance, beverages during lunches and dinners, departure taxes (if applicable), personal expenses (laundry, mini-bar, internet, etc) and gratuities (tips)

Cruise Price Includes: Group shore-excursions, entrance fees, cruise tour guide services (English speaking), fuel, full board (Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner) including mineral water, coffee and tea from 6.30am and afternoon tea, transfers in Saigon and Siem Reap from or to the meeting point to/from embarkation/disembarkation point or vv included

Cruise Price Excludes: International flights, Phnom Penh port taxes USD\$72 per person levied by the Cambodian Port Authority which will be collected with your booking, gratuities (we recommend USD\$10 per passenger/per day), Cambodian visa (available on Upstream cruise only USD\$42 per person), laundry, alcoholic beverages including mini-bar, wines, premium spirits and liqueurs, fancy soft drinks like Perrier, espressos and cappuccinos at bar

VISA Requirements:

On board the cruise, you can receive your Cambodian visa via ship's assistance, however we strongly recommend you arrange your Cambodian visa prior to departing from New Zealand.

Agent Booking Code: DISCRUS

NOTE: Itinerary and price subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances beyond our control. Please refer to our full terms and conditions available on our brochure or from our website www.activeasia.co.nz. Active Asia reserves the right to alter the hotels and/or the itinerary if needed due to availability and/or adverse weather conditions.

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