

VIETNAM WATERWAYS
11 DAYS/ 10 NIGHTS

Day 1: Hanoi - Arrival (D)

Upon arrival at Noi Bai international airport in Hanoi, you will be met by our guide and transferred to your hotel in the city centre. In the evening, you will enjoy a **welcome dinner** at a nice local restaurant with French colonial architecture. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 2: Hanoi – Orientation (B/L)

After breakfast, you will visit **Ho Chi Minh memorial complex.** The complex is combination of **Ba Dinh spacious square** with 240 four-season green grass carpets, **the mausoleum** where embalmed body of Ho Chi Minh is preserved, **his wooden house-on-stilt** surrounded by lush garden and fish pond. Within this complex, also located **One-pillar Pagoda**, an old temple built by the Emperor Ly Thai Tong in 11th century. Keep walking the Square to **Presidential Palace**, a yellow big house in French colonial style, a fountain in the front yard and army protected at the gate, and to the twin lakes of West Lake and Truc Bach Lake. Visit **Tran Quoc Pagoda**, the oldest temple in Hanoi, dated back to 1500 years ago. Pass by the **Army Museum** and **Hanoi Flag Tower** to see a collection of aircrafts and helicopters in Vietnam War. Enjoy your lunch at a local restaurant with Vietnamese Cuisine.

In the afternoon, you will visit the **Temple of Literature,** the first university in Vietnam, before returning to the bustling **Old Quarter** for **one-hour cyclo ride** through its narrow and colorful streets. You will visit **Dong Xuan** wholesale Market, **Ngoc Son temple** where reserve body of rare Rafetus swinhoei tortoise, **Hoan Kiem Lake** and its red **The Huc bridge** . You will enjoy a **Water Puppet Show** at Bong sen Theater before returning to your hotel. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 3: Hanoi – Ninh Binh – Trang An by car (B/L)

After breakfast, you will take 2 hour drive to Ninh Binh Province. Start your journey with a **3 hour rowing sampan** along the stream in **Trang An area** through 5 grottos with beautiful stalactites (70 to 320m length). Rowing long dark caves to green picturesque cannels, you are closest to nature. The Trang An Landscape complex was listed in UNESCO's list in 2014. Back to the boat quay, then you will head to Tam Coc area for lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, take **your bike** and **ride to Bich Dong**, 2 km Tam Coc, which was conferred by a King the title "Vietnam's second most beautiful grotto". Climb up the **Ngu Nhac Son** (Buddha's Palm Mountain), be charmed by the marvelous scenery offered by the mountains, rivers and pagodas. Then visit **Hoa Lu** - Vietnam's former capital before it was moved to Thang Long (now called Hanoi) in 1010 - and the remains of **Dinh & Le Kings' Temples**. Overnight in Ninh Binh.

Day 4: Ninh Binh – Ha Long Bay by car (B/L/D)

After breakfast, depart by road to **Ha Long Bay**, a UNESCO World Heritage Area of outstanding natural beauty. Travel through the rich farmlands of the Red River Delta and the landscape of rice fields, water buffalo, the daily life of the Vietnamese village. Board a traditional Junk. Lunch on board. The cruise passes by many rocks and islets in many funny shapes. The cruise may stop for a while for visiting one of the best caves on the bay. Later on, the Junk will anchor in a peaceful bay for relaxing and overnight. Dinner and overnight on board.

Day 5: Ha Long Bay – Hanoi – Hoi An by flight (Brunch)

Breakfast is served while the Junk cruises around Ha Long Bay, passing by many islets named by their shapes such as Dog, Incense Urn, Fighting Cock, Finger, etc. Stop for a while to explore **Surprise Cave** - one of the most beautiful caves of the bay. The Junk then continues cruising towards the wharf. Ready to disembark about 10:30AM. Drive back to Hanoi and then straight to the airport for a flight to Danang. Upon arrival, you will be welcomed by our guide and drive to Hoi An, around 35 kilometers away. Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 6: Hoi An – Private Cooking Class (B/L)

After breakfast, you will walk around **the tiny town of Hoi An** with your guide to visit a 400 year old Japanese Bridge, a 300 year old Chinese temple, and a 200 year old Vietnamese former merchants' house before checking in your hotel. Lunch will be arranged at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon, meet your chef and then go buy the ingredients to be used in the cooking lesson later. After the market visit, you board a boat for a leisurely cruise (25 minutes) along the Thu Bon River to the cooking school. On arrival, explore the school's herb and vegetable garden, before learning about some of Hoi An's and Vietnam's well-known dishes, which are a mix of Vietnamese and Chinese cuisine. The cooking lesson lasts about 2 hours – each dish is first demonstrated by the chef, before you prepare the same dish by yourself. The class also contains a brief introduction to Vietnamese food carving (plate decoration). After the lesson, we sit down and eat what we have cooked. Then the boat will take you back to Hoi An Town. Overnight in Hoi An.



Day 7: Hoi An – My Son Sanctuary, one way by car, one way by boat (B)

After breakfast, you will drive to **My Son**, a World Heritage site, 40 km southwest of Hoi An. Located in a lush valley, My Son was a capital and religious center of Cham people, with red brick towers and sanctuaries, considered to be in the same league as some of Southeast Asia's greatest archaeological sites, including Angkor-Wat in Cambodia, Bagan in Myanmar, Ayutthaya in Thailand and Borobudur in Indonesia. These towers and sanctuaries were built the 7th to 13th centuries.

Then leave My Son for Cau Lau boat station. Take a motorized boat along Thu Bon River to **Kim Bong carpentry village**, 3km west of Hoi An. Visit the village and continue boat trip to **Thanh Ha Pottery Village**. Return to the town after the visit and be free for the remainder of the day. Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 8: Hoi An – Danang – Ho Chi Minh City by flight (B)

After breakfast at your hotel, you will be free until being transferred to the airport for a flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Landing at Tan Son Nhat Airport, you will be greeted by our guide and depart for a city tour including the moving **War Remnants Museum** which presents a partial, but riveting, view of the American War, as it is known in Vietnam. Continue to the **Reunification Palace**, former residence of the Indochina Governor General and later President of the Republic of Southern Vietnam until the fall of Saigon in April 30, 1975. The day ends with visits to the charming **Notre Dame Cathedral, the Old Post Office,** one of the oldest buildings Ho Chi Minh City built around 1886-1891**,** the elegant **Saigon Opera House** and the bustling **Ben Thanh Market**. Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 9: Ho Chi Minh City – Mekong Delta on Mekong Eyes Cruise (B/L/D)

In the morning we take you to **Cai Be**. You board your comfortable wooden river cruise vessel around noon. After a refreshing welcome drink, we show you our on-board facilities and your cozy cabin. As lunch is served, the boat starts cruising. Sit back and watch the fantastic scenery and the daily life of the Mekong people. In the afternoon you can disembark for a guided leisurely **stroll through a village** and the surrounding **fruit orchards** or **rice fields**. Meet the friendly locals and taste the local produce and fruits. Get back on board and enjoy a drink at the bar or relax on deck as the sun sets over the magnificent water landscape of the Mekong River. The cruise boat will anchor for the night. The day ends with a delicious on-board dinner. You stay overnight on board your floating hotel in the Mekong Delta.



Day 10: Mekong Delta on Mekong Eyes Cruise – Ho Chi Minh City (B/L)

Wake up well rested to the sound of the river and get ready for another exciting day of sightseeing in the Mekong Delta. At 6:30am the cruise vessel sets off for a sunrise cruise. Watch the locals go about their daily work drying exotic fruits and building ships on the wooden yards while enjoying an early breakfast. After breakfast, we will board a sampan boat to the **Cai Rang floating market**, the region's busiest and most lively market. Marvel at the sheer abundance of exotic fruits, vegetables and handcrafted regional products. We will pull up to the boats for talking and bargaining with the merchants. We will also visit some of the local candy and cake making factories or boat through the green water landscape to see local houses, verdant orchards and ship-building yards. After brunch or lunch we will take you back to your hotel in Saigon. Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 11: Ho Chi Minh City – Departure (B)

After breakfast, you will be free until being transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

OUR PRICES INCLUDE

Breakfast and accommodation sharing a twin or double room
Travel in an appropriate private air-conditioned vehicle with an experienced safe driver
The services of an experienced English-speaking guide throughout the tour (please note: guides will be on hand from pick-up until guests' return to their hotel or reaching their destination)
Domestic flights Hanoi – Danang & Danang – Ho Chi Minh City, including airport taxes (Vietnam Airlines, economic class)
Where necessary, entry fees and permission to enter border areas for all visits mentioned in the program
Lunches and dinners (as specified in the itinerary) in the best local restaurants, or picnics where no suitable restaurant is available
Private cooking class in Hoi An
VAT and other taxes

OUR PRICES DO NOT INCLUDE

International flight tickets and airport tax
Vietnamese Visa handling and stamp fee
Dinners, except as specified above
Drinks, gratuities and personal expenses
Camera fees (if any)
Insurance.