

VIETNAM FOOD & SPA
11 DAYS/10NIGHTS

Cuisine reflects culture, geographical, economic and even historical features of a country. Vietnamese cuisine has being created and built up through many centuries. Vietnam has three regions: North, Central and South with distinguishable weather and geography, so cuisine is also significantly different. For Vietnam - Foodie and Spa, you will travel from the south to the central and to the north of Vietnam, you will learn how to cook different food styles and taste various kinds of food. Eating touches your human-being part, and skillful massage techniques will unravel tension and touch your soul!

Day 1: Ho Chi Minh City - Arrival (D)

Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, you will be welcomed by our guide and transferred to your hotel in the city center. Relax after a long-haul flight before enjoying a **Welcome Dinner** with Vietnamese food – your first taste of Vietnam. Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 2: Ho Chi Minh City - Cook Vietnamese southern style food & the city's highlights (B/L)

After breakfast, you will meet our guide and meet your chef at the vibrant Ben Thanh market, and prepare for cooking your first lunch. Follow your chef to purchase the necessary ingredients for your cooking lesson. **Ben Thanh market** is one of the biggest markets in Ho Chi Minh City that sells all kinds of seasonal fruits, herbals, poultry…farms and fields in the South of Vietnam. Your chef will let you know how these ingredients work in our daily meal. Prepare your strong will as you may see a live duck or chicken being taken out of the cage and killed in front of you!



After buying enough ingredients, you will be transferred to a local restaurant. In a warm atmosphere, you will cook all together following our Chef step by step but everyone has their own materials and ingredients for a better understanding of cooking techniques. You will use Vietnamese kitchenware to realize and enjoy a tasty 4-course meal. MSG and "Knorr powders" are forbidden! After the cooking lesson, sit down, taste and enjoy what you have cooked.

In the afternoon, explore HCMC's historical sights. Visit 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 a visit to **Notre Dame Cathedral, The Notre Dame Cathedral** and **Saigon Opera House**.
Dinner is at your own expense. You can take this chance to discover a variety of Saigon food. My suggestion is "Banh Trang Trang Bang" – special rice paper rolls with pork and fresh vegetables. The best place for the locals to sundown is Banh Trang Trang Bang Hoang Ty, or Banh Xeo – thin pancake with pork, shrimp, bean sprouts on top and popular to locals at Banh Xeo Muoi Xiem, or Saigon Pho – Saigon's beef or chicken noodle at Pho Hoa. Your guide will help you find what you are looking for.

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 3: Ho Chi Minh City – Cu Chi Tunnels – Spa & Street food by motorbike (B)

After breakfast, visit the **Cu Chi Tunnels**, which are 70 kilometers North West of Ho Chi Minh City, created since 1948 to assist the Viet Minh to combat the French. This is an underground city with living areas, kitchens, storage, weapon shops, field hospitals, command centers. During the American War the entire area of Cu Chi was designated a fire free zone and was heavily bombarded. Since 1988, two sections of the tunnels have been open for visitors. You can also try real gun shooting in Cu Chi with M16, M60 & AK47 rifles.

In the afternoon, you will experience the first **body massage** at a local spa. You will have a **90-minute Fresh ginger essence massage** to blow away your stress work and busy life. When you are relaxed, return to your hotel to enjoy the hotel amenities and more refreshment.

When the dark falls, you will meet our motorbike rider team and start to explore **Saigon by night**. To start off this Saigon night tour, enjoy drinks at a Vespa themed café, Café Zoom, to watch "as the world goes by". Throughout the night, try a variety of food and drinks at local restaurants and

samplings of Saigon's best authentic street food. You'll also go to a Vietnamese-style coffee shop with special live music, and then wrap up the evening at an exciting bar where the new generation of Vietnamese unwind and flaunt their unique styles. There are many styles of beers to try, the local Bia Hoi, brewed fresh by local vendors, to Saigon's 3 versions, Larue, or Tiger Singapore. No drinking your local western beers!

You will ride pillion behind our drivers to enjoy and experience the Vietnamese night life with friends. This tour includes free flowing drinks and all you can eat, so come with an appetite!

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 4: Ho Chi Minh City - Danang by flight – Hoi An (B)

After breakfast, you will be escorted to the airport for a flight to Danang. Upon arrival, you're met by our guide and drive 30km farther to Hoi An Ancient town. Check in to your hotel and be free to enjoy complimentary spa service at your hotel. No rushing around on your first day in Central Vietnam.

Almanity Hoi An offers complementary daily spa journey for their in-house guests. Spa Journeys combines massage, meditation and Tai Chi and offers in the My Chi Spa, one of the largest spas in Asia, features 40 treatment rooms and a relaxation pool set within a Silent Sanctuary.

Lunch and dinner is time for you to explore Hoi An food. Walk around the town and enjoy Banh Mi Hoi An – Hoi An bread with grilled pork, pork liver paste, pickles, chili sauce at Madam Khanh, chicken rice at Com Ga Ba Buoi, grilled pork rolls along the bank of Hoai River.

Day 5: Hoi An – Cook central Vietnam food & luxurious Spa treatment (B/L)

After breakfast, stretch your legs with a short walk to a local restaurant and meet your chef. Today is another cooking lesson, but in Central Vietnam style, which is different to the Southern style in ingredients, dipping sauce and decoration. Visit one of **Hoi An's colorful markets** where all of your senses will be aroused. You will have the opportunity to interact with the local sellers and purchase some of the ingredients to be used in the cooking lesson later in the day before learning about some of Hoi An's and Vietnam's well known specials. Later, take your bicycle and ride through the countryside to the picturesque **An My village** which will give you a real glimpse the traditional way of living of these charming people.
Here you will visit a typical Vietnamese house and duck farm. You will get interesting information about the cultivation of fresh herbs and vegetables as well as discover the use of them in traditional

Vietnamese medicine.

Your **cooking class** runs for about two hours and is a hands-on experience. Our chefs will demonstrate how to prepare each dish. After the lesson, you are able to enjoy your own creations.

In the afternoon, take a guided walking tour around Hoi An Ancient Town. Visit the **Japanese Covered Bridge, Chinese Assembly Hall**, and other local market. There are numerous art galleries, souvenirs and tailor shops where you can get some express made-to-order clothes if you like. Or just stroll around the town. Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 6: Hoi An – Luxury Spa treatment (B)

Relax today and enjoy another luxurious spa treatment. Mai Chi Spa at Almanity Hoi An has different treatments day to day, so you will never feel bored with their spa list.

Hoi An is famous for made-to-measure shirts and veston (suits), good quality and at reasonable prices. You come to the shop to choose material and style. Tailor will get your measurements and they will deliver to your hotel within 24 hours. Also Hoi An has many clothing, real leather shoes, silver shops at good quality that is worth a stop and try on.

If you want to try some local restaurants for lunch and dinner, instead of street food, Hoi An has many for your choice. Just let us know what kinds of food you prefer and we will give you our recommendations or you can ask our guide for the best place. Our guide knows best about his home town! Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 7: Hoi An – Danang - Hanoi by flight (B)

After breakfast, you will be free in Hoi An until meeting our driver to go to Danang airport for a flight to Hanoi. Upon arrival, be greeted by our guide and transferred to downtown. Check in to your hotel and be free at leisure. The best way to experience Hanoi and its Old Quarter are to simply stroll the streets, markets, and around the lake. You can take part or most of your day to see the quarter, at whatever pace you like. At night, there are many restaurants to try, 5 to little cafes sitting on plastic stools. Tell us what your style is, and we will recommend for you. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 8: Hanoi's Highlights & street food (B)

After breakfast, the day starts with a visit to the complex dedicated to Ho Chi Minh - the nation's founder, containing **Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum**, **his house on stilts** and **lush green garden**,

and **One-pillar Pagoda**, which was built in 1049 by King Ly Thai Tong. The temple is a pillar erecting in the middle of a lotus pond.

Later on, stroll through Hanoi's **Old Quarter** from **Hang Be market** to **Thanh Ha wet market**. Along the way delicacies, strange food items and an explanation of Vietnamese food practices will be given. These busy eclectic markets are alive with the sights and sounds of Hanoi and are the essence of Vietnamese culture.

Continue through the streets of the Old Quarter to **Dong Xuan market** to sample some local treats such as Pho Tiu (dry noodle bowl with grilled pork and bean sprouts), Bun Dau Mam Tom (noodles with fried tofu and shrimp sauce). Your guide will explain the routine of Vietnam meal times and indigenous/unusual ingredients eaten.

Keep walking deeper to the inner of the Old Quarter and its bustling 36 streets, stop at a famous dessert shop to taste "che" – fresh fruit or bean is cooked with sugar, mixed with jelly and ice, or eat hot. Finish your street food journey with a black or brown coffee in local style – strong and bitter. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 9: Hanoi – Ha Long Bay by car – Overnight onboard (B/L/D)

After early breakfast, take 3.5 hours drive to Ha Long bay, a World Heritage Area of outstanding natural beauty. Upon arrival at noon time, transfer to a junk for a cruise around Ha Long Bay with a delicious local seafood lunch served on board. The cruise passes by many rocks and islets in many funny and imaginable shapes. Again your dinner is served on board. In the evening, enjoy the night fishing (optional) and later overnight on board, anchored in a peaceful bay.

Day 10: Ha Long Bay – Hanoi & Farewell spa (Brunch)

For early risers, Tai Chi class will be held on the sundeck followed by a little breakfast with tea, coffee and pastries. More visits or cave exploration will be offered before a buffet lunch or a set-menu lunch is served while your boat is cruising through further natural beauty of the bay. Disembark the boat around (what time?) and our driver will transfer you back to Hanoi.

Check in to your hotel in Hanoi and walk with your guide to an authentic spa. Enjoy **a 90-minute hot Basalt stone massage**. This hot stone massage uses warm basalt river stones combined with traditional massage techniques aromatic warm oil and massage to unravel tension in the body for a deeply relaxing experience. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 11: Hanoi – Departure (B)



You will be free today in Hanoi until meeting our guide again for a transfer to the airport in good time to connect to 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 driverThe 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 Ho Chi Minh City to Danang and Danang to Hanoi, 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
Joined cooking class in Ho Chi Minh City and Joined Saigon street food by motorbike
Private cooking class in Hoi An and market visit
A 90-minute Fresh ginger essence massage in Saigon & A 90-minute hot Basalt stone massage in Hanoi at a local Spa
Daily 90-minute spa journey at Almanity Hotel 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