

# Grand Vietnam Tour

## 16 days

\*\*\*\*\*

- **Itinerary Overview**
- **Includes & Excludes**
- **Detailed Itinerary**

### I. Itinerary Overview

| Day    | Destination   |
|--------|---|
| Day 1  | HANOI ARRIVAL                                       |
| Day 2  | HANOI BY NIGHT STREET FOOD TOUR                     |
| Day 3  | HANOI - CITY TOUR - NIGHT TRAIN TO SAPA             |
| Day 4  | Y LINH HO - LAO CHAI - TA VAN VILLAGES TREKKING     |
| Day 5  | CAT CAT - SIN CHAI VILLAGES TREKKING - BUS TO HANOI |
| Day 6  | HANOI - HALONG BAY - NIGHT ON BOARD                 |
| Day 7  | HALONG BAY KAYAKING - NIGHT ON BOARD                |
| Day 8  | HALONG BAY - HANOI - FIGHT TO DANANG                |
| Day 9  | HOIAN - MY SON TOWERS TOUR                          |
| Day 10 | HOIAN - FREE AND EASY DAY                           |
| Day 11 | HOIAN - HUE SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEY                    |
| Day 12 | HUE CITY TOUR - LATE FLIGHT TO SAIGON               |
| Day 13 | SAIGON CITY + CU CHI TUNNELS TOUR                   |
| Day 14 | SAIGON - PANORAMA MEKONG RIVER CRUISE               |
| Day 15 | CAIBE/CAI RANG FLOATING MARKET - SAIGON             |
| Day 16 | SAIGON DEPARTURE                                    |

## II. Includes & Excludes

### **Inclusion:**

- Overnights in selected hotels or similar
- Vietnam visa approval letter
- Halong bay 3 day Cruise package
- Mekong 2 day cruise package
- Local English speaking guides
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Tours and transfers as mentioned, by air-conditioned vehicles (bus and group tour)
- Domestic flights (Hanoi – Danang, Hue – Saigon)
- Overnight train (4 berth AC cabin)

### **Exclusion:**

- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Visas fees
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, boat crew, and personal, non-itinerary services

## III. Detailed Itinerary

### **Day 1** HANOI ARRIVAL

Arrive in Hanoi. Greeted by your guide/driver at the airport. Transfer to your hotel in the city centre for check-in and at leisure in the rest of the day.

**Meals:** N/A

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hanoi

### **Day 2** HANOI BY NIGHT STREET FOOD TOUR

Free to relax at the hotel in Hanoi in the morning.

**18:00 - 21:00: Hanoi - Night Street food tour**

We start our excellent street food walking tour at your hotel in old quarter of Hanoi along the perimeter of the market, dozens of street hawkers sell a staggering variety of produce from live seafood to exotic

fruits and spices. Your expert English-speaking local guide will give you an insight into the intricacies and traditions of Vietnamese food culture including details on ingredients and historical backgrounds of popular northern dishes. We eat as we go, trying seasonal fruits and sampling a tasty French-inspired snack from a street cart.

Walking through the maze of bustling streets that make up Hanoi's Old Quarter, we tempt our tastebuds with the famed Hanoi dish Banh Cuon at a local eatery. Watch in awe as the skilled chefs demonstrate for you how this tasty dish is put together. Continuing into the atmospheric heart of the Old Quarter, we wander past street stalls and quiet residential lanes where you can observe local life that has changed little since Hanoi was founded over 1000 years ago.

Our next two snack stops are at outdoor barbeque stalls. We sit down with the Hanoi locals and sample various meat, vegetable and bread specialties that are flame grilled over hot coals for extra flavour. It's then time for dessert as we venture down a small alley to join in the local tradition of feasting on fresh fruit served in a cup and smothered with crushed iced and condensed milk – this speciality is one not to be missed!

Your local guide will then take you to one of Hanoi's best kept secrets, a hidden street food restaurant to taste top ten street foods in Hanoi is Banh My Hanoi, Vietnamese Rice Wine and famous Egg Coffee. This hard-to-find café is one of the few left in the narrow street inside the old quarter of Hanoi. Or, if coffee is not your style, a cold beer awaits!. At the end of the trip you are free to continue exploring the area or your guide will assist you with directions or a taxi back to your hotel.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Overnight Train to Sapa

### Day 3

### HANOI - CITY TOUR - NIGHT TRAIN TO SAPA

Today, we will spend a full day to visit the city. We start with visit to President Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum and residence. We also visit the famous One Pillar Pagoda nearby. Leaving the President's complex, we continue to visit the Temple of Literature (Van Mieu). Although several Van Mieu can be found throughout Vietnam, the most prominent and famous is that situated in the city of Hanoi, and was functioned as Vietnam's first university

After lunch in a local restaurant, we go to the Museum of Ethnology, which is an excellent museum containing the ethnic costumes of the various minorities of Vietnam, as well as relics, tools and even full size replicas of their homes and buildings.

Back to the hotel. Free till transfer to the station for overnight train to Sapa.

**Note\*:** Late checkout at the hotel is not included.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Night on overnight train to Sapa

### Day 4

### Y LINH HO - LAO CHAI - TA VAN VILLAGES TREKKING

Sa Pa is a quiet mountain town and home to a great diversity of ethnic minority peoples. Most of the ethnic minority people work their land on sloping terraces since the vast majority of the land is

mountainous. Their staple foods are rice and corn. Rice, by its very nature of being a labour intensive crop, makes the daily fight for survival paramount. The unique climate in Sapa has a major influence on the ethnic minorities who live in the area. With sub-tropical summers, temperate winters and 160 days of mist annually, the influence on agricultural yields and health related issues are significant. Today, upon arrival, we will transfer straight to Sapa. Here we have breakfast at the local restaurant and rest for few minutes before starting 6km of walking down to the south east of Sapa along the side of Muong Hoa valley to Y Linh Ho village of the Black H'mong. A 2 km-trekking down to Lao Chai village, through terraced rice fields to Ta Van village of the Dzay minority people. On the way, we would have chance to learn about the local agriculture producing customs and daily lifestyle. We have lunch at a local family, offering you a worth chance to learn about the local house architecture, which is full of their daily life styles and exclusive custom. We will then get back to Sapa by jeep or motorbike.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Sapa

## Day 5

### CAT CAT - SIN CHAI VILLAGES TREKKING - BUS TO HANOI

We start a walk down to the South-west of Sapa (around 4 km) to visit Cat Cat village of the Black H'mong. Relax at the food of the stunning waterfall and the vestige of a hydroelectric power station that was constructed by the French during the colonial time in Vietnam. We enjoy picnic lunch by the side of the river, and trek for 6 km to Sin Chai village, which is located at the foot of Fansipan Mountain, "the roof of Vietnam and Indochina". From here you can enjoy huge stunning landscapes before climbing up on the way back to Sapa. You are free to explore the town till bus transfer to Hanoi departing at 3:00pm. Arrive Hanoi at 9pm.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hanoi

## Day 6

### HANOI - HALONG BAY - NIGHT ON BOARD

07:45 – 08:15 : Pick up at your hotel near by the Old Quarter in Hanoi by shuttle bus

12:30 – 12:30 : Embark the cruise at Tuan Chau harbor. Enjoy welcome drink, cruise briefing & start cruising.

13:00 – 15:30 : A stunning lunch is served while cruising into the Halong Bay with thousands of extraordinary shaped limestone islands considered as the heaven on the earth

15:30 – 17:00 : Explore the area and be charmed by the outstanding masterpiece of the Mother Nature. Visit Mê Cung Cave – one of the most beautiful caves in Halong Bay. Climb up & see the panoramic view of the bay from above. Enjoy swimming in the crystal water of the peaceful Bay.

17:00 – 19:00 : Return to the cruise the Sunset party and admire the best moment of the day when the sun starts to set. Or enjoy the massage treatment in your comfortable cabin.

19:00 : Savor an amazing and dreamlike dinner in Fairy cave (or Drum cave) with extremely delicious food which is not only impressed by its incredible taste, but also by great fruit and vegetable carving performance. Socialize with new friends and crew members, enjoy squid fishing or leisurely relax on the

top deck in the middle of the tranquil bay.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Night on Board

## Day 7

### HALONG BAY KAYAKING - NIGHT ON BOARD

6.30 – 07.00 : Start your new day with a Tai Chi session or a photo hunt for the glamour sunrise in Halong Bay in the early morning.

07.00 – 08.00 : Have breakfast in the peaceful bay while listening to the bird songs.

08:00 – 10:00 : Transfer to a high quality day boat for a cruise to Thien Canh Son Cave, visit the cave to learn about the karst formation. Enjoy hiking to see the panorama view of the Bay from the cave's entrance.

10:00 – 12:00 : Start to down for a beautiful white-sand beach at the foot of Hon Co Island. Go kayaking though the isolated and off-the-beaten-track appeal of the Bay. Enjoy swimming in the blue water or leisurely lying down under the tropical sunshine for sunbathing.

12:30 – 14:00 : Back to the boat for lunch.

14:00 – 14:00 : More time for kayaking through the hidden lagoons and explore the biological diversity of the Bay.

16:30 – 19:00 : Return to the cruise refreshing and stretching your selves on the top deck. Join in the Sunset party and see the beautiful pinky clouds reflecting on the water surface. Or enjoy the massage treatment in your comfortable cabin.

19:00 : Savor our delicious dinner with incredible traditional Vietnamese food and amazing vegetable carving performance, while being well introduced the philosophies that lie behind each type of cuisine. Socialize with new friends and crew members, enjoy squid fishing or leisurely relax on the top deck in the middle of the tranquil bay

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Night on board

## Day 8

### HALONG BAY - HANOI - FIGHT TO DANANG

07.00: Coffee and tea will be served

08.00: Continue cruising

08h15: Visit splendid Sung Sot Cave

09h00: Check out and enjoy a fantastic cruise on the bay, passing Dinh Huong Island, fishing villages, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island and Sail Island.

09.30: Buffet brunch (breakfast/lunch) while cruising back through Halong Bay to the pier

11h30: Arrive at the pier. Time to say goodbye to the crew.

12.00: Return from Halong to Hanoi. Arrive Hanoi at about 17pm.

Airport transfer for late flight to Danang. Transfer to the hotel in Hoian upon arrival.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hoian

## Day 9 HOIAN - FREE AND EASY DAY

Free and easy day to relax and explore Hoian ancient town.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hoian

## Day 9 HOIAN - MY SON TOWERS TOUR

Pickup at the hotel at 7:50 am, we drive to visit My Son. The My Son temple complex is regarded one of the foremost Hindu temple complexes in Southeast Asia and is the foremost heritage site of this nature in Vietnam. It is often compared with other historical temple complexes in Southeast Asia, such as Borobodur of Java in Indonesia, Angkor Wat of Cambodia, Bagan of Myanmar and Ayutthaya of Thailand. Although badly damaged by bombing raids in the 1960s, the site still has more than 20 structures and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999.

Leaving My Son for boat station and taking a boat trip on Thu Bon river. You could visit the living of the local people and feeling the fresh air. You will have soft lunch on the boat and see the beautiful views along the river. Arrive Hoian in early afternoon. Free time to explore Hoian ancient town.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hoian

## Day 11 HOIAN - HUE SCENIC TRAIN JOURNEY

Free in the morning.

In the afternoon, transfer to the station for day train to Hue. Enjoy scenic view of Hai Van Pass on the way. Arrive Hue in late afternoon. Transfer to the hotel and enjoy free time.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hue

## Day 12 HUE CITY TOUR - LATE FLIGHT TO SAIGON

08:00: Pickup at the hotel.

Today, we will spend a full day touring Hue city. Our visiting sites includes Old Imperial City, Flag Tower, Thien Mu Pagoda, Royal Tombs of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh. The tour ends with your self exploration of Dong Ba bustling market then transfer to the airport for the late afternoon flight to Saigon.

Transfer to the hotel in Saigon upon arrival.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Saigon

**Day 13**

**SAIGON CITY + CU CHI TUNNELS TOUR**

Pickup at the hotel at 7:40, we head out of town to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels, which is an extensive underground network of approximately 200 kilometers of tunnels dug initially by the Viet Minh and then expanded by the Viet Cong. Here contains hospitals, plus accommodation and schools, and were used extensively for refuge and storage and also utilized as a military base for the Viet Cong close to Saigon. In late afternoon, transfer to Saigon for half day city tour. Our city tour will help you to see the best of Saigon. We visit the historic Reunification palace and War Remnants Museum, followed by the architectural treats of French colonial Notre Dame Cathedral and the post Office. Free time at leisure or shopping at Ben Thanh Market nearby.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Saigon

**Day 14**

**SAIGON - PANORAMA MEKONG RIVER CRUISE**

Pickup at the hotel in Saigon to Can Tho or Cai Be. You board your comfortable wooden Mekong Eyes cruise vessel around noon. After a refreshing welcome drink we show you our on-board facilities and your cosy cabin. As lunch is served, the Mekong Eyes Cruise 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 Mekong Eyes Cruise 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.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Mekong Eyes Cruise

**Day 15**

**CAIBE/CAI RANG FLOATING MARKET – SAIGON**

Wake up well rested to the sound of the river and get ready for another exciting day of sightseeing in the Mekong Delta. At 6.30h the Mekong Eyes 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 Cai Be or Cai Rang floating market, the region's busiest and most lively markets. Marvel at the sheer abundance of exotic fruits, vegetables and skilfully 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.

Note\*: The floating markets in the Mekong Delta are no tourist markets but wholesale markets where produce of the Mekong Delta like fruits and vegetables are traded. For this reason the number of boats

on the market fluctuates depending on harvesting seasons and market demand. Furthermore, modern wholesale markets are becoming more popular in Vietnam. This can result in decreasing numbers of boats being present on the markets.

**Meals:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Saigon

## Day 16

## SAIGON DEPARTURE

Today, you are free till airport transfer for departure flight. Trip ends!

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** N/A