

Classic Vietnam

Country(ies): Vietnam

Tour type: Private

Transport: AC car/minibus, junk boat, sleeper train & flight

Group size: Min: 1 | Max: 0

Days: 8 Days

Start location: Hanoi, Vietnam

End location: Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Departs On: Any day

Meals: Breakfasts - 10, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 1

Highlights: Night on a junk in romantic Halong Bay, hustle and bustle of Hanoi's Old Quarter, imperial city of Hue, traditional riverside town of Hoi An, energetic Ho Chi Minh City, waterways of the Mekong Delta, famous Cu Chi tunnels

Places Visited: Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hue, Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh City & Vinh Long



Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Hanoi and transfer to hotel

Arrive Hanoi Airport. After customs and immigration formalities you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to rest and recover after your flight, or start to explore the area around your hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Hanoi hotel

MEALS: None

EXTRAS: Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour || Single Room Supplement (VETMCV)

Day 2: Afternoon tour of Hanoi

We start the day with a visit to the Temple of Literature, which was built in the 11th century in honour of the Chinese scholar Confucius. At nearly one thousand years old it one of only a few remaining examples of traditional Vietnamese architecture still standing in Hanoi today.

We then stop at the island temple of Ngoc Son, surrounded by the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake. Access to the temple is via the Huc Bridge which means the 'Place Touched by Morning Sunbeams'. Your guide will retell the tale of the legend of an emperor, a magic sword and a giant turtle, from which the lake took its name.

Later we hop on board a cyclo for a ride through the Old Quarter's 36 streets, where the locals buy anything from noodles to light fixtures to Buddha statues. Each of the streets is named after the goods that were sold from their shops and even today Tin and Bamboo street vendors still sell the same wares.

We end the day with a delightful water puppet show, a traditional Vietnamese art that is still being performed today.

OVERNIGHT: Hanoi hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 3: Morning drive to Halong, overnight on Junk boat

In the morning we transfer to Halong bay 180km northeast of Hanoi. You'll enjoy an overnight boat cruise on Halong bay, which is listed as a World Heritage Area of outstanding natural beauty. The trip of Halong Bay is unforgettable. Visit ancient limestone caves and enjoy sea kayaking and swimming, weather permitting. Back on board the junk boat you can relax on deck with a drink to watch the sunset. In the evening you'll enjoy a freshly prepared seafood dinner under the stars.

OVERNIGHT: Junk boat

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

EXTRAS: None

Day 4: Halong Bay, Hanoi then train to Hue

Enjoy an early morning swim followed by breakfast. The tour then visits the "Cave of Surprises" before cruising back to the main harbour for the return drive to Hanoi.

In the evening you are transferred to the train station for the overnight journey on the Reunification Express

southwards to Hue. Accommodation aboard the train in four berth shared cabins, which are simple but comfortable.

Note: Day use room in Hanoi is not included.

OVERNIGHT: Sleeper train

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 5: Hue, full day tour

Upon arrival in Hue we will start the city tour.

Hue was the capital of Vietnam during the Nguyen Dynasty 1802-1945 and this imperial city was modelled on the Forbidden City in Beijing. There are many temples and palaces within the walls and although much was damaged during the Tet Offensive in 1968, there are plenty of impressive structures still standing.

Your tour starts with the ancient walled Citadel, which contained the former Imperial Palace. We enjoy wandering through the enclosure for the morning before our lunch stop and a trip into the surrounding countryside to visit the impressive Royal Tombs –Tu Duc and Minh Mang tomb. In the evening, we take a cruise along the Perfume River.

OVERNIGHT: Hue hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 6: Drive to Hoi An Walking City Tour

Today we make the 5-hour drive along the coast to the seaside town of Hoi An, en route crossing the Hai Van Pass ('Pass of the Clouds').

From the 16th to 18th centuries, Hoi An was a thriving international commercial port for Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Arab merchants. Today, Hoi An is a quaint riverside town, renowned for its silk and popular with tourists for its eclectic architecture, tailors shops and numerous cafes. Some of the buildings in the narrow streets have remained unchanged for more than a century and much of the town is now heritage-listed.

After lunch, enjoy a half day walking tour through the narrow winding streets of the Ancient Quarter visiting Chua Ong Pagoda, Assembly Hall, 200-year-old Tam Ky house and the Japanese Covered Bridge.

OVERNIGHT: Hoi An hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 7: Hoi An, farmer & fisherman tour

Today we take to bicycles, riding past green rice paddies to the village of Tra Que. This quaint village on the edge of Hoi An, is renowned for its sweet scented green vegetables that are used in some of Hoi An's famous dishes like Cao Lau and Mi Quang. You'll have a chance to learn about the planting and harvesting techniques and also watch a mouth-watering cooking demonstration.

Returning to Hoi we take a cruise along the river and learn the secrets of how to throw the large nets from local fishermen. You can also try your hand at paddling one of the unusual round basket boats used by the local fishermen and known locally as a coracle.

OVERNIGHT: Hoi An hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 8: Hoi An, Danang then flight to Ho Chi Minh

Transfer to the airport in Danang. Take a flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Upon arrival, you are met by your guide and transferred to your hotel. Free afternoon.

OVERNIGHT: Ho Chi Minh City hotel

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: None

Day 9: Cu Chi Tunnels & Ho Chi Minh city tour

Early morning we depart from the hotel and drive to the Cu Chi tunnels. After watching a short introductory video on the construction of the tunnels, the next hour is spent exploring the maze of tunnels, accompanied by the guide.

Also on display are various mantraps and the remains of an American tank as well as numerous bomb craters made by 500-pound bombs from B52 bombers. We return to Ho Chi Minh City around lunch time.

Following lunch, visit some of the city's major attractions including the Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Remnants Museum.

Please note: Some of the images on display at the War Remnants Museum can be confronting and may not be suitable for small children.

OVERNIGHT: Ho Chi Minh City hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 10: Mekong Delta (Shared group tour)

Our one day cruise excursion starts from Ho Chi Minh City with a drive to Cai Be - Phu An where you board our river boat. The tour will start with a visit of Cai Be's colourful floating market. You'll also visit some local home factories such as rice paste making, rice pop corn, coco candies, and longan drying. The trip continues along the Mekong canals towards Vinh Long. During the cruise you will discover beautiful landscapes along the river and observe the typical Mekong delta rural life. These evergreen islands among the Mekong River still remain unknown to many people.

After lunch we continue onto Vinh Long where we transfer back to Ho Chi Minh City arriving late afternoon.

OVERNIGHT: Ho Chi Minh City hotel

MEALS: Breakfast, Lunch

EXTRAS: None

Day 11: Depart Ho Chi Minh City

At leisure, until you are transferred from the hotel to the airport for your departure flight.

OVERNIGHT: N/A

MEALS: Breakfast

EXTRAS: Cambodia Extension || Extra day in Ho Chi Minh - post-tour

Included

- All accommodation with breakfast daily (Check in 2pm, Check out 12pm)
- Internal economy flight between Danang and Ho Chi Minh City
- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private a/c vehicle (unless stated)
- Pre-registration letter for visa on arrival
- English speaking guide on land tours
- Sightseeing fees and permits during guided time
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded

- International Flights in and out of Vietnam
- Vietnam visa fee
- Early/late check in/out service at hotels
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Options

Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

Single Room Supplement (VETMCV)

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$379.00

This option books a single room in all the accommodation throughout the tour. Room shares are not available on this tour, so if you are single traveller then you will need to add this option to your booking.

Note: The price shown is a low season price. Slightly higher prices may apply during high and peak seasons - the exact price for your dates will be shown on the online booking form and is always available on request.

Cambodia Extension

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$769.00

Cambodia Extension

This option extends your tour to 16-days and starts with a flight from Ho Chi Minh to Phnom Penh (not included). Whilst here you'll visit all the tourist highlights which the city has to offer including the fascinating Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda and National Museum. You'll also visit the sobering Killings Fields and Toul Sleng Genocide Museum which documents the atrocities of the Khymer Rouge. An internal flight then takes you to Siem Reap, home to the awe inspiring Angkor Wat temple complex. Whilst here you'll have a day and half filled with tours along with another free day so that you can choose to revisit the temples or join our optional tour to the floating villages of Tonle Sap.

Day 11: Tue**Option Cu Chi Tunnel tour. Fly to Phnom Penh**

This morning we offer an optional tour to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels. Later in the day you'll take a short flight to Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This flight is not included in the price of this extension as it can often be built into your main international flight ticket for little additional cost. Please contact us if you would like us to book the ticket for you and we will provide prices subject to availability at the time (normally around US\$110-160 p/p). After arrival in Phnom Penh we transfer you to your hotel and the remainder of the day is free to begin exploring Cambodia's exotic capital city.

Overnight: Phnom Penh hotel

Extras: Cu Chi Tunnels tour

Meals: Breakfast

Day 12: Wed

Phnom Penh Tour

Our guide will show you all the highlights of this bustling, vibrant city, including the fascinating Royal Palace, the Silver Pagoda, and the National Museum. You can climb the hill to Wat Phnom, the city's main temple, where you'll find throngs of worshippers and troops of monkeys. In the afternoon, you can visit the sobering and poignant Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, which documents the atrocities of the Khmer Rouge against the Cambodian people. Tour ends with a visit to Choeung Ek or the "Killing Fields", where over 17,000 people were murdered and buried in mass graves by the Khmer Rouge.

Overnight: Phnom Penh hotel

Extras: N/A Meals: Breakfast & lunch

Day 13: Thu

Fly to Siem Reap. Half day temple tour

Free time at leisure until you are transferred to the airport for your flight to Siem Reap. Upon arrival in Siem Reap, you are met and transferred to your hotel. In the afternoon, head to the famous Angkor Wat-best preserved of all the Angkor temples. Explore this huge architectural wonder at your leisure before visiting either Phnom Bakheng or Pre Rup temple to watch the sunset.

Overnight: Siem Reap hotel

Extras: N/A

Meals: Breakfast.

Day 14: Fri

Siem Reap. Full day temple tour

The day begins at the South Gate of Angkor Thom, where you will begin your exploration of the centrepiece of this ancient city, the Bayon. The Bayon holds 54 towers decorated with more than 200 enigmatically smiling stone faces. The morning tour also visits the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Terrace of Elephants and Terrace of Leper Kings. In the afternoon you will visit Ta Prohm Temple which was famously featured in the movie, Tomb Raider.

Overnight: Siem Reap hotel

Extras: N/A

Meals: Breakfast, lunch & dinner

Day 15: Sat

Free day in Siem Reap. Optional Tonle Sap tour

You have a free day in Siem Reap today. You can choose to revisit the temples, enjoy the city or choose to take our interesting trip to the floating village at Tonle Sap (described below): (Today, you will discover Tonle Sap Lake at Kompong Kleng, which is a unique village with few tourists visiting this area. It is a large remote village located on the northern edge of the lake approximately 45km from Siem Reap. The main industry for the community is fishing. You will take a boat trip passing markets and villages to the edge of the great Tonle Sap Lake where you will enjoy a relaxing, fascinating journey to the flooded forest. Return by boat and vehicle to Siem Reap with the balance of the day at leisure)

Overnight: Siem Reap hotel

Extras: Tonle Sap tour

Meals: Breakfast.

Day 16: Sun

Siem Reap. Free time. Transfer to airport for departure

Free time at leisure until you are transferred to the airport for your departure flight.

Overnight: N/A

Extras: Extra nights in Siem Reap

Meals: Breakfast.

Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$30.00

This option adds an extra day to the start of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport arrival transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Extra day in Ho Chi Minh - post-tour

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$35.00

This option adds an extra day to the end of your tour, staying in the same hotel as the main tour itself (subject to availability). Your airport departure transfer is still included. Prices shown are per person and based on two people sharing.

Note: Single room and peak season supplements apply.

Ha Giang trekking

Min numbers: 1 person

Price: \$1129.00

Vietnam is fast becoming a major trekking destination. The beautiful forested hills of the north combined with many fascinating local ethnic tribes, makes it the perfect place to get away from civilisation and step back in time to a more simple way of life.

This short tour begins in the current capital, Hanoi from where we spend a full day driving north to the beautiful Ha Giang province. Here we spend 4-days trekking in this remote part of the country and experiencing life in the villages first-hand during a local homestay. This amazing part of Vietnam is little visited by tourists and still retains an untouched and timeless quality. You will trek from village to village staying in local houses and enjoying the genuine hospitality of the villagers.

The tour starts and finishes in Hanoi and works well as an add-on to a longer exploration of the rest of Vietnam.

Itinerary

Day: 1 | Hanoi to Pan Hou Village, Ha Giang

Today you will be picked up very early from your hotel and transferred to Pan Hou in Ha Giang province. The drive takes around 8 hours.

Hidden in the hills of the North, Ha Giang is the last province in Vietnam to open its doors to tourism. With its breathtaking scenery this province offers some of the most picturesque landscapes in Vietnam. Situated in between dense forests and towering mountains, Pan Hou Village is shrouded in the natural beauty of the area. The area is also renowned for its rich culture of the many ethnic minorities that make the area their home.

Meals included:
Lunch & Dinner

Day: 2 | Pan Hou, trek to Man Ta Pan

The morning is free to explore Pan Hou village and after lunch you'll set off through the mountains and rice fields to the small Yao village of Nam Hong. The 3-hour walk will take you through some of Vietnam's best scenery and you will end the day in a village that is home to the the Man Ta Pan ethnic group. The evening is spent discovering the villagers' traditions and you'll overnight in a traditional home stay.

Meals included:
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day: 3 | Trekking to Ban Peo

We rise early and walk to the village of Ban Peo, this enjoyable trek will take you through some of the thickest forests of the area and is most definitely 'off the beaten track'. You'll walk through the 'Sky Gate' and end your day in a village that is home to the Long Tunic Yao people, yet another of the ethnic minorities in the area. You'll spend the night in a Yao house on stilts surrounded by the mountains and forest. Trekking approx 5-6 hours today.

Meals included:
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day: 4 | Trekking to the Yao Village of Ta Phin

Todya your trek takes you to the Yao Village of Ta Phin. As you trek through the area's dense forests you will be shown the 'Shan Tea trees' that grow in the area. This 5-6 hour trek ends in Ta Phin, which is home to the Man Ya Pan people. You'll spend another night in a local family homestay.

Meals included:
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day: 5 | Pan Hou Village, Ha Giang

On your last day off trekking you will spend the day walking through the bamboo forests of the area as you make your way back to Pan Hou village, home to the Tay ethnic group. Upon arrival back at the village enjoy a traditional bath and massage to help you relax and revive your muscles after the trek. Your last night will be spent at a Pan Hou village hotel, before returning to Hanoi in the morning.

Meals included:
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Day: 6 | Pan Hou Village - Hanoi

Today you will make the 8 hour drive back to Hanoi by road.

Meals included:
Breakfast

Note: Prices are per person, based on two people sharing a twin/double room.

Note: single room supplement: available on request

Included:

- All accommodation with all meals daily whilst on trek

- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private a/c vehicle (unless stated)
- English speaking guide on land tours
- Pre-registration letter for visa on arrival
- Personal porter for trekking tours in Ha Giang
- Sightseeing fees and permits during guided tours
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Excluded:

- International flights in and out of Vietnam (available on request)
- Vietnam visa fee
- Early/late check in/out service at hotels
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

Tour Notes

1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the local 3 and 4-star level on this tour, together with a comfortable stay onboard a deluxe Junk boat in Halong Bay. Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms. All couples will be given a private double room.

2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. With this in mind we use public transport where we think it offers a good local experience, this may include overnight sleeper trains, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transportation including jeeps, rickshaws or pickup trucks, and mini buses for sightseeing tours where required.

Sleeper trains:

The sleeper trains in Vietnam are of a good standard and are popular with tourists. Each carriage has its own steward who ensures the train is kept clean and tidy. You will stay in a 4-berth cabin with 3 other passengers. Supplements can be paid to book a private cabin. Bedding is provided onboard the train. The berths are on two tiers and we cannot pre-book lower tier berths. A ladder is provided but you therefore need a reasonable degree of mobility to climb up to the top tier berths.

When travelling in a group, we cannot guarantee that everyone in the group will be seated together in the same cabins. However, the train stewards are generally very helpful at arranging seat swaps, and the local travellers on the train are friendly and interesting to talk to during your journey too.

3. Transfers

Our South East Asia tours all include a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service, and all other transfers throughout the tour. If you are already in the country then we will provide you with your first hotel details, contact numbers for our local representatives, and details of your first meeting time.

4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

Our Vietnam tours start and finish in either Hanoi airport (HAN) or Ho Chi Minh airport (SGN).

If you are booking a tour that combines Vietnam and Cambodia we may not include the connecting flight between the two countries in the tour price (see the inclusions/exclusions or extension option sections for details). This flight can often be built into your main international flight ticket, or we may be able to book this flight for you separately if you prefer - please contact us and we will advise you on available airlines, times and prices.

5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Vietnam we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. A small groups we'll generally use different guides in each cities and as such this is the way the tour has been priced. If you'd prefer to have an escort guide then we'll be happy to quote based on this. At Encounters Travel we only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing. Please check our website for more details and profiles of some of our most famous guides.

6. Entrance Fees

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

7. Tipping

Tipping is not part of culture in South East Asia in the same way that it is standard practice in other parts of the world. However it has become more customary but not compulsory in the tourist and service industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. USD 5-10 per person per day would be appropriate for your guide(s).

8. Health and Vaccinations

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

Thailand: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Vietnam: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

Cambodia: Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

Laos: Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

Malaria: Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

Yellow Fever: This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transited through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view a [World Health Organisation map](#) of areas where the virus is present in monkeys and therefore a potential risk to humans. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

9. Passports and Visas - Vietnam

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

British citizens (plus Japan, South Korea, Denmark, Russian, Sweden, Norway, Finland, , France, Germany, Italy, Spain) are currently subject to a visa exemption scheme, so no visa is required for stays in Vietnam of up to 15 days. Other nationalities and those staying longer in Vietnam will need to obtain a visa in advance. As this isn't always convenient we offer the option of obtaining a visa on arrival approval letter which means that you can then purchase your visa on arrival in Vietnam. However if you try to board the flight without this letter or a visa you'll be refused board. Visa approval letter fees are normally USD 10 p/p for single entry, or USD 15 p/p for multiple entry visas. The visa stamp fee on arrival at the immigration desk is then USD 25 p/p for single entry, or USD 50 p/p for multiple entry. These fees are given as a guide and may vary over time and subject to nationality. Please contact us if you have any queries.

10. Time

The time in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is GMT plus 7 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not observed.

11. Voltage

Sockets are two round or flat pronged and 220 volts (Type A, B, C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc. Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

12. Money - Vietnam

The Vietnamese currency is the 'Dong' (VND). Most people prefer to be paid in Dong rather than US dollars. It can sometimes be difficult to change large notes at smaller villages so try to keep a stash of smaller notes with you.

You can also change all major currencies with any private moneychangers, at the local markets, shops or hotels, or at a bank. Banks usually open from 8.00am to 3.00pm, except Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Although all major currencies are usually accepted, the US\$ is by far the most widely accepted and preferred currency, with large notes (\$50 and \$100 bills) getting a better exchange rate. Travellers' cheques in major currencies are accepted at all banks, though a commission will be charged.

At banks throughout Vietnam you can draw cash, in both dong and dollars on all major credit cards. Approx. 3% commission will be charged for this service. Many souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels will accept payment with credit cards. There is, however, a 3-4% surcharge.

There are ATMs in Major cities like Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hué, which accept major credit cards. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards, some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars), and some travellers' cheques.

13. What to take

Luggage: Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Vietnam, though if your itinerary has many stops and different travel included within it, we recommend packing light and not bring any large cases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

Luggage limits: There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

Climate and Clothing: There are three reasonably well-defined seasons in Vietnam, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Vietnam is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights. Some light raingear would be useful in the wet season.

Other items: We recommend you also bring:

- Cool footwear (sandals are ideal). If you are interested in exploring the reefs, a pair of reef shoes is recommended to avoid injuries. If you are trekking, then bring comfortable and sturdy walking shoes or light walking boots.
- Swimming costumes - rash-guards/t-shirts are recommended for snorkelling to avoid sunburn.
- Sunscreens, after sun lotions and personal hygiene products - Please adhere to 100ml restrictions for anything you wish to carry on hand-luggage on flights.
- Prescription medications (if required) - please bring supporting documents.
- Power adapter for phones, laptops etc
- Sunglasses and hats
- Basic first aid kit and toiletries
- Money belt
- Small torch
- Dive certification card and log book if you intend to participate in SCUBA diving.
- Sleeping bag if your tour includes any hill-tribe or village trekking

14. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal

prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

For many people planning a trip to Vietnam, the weather will be a determining factor in choosing when to travel. In general there isn't really a 'bad' time to visit Vietnam as you'll normally experience a mix of sunshine and rainy days at most times of the year. In the north of Vietnam May to October generally experiences hot, humid weather with high rainfall and November to April is generally a bit cooler with little rainfall. Central Vietnam generally experiences hot and dry weather from January to August and high rainfall from September to November. In the South of Vietnam you'll generally experience hot and dry weather from November to April and rainfall from May to October. Please speak with our reservations team who will be happy to help you in selecting an appropriate time for your tour.

15. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

16. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally, or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

IMPORTANT: We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

17. Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and an ABTA Member (Y4447) and you can be confident when booking with us that your money is safe and protected.

Financial failure insurance is also provided through Affirma to protect all customers for the land portion of your tour. Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

18. Responsible Tourism

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudge: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

19. Follow Us Online

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

www.facebook.com/encounterstravel

www.twitter.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

20. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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Note: Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.
