ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Vietnam Encounters

COUNTRY(IES)	Vietnam
TOUR TYPE	Small Group
TRANSPORT	A/C minibus, junk boat, sleeper train, flight & riverboat
GROUP SIZE	Min: 2 | Max: 12
DURATION	10 days
STARTS	Hanoi, Vietnam
ENDS	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
MEALS	Breakfasts - 8, Lunches - 5, Dinners - 3

TOUR ROUTE MAP **10 Days**



ROUTE: **Noi Bai International Airport** (Start) → **Hanoi** → **Halong Bay** → **Hue** → **Hoi An** → **Ho Chi Minh City** → **Cu Lao Tan Phong** → **Ho Chi Minh City** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Ancient Hanoi tours, street food walk, Halong Bay overnight junk boat cruise, perfume river in Hue, colonial Hoi An, boat trip and overnight eco-lodge on the Mekong Delta

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive in Hanoi, airport to hotel transfers included

Meet the guide at the airport and transfer to the Hanoi hotel while receiving introductory information about the city and country. Once there, practical arrangements are made for the next day's pickup. The only additional activity mentioned is an optional visit to Hoan Kiem Lake the following morning for Tai Chi, which should not be treated as included or guaranteed. No other arrival-day sightseeing is specified.

ACTIVITIES

- **Arrival at Noi Bai International Airport**
  You arrive at Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam to start your Vietnam Encounters Tour. Your local guide welcomes you at the airport and helps you prepare for the transfer into the city.

- **Hanoi Airport to Hotel**

  A road transfer from Hanoi, Vietnam takes you from the airport into the city centre to your hotel. Along the way your guide introduces Hanoi's history and gives you practical tips for your first evening in Vietnam.

- **Free Time / Leisure – Hanoi**

  You enjoy free time in Hanoi, Vietnam to rest or wander the Old Quarter. A day-use room lets you freshen up before the evening train.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Thien Thai Hotel	None	Single room supplement, Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour

DAY 2 Hanoi Heritage & Old Quarter Flavours

This day explores Hanoi’s political, cultural, and culinary highlights, offering a well-rounded view of the capital. Visits to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, One Pillar Pagoda, and Presidential Palace reflect the city’s modern history and national identity, while the Temple of Literature highlights Vietnam’s scholarly traditions. The focus then shifts to everyday life in the Old Quarter with a guided street food experience that introduces local flavours and food culture. The day continues with a stop at Hanoi Train Street for egg coffee before concluding with dinner at KOTO Van Mieu, combining social impact dining with contemporary Vietnamese cuisine.

ACTIVITIES

- **Visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum – Hanoi**

  You visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in Hanoi, Vietnam, an important national monument dedicated to the country's former leader. The complex showcases grand architecture and strong symbolism in the heart of the capital.

- **Visit One Pillar Pagoda – Hanoi**

  You stop at the historic One Pillar Pagoda in Hanoi, Vietnam, famous for its single stone pillar rising from a lotus pond. The small wooden shrine reflects traditional Vietnamese Buddhist design.

- **Visit Presidential Palace – Hanoi**

  You view the French-era Presidential Palace in Hanoi, Vietnam from its landscaped grounds. The building's yellow façade highlights the city's colonial heritage and modern political life.

- **Visit Temple of Literature – Hanoi**

  You explore the Temple of Literature in Hanoi, Vietnam, originally founded as a Confucian university. Courtyards, pavilions and stone steles honour scholars and the country's learning tradition.

- **Street Food Tour – Hanoi Old Quarter**

  You take a guided street food walk through Hanoi's Old Quarter in Vietnam, sampling local dishes in narrow lanes. The tour introduces classic flavours and small eateries popular with residents.

- **Visit Hanoi Train Street – Egg Coffee Stop**

  You visit Hanoi Train Street in Hanoi, Vietnam for a cup of egg coffee beside the tracks. The tight alleyway gives a dramatic perspective on passing trains and local life.

- **Dinner at KOTO Van Mieu – Hanoi**
  You dine at KOTO Van Mieu in Hanoi, Vietnam, a social enterprise restaurant training disadvantaged youth. The meal combines Vietnamese dishes with a strong community focus.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Thien Thai Hotel	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 3 Cruise Through Halong Bay Limestone Karsts

Travel from Hanoi to Ha Long Bay and board a traditional junk boat for a cruise among the limestone towers and sheltered waters that define the area. The boat offers close views of the karst scenery, while a later viewpoint hike provides a higher vantage point across the bay. Together, the cruise and walk give two different ways to appreciate this famous coastal landscape.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive Hanoi → Halong Bay**
  A road transfer from Hanoi, Vietnam takes you through the Red River Delta toward Halong Bay. Rural villages and rice fields line the highway as you leave the capital behind.
- **Halong Bay Junk Boat Cruise**
  You board a traditional junk boat in Halong Bay, Vietnam and cruise among limestone karsts and islands. Fresh seafood lunch is served on board as you sail deeper into the UNESCO-listed bay.
- **Halong Bay Viewpoint Hike**
  You can hike up a steep viewpoint in Halong Bay, Vietnam to see a panoramic sweep of islands and emerald water. The climb rewards you with one of the most iconic sunset views in the region.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Le Journey Cruise	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 4 Halong Bay to Hue Overnight Rail Journey

This day begins on the calm waters of Halong Bay with morning tai chi on board, followed by kayaking through Luon Cave and a Vietnamese cooking class that highlights regional flavours. After returning to shore, the journey continues by road back to Hanoi, transitioning from coastal scenery to the capital’s urban rhythm. Free time allows for a short pause in the city before onward travel. In the evening, you board the Reunification Express for an overnight train journey to Hue, tracing a historic rail route through central Vietnam.

ACTIVITIES

- **Morning Tai Chi – Halong Bay Junk Boat**
  You start the day with a Tai Chi session on the junk boat sundeck in Halong Bay, Vietnam. Gentle movements at sunrise add a calm, reflective note to the cruise.

- **Kayak Luon Cave - Halong Bay**
  You explore Luon Cave by kayak in Halong Bay, Vietnam, paddling through a low natural arch into a sheltered lagoon. The quiet water and steep cliffs create an intimate perspective on the karst landscape.
- **Onboard Vietnamese Cooking Class – Halong Bay**
  You join a Vietnamese cooking demonstration on your junk boat in Halong Bay, Vietnam. The class shows how to prepare simple local dishes which you then taste for lunch.
- **Drive Halong Bay → Hanoi**
  A road transfer from Halong Bay, Vietnam takes you back inland toward Hanoi. Leaving the coast, you pass farms and villages of the Red River Delta.
- **Free Time / Leisure – Hanoi**
  You enjoy free time in Hanoi, Vietnam to rest or wander the Old Quarter. A day-use room lets you freshen up before the evening train.
- **Train Hanoi → Hue (Reunification Express SE3)**
  From Hanoi, Vietnam you board the Reunification Express SE3 overnight train heading south toward Hue. Shared cabins and a relaxed pace give you time to watch the countryside roll by.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Sleeper Train	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 5 Hue Imperial Heritage & River Life

This day introduces Hue through its imperial legacy and riverside setting. After arriving at Hue Railway Station and transferring to your hotel, the focus turns to the Hue Imperial Citadel, once the political and ceremonial centre of the Nguyen Dynasty. A dragon boat cruise along the Perfume River offers a relaxed perspective on the city’s historic landscape and daily life. The experience continues with a visit to Thien Mu Pagoda, one of Hue’s most recognisable religious landmarks overlooking the river.

ACTIVITIES

- **Hue Railway Station to Hotel**
  A road transfer from Hue Railway Station in central Vietnam takes you to your hotel. The short drive introduces the former imperial city on the Perfume River.
- **Visit Hue Imperial Citadel**
  You tour the UNESCO-listed Imperial Citadel in Hue, Vietnam, once the seat of the Nguyen emperors. Walls, palaces and ceremonial gates reveal the scale of the royal complex.
- **Perfume River Dragon Boat Cruise – Hue**
  You board a traditional dragon boat on the Perfume River in Hue, Vietnam for a gentle cruise. River views show daily life on the banks and the city's pagodas from the water.
- **Visit Thien Mu Pagoda – Hue**
  You visit Thien Mu Pagoda overlooking the Perfume River in Hue, Vietnam. The seven-storey tower and temple grounds are among the city's most important religious sites.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Romance Hotel	Lunch

DAY 6 Hue to Hoi An Coastal Drive & Ancient Town Traditions

This day follows a scenic coastal route from Hue to Hoi An via the Hai Van Pass, where mountain roads and ocean views frame the journey south. On arrival, a walking tour through Hoi An Ancient Town reveals layers of history shaped by centuries of trade, reflected in family chapels, Chinese assembly halls, temples, and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Visits to museums and historic religious sites highlight the town’s cultural diversity and architectural heritage. The experience continues with a hands-on lantern-making workshop before concluding with lantern releasing on the Hoai River, capturing Hoi An’s atmosphere as evening falls.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive Hue → Hoi An via Hai Van Pass**
  A scenic road transfer from Hue, Vietnam takes you south across the Hai Van Pass toward Hoi An. Coastal views, beaches and mountains line this dramatic section of highway.
- **Hoi An Ancient Town Walking Tour**
  You explore the UNESCO-listed Ancient Town of Hoi An, Vietnam on foot. Narrow lanes, assembly halls and riverside houses reflect centuries of trading-port history.
- **Visit Family Chapel – Hoi An**
  You visit a traditional Family Chapel in Hoi An, Vietnam used for ancestor worship by prominent local clans. The wooden interior and altars show long-standing family traditions.
- **Visit Chinese Assembly Hall / Pagoda – Hoi An**
  You stop at a Chinese-style Assembly Hall or pagoda in Hoi An, Vietnam. Elaborate carvings, incense and courtyards highlight the town's Chinese merchant heritage.
- **Visit Japanese Covered Bridge Pagoda – Hoi An**
  You cross the Japanese Covered Bridge Pagoda in Hoi An, Vietnam, built in the 16th century to link communities across the canal. Its wooden roof and small shrine make it an iconic town symbol.
- **Visit Fukien Association Temple – Hoi An**
  You visit the Fukien Association Temple in Hoi An, Vietnam, once a gathering place for Fujian traders. The richly decorated halls and courtyards honour sea deities and ancestors.
- **Visit Hoi An Ceramic Museum**
  You stop at the Ceramic Museum in Hoi An, Vietnam to see historic pottery and trade artefacts. Exhibits illustrate how the town was linked to regional sea routes.
- **Visit Chua Ong Temple – Hoi An**
  You visit Chua Ong Temple in Hoi An, Vietnam, dedicated to a revered general from Chinese legend. Colourful statues and incense-filled halls add to the old-town atmosphere.
- **Lantern Making Workshop – Hoi An**
  You join a lantern-making workshop in Hoi An, Vietnam and learn how to craft the town's famous silk lanterns.

Local artisans guide you through framing, covering and decorating your lantern.

- **Lantern Releasing on Hoai River – Hoi An**
  You release your handmade lantern onto the Hoai River in Hoi An, Vietnam at dusk. The glowing lights floating along the water create a memorable final scene in the ancient town.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Blue Sky Boutique	Breakfast

DAY 7 Hoi An to Ho Chi Minh City Transition

This day allows time to enjoy Hoi An at a relaxed pace before travelling south to Vietnam’s largest city. Free time offers the opportunity for last-minute exploration, shopping, or leisure in the historic town. You then transfer to Da Nang Airport for a flight to Ho Chi Minh City, marking a shift from central Vietnam to the country’s commercial centre. Upon arrival, a transfer to your hotel completes the journey and sets the stage for exploring southern Vietnam.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time / Leisure – Hoi An**
  You have free time in Hoi An, Vietnam to revisit favourite streets, shop or relax by the river. The atmospheric old town rewards slow, unstructured wandering.
- **Drive Hoi An → Da Nang Airport**
  A road transfer from Hoi An, Vietnam takes you north to Da Nang Airport. The short coastal drive links the heritage town with the region's main flight hub.
- **Flight Da Nang → Ho Chi Minh City**
  A domestic flight departs from Da Nang, Vietnam and heads south to Ho Chi Minh City. The journey quickly carries you from central Vietnam to the country's largest metropolis.
- **Ho Chi Minh City Airport to Hotel**
  A road transfer from Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam takes you to your hotel. Traffic, scooters and high-rise buildings signal the energy of Saigon.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
Avanti Boutique	Breakfast	Cooking class at Tra Que village

DAY 8 Mekong Delta River Life & Village Traditions

This journey leaves Ho Chi Minh City and travels into the heart of the Mekong Delta, where rivers shape daily life and local traditions. Boat travel around Cai Be reveals floating markets, riverside craft villages, and family-run workshops producing rice paper, popcorn cakes, and traditional sweets. Visits to Tan Phong Island highlight fruit orchards, bee farming, and folk music, offering insight into rural culture and seasonal livelihoods. Narrow canal rowing provides a closer view of delta waterways before settling into a riverside ecolodge. The day concludes with

a garden walk and hands-on cooking experience, connecting local ingredients with regional cuisine.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive Ho Chi Minh City → Cai Be**
  A road transfer from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam takes you southwest toward Cai Be in the Mekong Delta. The route passes suburban districts before opening out into flat, fertile countryside.
- **Mekong Boat Trip – Cai Be**
  You board a motorised boat at Cai Be in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam to explore canals and rivers. Wooden boats, stilt houses and riverside workshops line the waterways.
- **Visit Local Family – Rice Paper & Popcorn Cakes - Cai Be**
  You visit a local family home in Cai Be, Vietnam to see how rice paper and popcorn cakes are made. The demonstration offers insight into small-scale Mekong Delta food production.
- **Visit Cai Be Floating Market**
  You visit Cai Be Floating Market in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam where traders sell produce from their boats. Painted bows and hanging sample goods show what each vessel offers.
- **Visit Rice Candy Craft Village – Cai Be**
  You stop at a rice candy craft village near Cai Be, Vietnam to watch sweets being cooked and shaped. Tasting freshly made pieces connects you directly with this local specialty.
- **Visit Bee Farm – Tan Phong Island**
  You visit Uncle Tu Dang's bee farm on Tan Phong Island in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. He explains how the bees are kept and serves you honey tea in a garden setting.
- **Tan Phong Island Fruit Orchards & Folk Music**
  You walk through fruit orchards on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam, seeing seasonal crops like durian and jackfruit. At Uncle 5 On's house you enjoy fresh fruit and traditional folk music performed by locals.
- **Rowing Boat Canals – Tan Phong Island**
  You board a small rowing boat to glide through narrow canals around Tan Phong Island, Vietnam. Low palms and quiet waterways give an intimate feel for Mekong Delta life.
- **Mekong Ecolodge Stay & Garden Walk**
  You check in at Mekong Ecolodge on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam and stroll through its gardens. Guests can pick and taste fresh fruit while relaxing in the rural setting.
- **Ditch Slapping & Cooking Class – Mekong Ecolodge**
  You join a “ditch slapping” activity at Mekong Ecolodge on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam to catch fish and harvest vegetables. These ingredients are then used in a hands-on cooking class for dinner.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Mekong Eco-Lodge	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 9

Tan Phong Island Village Life & Return to Ho Chi Minh City

This day focuses on close interaction with village life on Tan Phong Island, combining cycling, craftsmanship, and local hospitality. Travelling by bicycle through island villages offers insight into daily routines shaped by the Mekong Delta’s waterways and farmland. Visits to family homes highlight traditional skills such as rice paper roll making, banana rope hammock weaving, water hyacinth craft, and bamboo nail file production. A hands-on cooking class introduces jackfruit leaf cake, reflecting regional flavours and home-style cooking. The journey concludes with a ferry crossing to Hiep Duc and a drive back to Ho Chi Minh City, marking the transition from rural delta life to the urban south.

ACTIVITIES

- **Cycling Tan Phong Island Villages**
  You cycle quiet lanes on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam, visiting homes and workshops scattered among orchards. The gentle ride shows everyday Mekong Delta life up close.
- **Visit Sister 3’s House – Rice Paper Rolls**
  You stop at Sister 3's house on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam to see traditional rice paper rolls being made. Simple tools and local rice flour demonstrate low-tech food production.
- **Visit Aunt 4's House - Banana Rope Hammocks**
  You visit Aunt 4's house on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam to watch her weave hammocks from banana fibre rope. The craft shows creative use of readily available local materials.
- **Visit Ms Thao – Water Hyacinth Weaving**
  You meet Ms Thao on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam and learn how she weaves products from dried water hyacinth. Under her guidance you can create a small woven souvenir.
- **Visit Ms Hieu – Bamboo Nail Files**
  You visit Ms Hieu's home on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam to see how she makes nail files from bamboo sticks. The process highlights practical cottage-industry skills.
- **Cooking Class – Jackfruit Leaf Cake - Tan Phong Island**
  Back at the ecolodge on Tan Phong Island, Vietnam you join Ms Tam for a cooking class. You prepare and taste jackfruit leaf cake, a local sweet specialty.
- **Ferry Tan Phong Island → Hiep Duc**
  A short local ferry ride from Tan Phong Island, Vietnam carries you across the Mekong waterways toward Hiep Duc. Travelling with residents gives the crossing a very authentic feel.
- **Drive Hiep Duc → Ho Chi Minh City**
  A road transfer from the Hiep Duc area in Vietnam takes you back to Ho Chi Minh City. You leave the Mekong Delta's orchards and canals and return to the country's busiest city.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Avanti Boutique	Breakfast

DAY 10

Ho Chi Minh City Departure Day

This final day in Vietnam allows time to enjoy Ho Chi Minh City at your own pace before departure. Free time offers flexibility for last-minute sightseeing, shopping, or relaxation in the city. You then transfer from your hotel to Tan Son Nhat International Airport, concluding the journey through Vietnam. Departures take place according to individual onward travel arrangements.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time / Leisure – Ho Chi Minh City**
  You have free time in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to relax, shop or add extra sightseeing. The city's markets, museums and cafés offer plenty of options before departure.
- **Ho Chi Minh City Hotel → Airport**
  A road transfer from your hotel in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam takes you back to Tan Son Nhat International Airport. This marks the end of your guided services in the south.
- **Departure from Tan Son Nhat International Airport**
  You depart from Tan Son Nhat International Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam to fly onward or home. The Vietnam Encounters Tour concludes after your included airport transfer.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS	EXTRAS
N/A	Breakfast	Cambodia Extension, Extra day in Ho Chi Minh - post-tour, Half-day city tour, Cu Chi Tunnels tour

INCLUDED

- All accommodation as stated in the itinerary
- All transport and transfers
- 24-hour airport arrival & departure transfer service
- Services of a local tour guide during sightseeing and activities
- Admission fees
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Internal Flight from Da Nang to Ho Chi Minh
- Street Food Tour in Hanoi
- Halong Bay Experience
- Perfume River Cruise
- Lantern Making and releasing
- Mekong Delta Local Life immersive experience

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visas fees (Currently waived for GB and some other nationals. We can arrange a Visa Approval letter to enable other nationalities to obtain their visa on arrival - see your Tour Notes for details)
- Travel insurance (compulsory, get a quote here)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Tips for tour guides and drivers
- Any other items not mentioned above

Tour 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.

Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour

Min numbers: 1

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

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.

Cooking class at Tra Que village

Min numbers: 1

A tour guide will meet you at your hotel before cycling to Hoi An's colourful central market. Here, you'll have the opportunity to interact with the local sellers and learn about the ingredients to be used in the cooking lesson later.

You'll then hop back on your bike and head towards the Tra Que vegetable village. You'll be welcomed with a drink before being introduced to the vegetable gardens where the local farmers work using traditional methods of yesteryear - no electricity needed.

After familiarising yourself with the locals, you'll go to the restaurant to meet the chef - who will give you a cooking master class on the traditional ways of preparing and cooking Vietnamese food, before enjoying the fruits of your labour for lunch (included in the tour price).

The tour starts at your hotel at 08.00am or 2.00pm and takes around 4 hours. The tour is arranged as a sharing tour, joining other people, but is available privately for a supplement if you prefer (please contact us for prices).

Half-day city tour

Min numbers: 1

Go on a city tour of Ho Chi Minh and explore its highlights which include the Reunification Hall, the War Crimes Exhibition or the History Museum, a lacquer or rattan ware factory, Notre Dame Cathedral, War Remnants Museum, Centre Post Office, Chinatown and Thien Hau Pagoda (built by the Cantos congregation in the early 19th). You'll stop at Binh Tay or Ben Thanh Market for some shopping.

The tour starts at your hotel at 08.00am and takes around 4 hours. This is a private tour, just for any travellers in our group. Prices shown are based on min 2 people. Solo travellers can opt to pay a supplement for a private tour, or to join a sharing tour with other travellers.

Cu Chi Tunnels tour

Min numbers: 1

You'll have the chance to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels, which highlight the dedication of Viet Cong soldiers during the Vietnam War. It took about 25 years to build these extensive underground tunnels, which stretch for approximately 250 kilometres.

Using the tunnels, Viet Cong soldiers could move around war areas undetected by American soldiers. It is believed that Cu Chi Tunnels are built on the land known as 'Land of Steel' which is located at the end of Ho Chi Minh Trail.

This activity includes:

- Watching a documentary film about one of the most sophisticated man-made tunnels together with its extraordinary wartime legends
- Walking in the jungle and visiting the traps, the secret entrances, the bunkers, and underground hideouts
- Option to do some shooting at the rifle range of Cu Chi Tunnels. (Exclusive of bullets)
- Seeing the rice-paper (spring roll skin) and rice-wine production line
- Crawling into the tunnels and getting a feel for their size and the soldiers' experience
- Taking a rest, drinking green tea and having tapioca - the main food served during the war time.

You'll then head back to Ho Chi Minh, either back to your hotel or to the airport.
The tour starts at your hotel at 08.00am and takes around 5-6 hours. The tour is priced as a sharing tour, joining other people, but is available privately for a supplement if you prefer (please contact us for prices).

Mai Chau & Lu Luong Homestay pre-trip Extension

Min numbers: 1

This optional 3-night add-on takes you to the serene Pu Luong Nature Reserve for an authentic escape from city life. Begin with a night in Hanoi to settle in, before heading to the lush valleys of Pu Luong.

For two nights, you'll stay in a traditional, communal homestay, offering a true taste of local life amidst stunning landscapes. Your journey includes a scenic drive through rural vistas, a traditional lunch in a Thai stilt house, and guided treks to 'hidden villages' like Kho Muong. Experience the tranquil pace of life, immerse yourself in local culture, and explore magnificent terraced rice fields. The final day sees you returning to Hanoi which forms day 1 of

your main tour.

The price is based on two people sharing, and a single supplement applies for solo travellers, which covers your private room in Hanoi.

Day 1: Welcome to Hanoi, arrival airport transfer

After arriving at the airport, the Vietnam tour starts with a tour guide meeting you and transferring you to your hotel in Hanoi. They'll give you some initial introductions to the country and Hanoi during the drive to the hotel, help you settle in and schedule a pick-up time for the next day.

You can decide this evening whether to join the visit to Hoan Kiem Lake to watch or join in with the local's early morning Tai Chi exercise.

OVERNIGHT:

Hanoi hotel

MEALS:

None

Day 2: Leave Hanoi behind and head to Mai Chau & Pu Luong. Lunch in a Thai stilt house and arrive at homestay

We'll begin with a scenic 3.5-hour drive to Mai Chau. The journey offers beautiful views of the countryside, passing fields of tapioca, sugar cane, and lush rice paddies.

Upon arrival, we'll enjoy a traditional lunch in a Thai stilt house. Afterwards, we'll take a leisurely walk through the local village to see more of these unique homes, which are a central part of Thai culture. They are designed to be airy, comfortable, and safe, providing a truly peaceful atmosphere. The clean air and relaxed pace of life here are perfect for unwinding and escaping the daily grind.

At approximately 3pm, we will transfer to the Pu Luong Nature Reserve. The route takes us over a stunning mountain pass, offering a panoramic view of the whole valley below. We'll arrive at our accommodation with plenty of time to settle in before dinner.

You will have a delicious dinner and then some free time to explore the beautiful retreat. You'll love the captivating views and tranquil setting.

You'll spend the night in a Pu Luong homestay, an authentic, communal experience. These traditional stilt houses are set amidst the stunning scenery, offering a chance to stay in the heart of the reserve. You will share a room with other guests, each with a separate mattress and blanket, providing a real taste of local life and hospitality.

OVERNIGHT:

Pu Luong Homestay

MEALS:

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3: Trek to the 'hidden village' of Kho Muong.

We'll begin with a short drive from the retreat to Dong Dien village, the gateway to the most beautiful valley in Pu Luong. From here, we'll start a trek on a winding trail, where you can admire the vast terraced fields. If you visit during the rice season, you'll be treated to a spectacular view of the iridescent, golden rice paddies set against the majestic mountains.

The trail leads to Kho Muong village, often called the "Hidden Village" because it's nestled in a small, forested

valley surrounded by high mountains. Inhabited by over 50 households, the villagers here have maintained their traditional culture for generations. We will have lunch with a local Thai family in the village.
After lunch, our trek continues. We'll follow a scenic trail out of Kho Muong towards Bang village, navigating a hidden path alongside the terraced rice fields before returning to your accommodation.
You'll spend the night back at your homestay, your home away from home in the Pu Luong Reserve.
Please note: This trekking itinerary may be subject to change depending on the weather and customer requirements. Trekking will be 8-10km.

OVERNIGHT:
Pu Luong Homestay

MEALS:
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4: Return to Hanoi. Free time to explore the city
Today, you'll be leaving the serene valleys of Pu Luong and heading back to the bustling city of Hanoi. After a final breakfast surrounded by the peaceful, terraced fields, your journey will begin.
The drive back to Hanoi typically takes around four to five hours depending on traffic and any stops along the way. The route will see you transition from the rural landscapes and limestone karsts you've become accustomed to, back towards the urban sprawl. This is a good opportunity to reflect on your time in Pu Luong, perhaps reminiscing about the trekking, the local culture, or simply the quiet moments spent amidst nature.
As you get closer to Hanoi, the scenery will change from open fields and small villages to increasingly developed areas. The roads will get busier and the sounds of the countryside will be replaced by the constant hum of traffic. You can expect to arrive in the city in the early afternoon, giving you a chance to settle into your accommodation before deciding how to spend your evening.

MEALS:
Breakfast

Important Notes

1 Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the local 3 and 4-star level on this tour, together with a more basic eco-lodge in the Mekong Delta and a comfortable stay onboard a deluxe Junk boat in Halong Bay. Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms. Facilities at the eco-lodge are simple but with all beds & bedding provided.

All couples will be given a private double room.

Please check the Single Room Supplement option for details on room sharing options and charges for solo travellers on this tour.

2 Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides

We are committed to making sure our small-group tours in South East Asia have low maximum numbers as we feel this gives everyone in the group the best chance to get to know their fellow travellers and to hear and make the most of their guide. Having a smaller group also allows us to be a bit more creative with the places you stay and activities you do, which may simply not be possible with larger numbers. The group size for this tour is therefore a minimum of 2 and maximum of 12.

At Encounters Travel we aim to only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

On this tour we may use separate guides in Hanoi, Hue-Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh. The Halong Bay cruise and some optional tours are a sharing basis and you may join other travellers for these parts of the tour.

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3 Dates & Prices

We run regular small-group departures on this tour throughout the year starting on Saturdays. All departures are guaranteed to run with a minimum of 2 people. Departure dates and prices are listed on our website and on a separate dates & prices sheet available on request. Extra nights can be added to the start and/or finish of the tour if you would like to extend your time.

The tour can also be run privately on any other dates for any number of people. An additional supplement will be due for private departures, the amount depending on your dates and the number of people in your party.

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4 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.

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5 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

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6 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.

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7 Financial Security

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see our website or booking conditions for more information.

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8 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).

9 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

https://x.com/encounterstravl (yes, without the 'e')

10 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).

Considering travel insurance for your trip? World Nomads Travel Insurance offers coverage for more than 150 adventure activities as well as emergency medical, lost luggage, trip cancellation and more.

If your tour includes car hire, or 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.

Covid-19

Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable.

11 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.

travel aware
gov.uk/travelaware

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12 Reduce Plastic Waste with Water-to-Go Filter bottles

Traveling responsibly means minimizing plastic waste, but staying hydrated on the go is essential. At Encounters Travel we are committed to reducing single-use plastics, which is why we've partnered with Water-to-Go. Their portable filtration system removes over 99.9% of contaminants from any non-saltwater source, turning even questionable water sources into safe drinking water.

Given that tap water is un-safe to drink in many of the countries in which we operate, we recommend purchasing a Water-to-Go bottle prior to departure. This will help you avoid the use of single use plastic bottles and keep you hydrated on the go.

Save big! Get a huge 25% off your Water-to-Go bottle and other Water-to-Go products (such as filters, lids, and carriers). Use code **ENCOUNTERS25** at checkout (valid in the UK, USA and Canada).

How Water-to-Go Technology works:

- Their reusable, BPA free water bottles contain their own unique 3-in-1 filtration technology effectively providing clean safe drinking water from any non-salt water source around the world.
- Three different (1 traditional and 2 nano) technologies are combined in one filter cartridge to remove up to 99.9999% of microbiological contaminants in water.

The three technologies used in a Water-to-Go filter are:

- Mechanical filtration – A tiny pore size, so small contaminants can’t fit through.
- Electrical – A positive charge reduces the pore size even further and attracts contaminants like a magnet, trapping them inside the filter.
- Activated Carbon – Unlike most carbon based filters, instead of using adhesives to glue the carbon particles together, (which vastly reduces the carbon’s efficiency) it is contained within the membrane, helping to reduce contaminants whilst eliminating bad tastes and odours. Try filtering water from your tap at home and taste the difference!

Water-to-Go filter bottles deliver safe, healthy water worldwide

- Water-to-Go filters remove bacteria, viruses, waterborne disease, protozoa, heavy metals such as lead as well as harmful chemicals.
- Their filters remove Chlorine and Fluoride from tap water.
- The filter will eliminate harmful contaminants from the water but allow beneficial minerals such as sodium and magnesium to pass through leaving you with the healthiest water possible.
- Water-to-Go filters have been independently tested against internationally recognised standards by industry specialists including The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (UK), BCS Laboratories (USA), Bangalore Test House (India) and IMI (China).

Use Water-to-Go products and you'll be healthier, wealthier and helping to make the world a better place!

- Depending on filter size, each Water-to-Go filter is able to replace 260 or 400 single-use plastic water bottles!
- They ensure you have access to safe water anywhere in the world without ever having to buy environmentally damaging bottled water.
- Their water bottles deliver safe, clean drinking water at just 5p per litre.
- The filter membrane is biodegradable and the shrouds are recyclable.
- The water bottles are used and approved by everyone from backpackers to commuters, gym users to expecting mums. Perfect for everyday, outdoor and travel.

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13 Private & Tailor-made Tours

While our group departures offer a fantastic way to explore with like-minded travellers, we understand that some guests prefer a more exclusive experience. Most of our group tours can be booked on a private basis, allowing you to enjoy the same expert-led routes with your own dedicated party. The primary advantage of choosing a private arrangement is the flexibility it provides; we can easily customise the itinerary to include your preferred style of accommodation or adjust the pace to suit your needs. Private tours can be run on the same start days as our group tours, or on other dates. However, some activities within our trips are restricted to particular days of the week - we will advise you on anything like this that we need to work around. Pricing will be based on the number of travellers in your party, and any customisations you may like to make.

For those seeking something truly unique, our specialist sales team is available to collaborate with you on a completely tailor-made tour, designed from the ground up to match your specific interests, accommodation level and requirements.

To request a quotation for a private or tailor-made tour, please contact us.

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14 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.

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15 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.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.
Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

Flight CO2 Emissions:

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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16 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.

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17 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).

18 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 you 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.

Please note that as of April 15, 2026, a new requirement has been implemented at Tan Son Nhat International Airport (Ho Chi Minh City). All foreign travelers (excluding Vietnamese passport holders and transit passengers) are now required to complete a declaration form prior to passing through immigration. This form is free of charge and can be completed:

• Online before departure (strongly recommended) using the following link: https://prearrival.immigration.gov.vn

• Upon arrival, by scanning a QR code available at the airport.

Please note that this measure is currently only in effect at Ho Chi Minh City Airport. It may be gradually extended to all airports in Vietnam.

19 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 vacinnation may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this US CDC information about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. 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.

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20 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.

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21 Time

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

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22 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.
