ENCOUNTERS TRAVEL

Your passport to adventure

Vietnam Family Adventure

COUNTRY(IES)	Vietnam
TOUR TYPE	Family
TRANSPORT	A/C minibus, junk boat, sleeper train & flight
GROUP SIZE	Min: 3 | Max: 16
DURATION	13 days
STARTS	Hanoi, Vietnam
ENDS	Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
MEALS	Breakfasts - 11, Lunches - 8, Dinners - 2

TOUR ROUTE MAP **13 Days**



ROUTE: **Noi Bai International Airport** (Start) → **Hanoi** → **Halong Bay** → **Tam Thuan** → **Hoi An** → **Ho Chi Minh City** (End)

HIGHLIGHTS

Night on a junk boat in Halong Bay, Hanoi's Old Quarter, traditional cooking class, quaint riverside town of Hoi An, energetic old Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), exploring the cramped Cu Chi tunnels

Itinerary

DAY 1 Arrive Hanoi and transfer to hotel

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

- **Arrive 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.
- **Transfer from 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 in 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
Hanoi hotel	None	Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour, Single room supplement (VEFAFA)

DAY 2 Hanoi, full day city tour

This full day in Hanoi explores the political, cultural, and intellectual foundations of Vietnam through its most important landmarks. The journey moves between historic sites connected to Ho Chi Minh, ancient religious monuments, and museums that provide insight into Vietnam’s diverse ethnic communities and long scholarly traditions. Central Hanoi’s lakes and temples add a sense of place rooted in daily life and local heritage. The experience continues into the Old Quarter, where narrow streets and traditional neighbourhoods reveal the city’s living character. A cyclo ride and a traditional water puppet performance complete the day, blending history, culture, and everyday life into a cohesive Hanoi experience.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum in 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.
- **Explore One Pillar Pagoda in 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.
- **Explore Presidential Palace in 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.
- **Explore Ho Chi Minh Museum in Hanoi**
  Discover the Ho Chi Minh Museum in Hanoi, Vietnam with exhibits on the life and legacy of “Uncle Ho”. The displays help explain Vietnam's 20th-century history in a family-friendly way.
- **Explore Temple of Literature in 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.
- **Explore Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi**
  Explore the Vietnam Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi, Vietnam, with its life-size houses and rich displays. Learn how different ethnic groups across the country live, dress and celebrate.

- **Explore Ngoc Son Temple in Hanoi**
  Visit Ngoc Son Temple on a small island in Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi, Vietnam. Cross the red bridge to this peaceful shrine at the heart of the old city.
- **Explore Hoan Kiem Lake in Hanoi**
  Walk around Hoan Kiem Lake in central Hanoi, Vietnam, a favourite gathering place for locals. Enjoy views of the water, shaded paths and lakeside temples.
- **Cyclo Tour in Hanoi Old Quarter**
  Take a one-hour cyclo ride through the narrow streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter in Vietnam. Sit back as your driver weaves past shops, markets and buzzing traffic.
- **Traditional Water Puppet Show in Hanoi**
  Watch a traditional water puppet show in Hanoi, Vietnam, a unique art form that dates back centuries. Enjoy colourful stories, music and puppets dancing on the water stage.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hanoi hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 3 Hanoi, Vietnamese cooking class

This morning starts with a visit to the Hanoi Cooking Centre to begin your day of Vietnamese cooking. You will enjoy a special 'La Han' Vietnamese welcome tea, followed by a brief introduction to Vietnamese cuisine, including highlighting the contents of a traditional Vietnamese meal. Then take a short walk to Chau Long Market, where you will be shown around by the Chef who will explain the interesting goods on sale. Anything from livestock to silk worms are available to buy. Upon arriving back at the HCC the cooking class will begin and you will be able to sample some local goods, as well as getting all of the recipes printed for you to take home. On completion of the cooking class, enjoy the meal you have prepared. This gives you a chance to chat to the chef in the comfort of the HCC dining area and enjoy a drink whilst you relax. After the lesson receive a HCC 'Going Home' gift and you can also purchase some of the Vietnamese spices, tools and books that you have used during the day.

ACTIVITIES

- **Explore Chau Long Market in Hanoi**
  Walk through Chau Long Market in Hanoi, Vietnam with your chef to see fresh produce, spices and unusual ingredients. Discover how local families shop for their daily meals.
- **Vietnamese Cooking Class in Hanoi Cooking Centre**
  Join a Vietnamese cooking class at the Hanoi Cooking Centre in Hanoi, Vietnam. Learn how a typical Vietnamese meal is structured and prepare family-friendly dishes together.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hanoi hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 4 Halong Bay Cruise

This journey travels from Hanoi to Halong Bay, one of Vietnam’s most iconic natural regions, known for its limestone karsts and calm emerald waters. After reaching the coast, you board a traditional junk boat to explore the bay by water, passing dramatic rock formations and secluded inlets. Shore visits include a large limestone cave and an island viewpoint that offers wide views across the bay. Time on board is balanced with relaxed cruising and a cooking demonstration that introduces regional flavours. The experience blends scenic exploration with life on the water in Halong Bay.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Hanoi to 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.
- **Junk Boat Cruise on Halong Bay**
  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.
- **Explore Sung Sot Cave in Halong Bay**
  Visit Sung Sot Cave in Halong Bay, Vietnam, climbing many steps to reach vast chambers filled with stalactites and stalagmites. Enjoy an easy family hike through the illuminated caverns.
- **Explore Titop Island in Halong Bay**
  Stop at Titop Island in Halong Bay, Vietnam for swimming and short walks. Relax on the small beach or climb to viewpoints for sweeping bay panoramas.
- **Cooking Demonstration in Halong Bay Junk Boat**
  Watch a cooking demonstration on the deck of your junk boat in Halong Bay, Vietnam. Learn how to prepare simple Vietnamese dishes before sitting down to a seafood dinner.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Halong Bay junk boat	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 5 Halong Bay Cruise

This morning experience on Halong Bay combines gentle activity, local culture, and continued exploration of the bay’s limestone seascape. The day begins on board with Tai Chi, offering a calm start surrounded by open water and karst formations. Cruising continues through the bay with visits to a floating fishing village, providing insight into traditional livelihoods on the water. Kayaking in the Drum Cave area allows closer access to hidden corners and quiet lagoons. Time on board includes relaxed cruising and a cooking demonstration, rounding out a balanced and immersive Halong Bay experience.

ACTIVITIES

- **Morning Tai Chi in 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.
- **Explore Van Floating Fishing Village in Halong Bay**
  Visit a floating fishing village in Halong Bay, Vietnam by sampan or kayak. See fish pens and simple houses on the water where local families live and work.
- **Kayak Drum Cave Area in Halong Bay**
  Paddle a kayak around the Drum Cave area of Halong Bay, Vietnam. Explore quiet coves and rock formations from water level in a fun family-friendly activity.
- **Cooking Demonstration in Halong Bay Junk Boat**
  Watch a cooking demonstration on the deck of your junk boat in Halong Bay, Vietnam. Learn how to prepare simple Vietnamese dishes before sitting down to a seafood dinner.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Halong Bay junk boat	Breakfast,Lunch,Dinner

DAY 6 Halong Bay, Hanoi then train to Danang

This final stretch in northern Vietnam begins with a peaceful morning on Halong Bay, combining gentle Tai Chi with continued exploration of the limestone seascape. Time on the water includes kayaking through cave areas and relaxed cruising among the bay’s islands before returning to the mainland. The journey then transitions back to Hanoi, marking a shift from coastal scenery to urban life. After free time in the capital to rest or explore independently, the day concludes with an overnight train journey south. The route connects northern and central Vietnam while offering a classic long distance rail experience.

ACTIVITIES

- **Morning Tai Chi in 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 in 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.
- **Drive from Halong Bay to 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 in 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 from Hanoi to Danang (Reunification Express)**
  Board the Reunification Express night train in Hanoi, Vietnam for the southbound journey to Danang. Settle into

a shared four-berth cabin as the train rolls through towns and countryside.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
On board sleeper train	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 7 Travel to Hoi An and explore the town

This experience introduces the historic town of Hoi An through a guided walk that traces its trading past and cultural influences. After arriving from Da Nang, the journey unfolds through the preserved streets of the Ancient Town, where merchant houses, temples, and assembly halls reflect centuries of international exchange. Visits to Chinese and Japanese landmarks highlight the blend of architectural styles and religious traditions that shaped the town. Along the route, historic homes and pagodas reveal how Hoi An functioned as a living port city rather than a single monument. The walk offers a well rounded introduction to Hoi An’s heritage and enduring charm.

ACTIVITIES

- **Transfer from Da Nang Railway Station to Hoi An Hotel**
  A road transfer from Da Nang Railway Station to your hotel in Hoi An, Vietnam. Travel along the coast before checking into your riverside base.
- **Walking Tour of Hoi An Ancient Town**
  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.
- **Explore Chua Ong Temple in 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.
- **Explore Tam Ky Ancient House in Hoi An**
  Explore the 200-year-old Tam Ky house in Hoi An, Vietnam, a well-preserved merchant home. See carved wooden beams, antiques and family altars that show how traders once lived.
- **Visit Chinese Assembly Hall and 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.
- **Explore Japanese Covered Bridge Pagoda in 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hoi An hotel	None

DAY 8 Hoi An, Farmer & Fisherman tour

This active day in Hoi An explores rural landscapes and traditional livelihoods beyond the historic town centre. The journey begins with cycling through Tra Que Vegetable Village, where farming practices and local produce reflect generations of agricultural tradition. Hands on activities and a cooking demonstration offer insight into daily village life and regional cuisine. The experience then shifts to the river, combining a gentle eco cruise with traditional net fishing alongside local fishermen. A bamboo basket boat ride completes the day, highlighting the close relationship between waterways and community life in the Hoi An countryside.

ACTIVITIES

- **Cycle Through Tra Que Vegetable Village – Hoi An**
  Cycle from Hoi An, Vietnam out to Tra Que Vegetable Village through rice paddies and quiet lanes. Enjoy gentle countryside riding suitable for families.
- **Tra Que Village Farming Experience in Hoi An**
  Join local farmers in Tra Que Village near Hoi An, Vietnam to learn how they grow herbs and vegetables. Try simple tasks like preparing soil and planting seedlings.
- **Cooking Demonstration in Tra Que Vegetable Village**
  Take part in a cooking demonstration at Tra Que Village near Hoi An, Vietnam using fresh garden produce. Prepare and taste dishes that showcase central Vietnamese flavours.
- **Eco Tour River Cruise on Hoi An**
  Board an Eco Tour boat near Hoi An, Vietnam for a relaxed river cruise. Glide along calm waterways and meet local fishermen working on the river.
- **River Net Fishing with Local Fishermen in Hoi An**
  Try traditional river net fishing with local fishermen near Hoi An, Vietnam. Learn how they cast and haul nets as part of their daily work.
- **Bamboo Basket Boat Experience on Hoi An**
  Paddle in a round bamboo basket boat through coconut-lined channels near Hoi An, Vietnam. Enjoy this fun hands-on activity as you explore the watery palm groves.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hoi An hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 9 Hoi An, lantern making

This creative experience in Hoi An focuses on one of the town’s most recognisable cultural symbols. You take part in a hands on lantern making workshop that introduces traditional techniques, materials, and design styles passed down through generations. The activity reflects Hoi An’s historic role as a trading port, where decorative lanterns became part of daily life and celebrations. Working alongside local artisans offers insight into craftsmanship and cultural continuity. The experience provides a relaxed and meaningful connection to Hoi An’s living heritage.

ACTIVITIES

- **Lantern Making Workshop in 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hoi An hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 10 — Hoi An, free day

This period allows you to enjoy Hoi An at your own pace, offering time to explore the town independently or simply relax. You may choose to wander the Ancient Town, visit local cafés, browse tailor shops, or enjoy the riverside atmosphere. The flexible schedule provides a break from guided activities while still being immersed in Hoi An’s distinctive character. It offers a calm pause within the journey and space to personalise your experience of the town.

ACTIVITIES

- **Free Time in 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Hoi An hotel	Breakfast

DAY 11 — Hoi An, Danang then flight to Ho Chi Minh

Transfer from Hoi An to Da Nang Airport and fly south to Ho Chi Minh City. After landing, continue by road to the hotel and settle in. The rest of the day is free, giving you time to relax after the journey or head out independently for a first look around the city. The day remains focused on the move from central Vietnam to the southern metropolis and an easy arrival period.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Hoi An to 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.
- **Travel from Flight Da Nang to 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.
- **Transfer from 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.

- **Free Time in 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ho Chi Minh City hotel	Breakfast

DAY 12 Ho Chi Minh City, half day Cu Chi Tunnels

Travel from Ho Chi Minh City to the Cu Chi Tunnels before continuing to a local cricket farm in the countryside. The first stop explores wartime history, while the second introduces a different side of rural food production. After the excursion, return to the city and enjoy free time at your own pace.

ACTIVITIES

- **Drive from Ho Chi Minh City to Cu Chi Tunnels**
  Travel by bus from Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam out to the Cu Chi district. Watch urban scenes fade into countryside on the way to the famous tunnel network.
- **Explore Cu Chi Tunnels in Cu Chi**
  Explore sections of the Cu Chi Tunnels near Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam with a local guide. Learn how fighters lived underground and see wartime traps and craters.
- **Explore Cricket Farm in Cu Chi**
  Visit a cricket farm in the Cu Chi area of Vietnam to see how these insects are raised as food. Hear why crickets are considered a delicacy and taste them in a spring roll if you wish.
- **Drive from Cu Chi to Ho Chi Minh City**
  Return by road from the Cu Chi countryside to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Arrive back in the city with time to rest or continue exploring.
- **Free Time in 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.

OVERNIGHT	MEALS
Ho Chi Minh City hotel	Breakfast,Lunch

DAY 13 Depart Ho Chi Minh City

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 in 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.
- **Travel from Ho Chi Minh City Hotel to 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.
- **Depart 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

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, with instruction where necessary
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- Internal Flight from Da Nang to Ho Chi Minh

EXCLUDED

- International flights (available on request)
- Visas fees (Currently waived for GB nationals. We can arrange a pre-registration VISA letter for other nationalities - you will still need to pay for visa stamp fee upon arrival into the country, at customs check in counter, at a cost of $45 per person together with 2 passport photos. Please contact us for more information about the cost of this letter as prices vary depending on nationality.)
- 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.

Important Notes

1 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.

2 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

3 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.

4 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.

5 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).

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6 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')

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7 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.

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8 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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9 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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10 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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11 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.

12 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.

13 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.

14 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).

15 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.

16 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.

17 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.

18 Time

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

19 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.
