

EXPLORE!

BEST SELLER

Family Discover Vietnam

11 days

Vietnam - Trip code FQVN



Family Discover Vietnam

Experience an exciting introduction to Vietnam as we travel along the coast from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. On this fun-filled adventure, we sea kayak around the island cliffs of Halong Bay and descend into the maze of tunnels remaining from the Vietnam War. We can also learn a martial art, make kites and cook a Vietnamese meal. Why not extend your trip with time in Cambodia and the famous Angkor Wat Temples - search for trip code FQVNA. **TRIPLE ROOMS** This trip allows the option for triple rooms to be included within the booking on a selected number of night stops within the holiday. If you would like this option, a discount may be applicable on the cost of the trip - please ask our Sales team for further information.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Hanoi** - Free time to wander through the bustling narrow streets of the Old Quarter lined with shop-houses
- ★ **Halong Bay** - Sea kayaking in one of the most breath-taking limestone landscapes in South East Asia
- ★ **Hue** - Try making a kite and a martial arts lesson
- ★ **Ho Chi Minh City** - Learn about the resourcefulness of the Viet Cong at the Cu Chi Tunnels
- ★ **Hoi An** - Charming ancient merchant's town on the banks of the Thu Bon River

ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

Standard

Our standard, mid-range accommodation offers a good level of service, often with other amenities such as a restaurant, bar, garden or swimming pool. Generally rooms will be comfortable with en suite facilities.

TRIP PACE:

Moderate

Moderate pace tours are ideal if you want a holiday which combines exciting activities and experiences with plenty of time to relax and unwind. Typically you'll be active and busy for part of the day but then also have time to rest and recharge your batteries.

GROUP SIZE:

14 - 20

Maximum group size ranges from between 6 to 20 people, depending on the type of trip, the transport and accommodation used and activities included. We rarely have groups that are smaller than five or six people and the average is 12 people plus an Explore leader.

Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

DAY 1 - Join tour in Hanoi and guided tour of the Old Quarter

Arrive in Hanoi and check-in at the hotel. Vietnam's bustling capital is architecturally styled like a French provincial town, with tree-lined boulevards and low-rise buildings. Hanoi is a wonderful nostalgic city to explore and this afternoon you have a guided walking tour of its Old Quarter. A maze of narrow lanes named after the various crafts and specialities of the city's artisans. The pavements are filled with food sellers tempting you with steaming noodles, snacks and stir-fried delights.



Accommodation: La Belle Vie Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Tour of Hanoi with optional cooking class or a city tour

This morning we join our tour leader on a further sightseeing tour of Hanoi, visiting the One-Pillar Pagoda, the Temple of Literatures and the Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh. The afternoon is then free to perhaps take an optional cookery class, or explore Hanoi's elegant French Quarter by bicycle. In the evening there is the chance to witness a remarkable performance of traditional water puppetry. Set on a flooded stage, the stories tell tales of legendary heroes and everyday life, with dragons and unicorns often sharing the stage with fireworks and naval battles.



Accommodation: La Belle Vie Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel

DAY 3 - Morning drive to Ha Long Bay and overnight cruise on a traditional junk boat


Leaving Hanoi after breakfast, we drive approximately 4 hours to the Gulf of Tonkin and the breath-taking scenery of Ha Long Bay. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, and one of the most visually impressive landscapes in South East Asia, Ha Long Bay is the setting for our overnight cruise. There are between 10-18 en-suite cabins (all bedding is provided) with a restaurant, bar and sundeck area. Boarding the boat in time for lunch, we set sail and visit Sung Sot Cave which means 'Amazing Cave' which is the largest of its kind in the area with numerous stalactite and stalagmite limestone formations in an impressive cavern. We then spend the rest of the afternoon exploring the bay before our Junkboat finds its mooring for the evening. Please be aware, the boat may not be exclusive to Explore and consequently we may be sharing with other tourists.



Accommodation: Overnight Boat in Halong Bay (or similar)



Standard Junk

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 4 - Morning sea kayaking; Afternoon drive to Hanoi and overnight train to Hue

After a morning's sea kayaking and cruising around the bay, we head back to shore and disembark the boat at Bai Chay Beach before driving back to Hanoi. In the evening we board the Reunification Express overnight sleeper train to Hue, Vietnam's old imperial capital. We travel in soft sleeper compartments, with four passengers sharing each compartment with all bedding provided. Please note, breakfast will not be provided on the train, so there will be time to pick up snacks for the morning before boarding the train.



Accommodation: Overnight train from Hanoi to Hue



Simple Overnight Train

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Arrive Hue. Visit Royal Tombs and kite making and flying

Arriving in Hue this morning, we enjoy some of the highlights of this historic city including a visit to the Royal Palace with its Terracotta Warriors guarding the entrance and the iconic Thien Mu Pagoda, home to the oldest monastery in the city. We also visit Mr Cu's house who was a national champion kite flier for Vietnam and he shows us how to make traditional Vietnamese kites which you make and decorate with iconic symbols such as dragons, birds and peacocks. Once assembled, we fly them at the nearby Citadel. The Citadel is an impressive monument that is almost 10 km in circumference with the Imperial City located in the centre of the Citadel which is more than 600m long on each side. Access to the Imperial City can be made by four entrance gates although the Noon Gate is only used for the King.



Accommodation: Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available

DAY 6 - Cycle around the countryside, traditional wood painting and martial arts lesson

We travel to Trieu Son village which is located by the Perfume River on Hue's outskirts for a guided walk and boat ride. Our first stop is to Sinh village where we meet a local family that specializes in making wood paintings and they will teach the group how to make these traditional artefacts. We then take a leisurely cycle ride around the village and along countryside lanes to Thanh Tien village which is famous for paper flowers. Continuing through paddy fields and the Vietnam countryside, we arrive at Tien Non village where we board our cruise boat which takes us back to Hue (total cycling distance is approximately 6km). An included martial arts lesson is our next stop with a visit to a dedicated martial arts school that practices the Vietnamese art of Kinh Van, the countries equivalent to Kung Fu which is based upon defence techniques from the actions of a tiger, cobra, and bird. The owner's ancestors were chosen to guard the Vietnamese king and he now teaches this ancient art. We then travel over the Truong Son Mountains and through the Hai Van Pass, as seen on the TV programme, Top Gear, to the historic merchant seaside town of Hoi An.



Accommodation: Vinh Hung 2 Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Free in Hoi An; optional bike hire or visit the towns famous tailors

The morning is free to wander through the historic heart of this World Heritage Site, taking in the wonderfully preserved buildings of what was once one of the busiest trading outposts in South East Asia. Discovering this delightful town, we recommend an early morning visit to Hoi An's fish market which presents the perfect setting for some great photographs and some priceless interaction with the locals. Visit the city's famous Japanese Bridge, before wandering through its historic collection of traditional wooden houses and Chinese temples. This afternoon you could hire bicycles and explore the surrounding countryside, experience a gentle river cruise, spend time at the beach, or grab the chance to visit some of Hoi An's famous tailor shops.



Accommodation: Vinh Hung 2 Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Drive to Danang, fly to Ho Chi Minh City with walking and cyclo city tour

Our drive to Danang this morning takes us past the five peaks of the Marble Mountains, originally believed to have been islands that were said to represent the five elements of water, wood, fire, gold and earth. On arrival in Danang, we then board the morning flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Upon arrival we have a walking tour of Saigon with a local guide plus a cyclo tour (cycle carriages with a seat at the front) around Saigon's China Town and the Binh Tay Market areas.



Accommodation: Liberty 4 Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Morning visit to Cu Chi Tunnels; Afternoon free with optional visit to a water park

After breakfast this morning we head out to visit the infamous Cu Chi tunnels. First constructed by the Vietnamese during their colonial war with the French, the tunnels were later greatly expanded and went on to achieve notoriety during the Vietnam War, when they served as an underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops. Exploring Cu Chi gives some idea as to the conditions that the Vietnamese and their American adversaries had to endure (the tunnels are narrow and can be quite claustrophobic). The afternoon allows for more time in the city including an optional visit to the waterpark, a great way to cool off from the mid-day sun.



Accommodation: Liberty 4 Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel

 Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Drive to the Mekong Delta, cycle ride, homestay and cooking lesson


Leaving the city, we drive to the Mekong Delta and catch a boat to the start point of our cycle ride. We cycle for around 10-12 km along the flat Cai Thai village path with constant views of the delta as we wind our way around its many tributaries. The route is often shaded which is helpful to combat the humidity (the boat can pick up cyclists at various stopping points if required). Along the way, we visit Mrs Nani's home who will show us how to make rice paper in the traditional way and Mr and Mrs Chin's home who will provide refreshments that include her famous 'Banh Tieu' (traditional doughnut). We return to the boat where we have lunch on-board and sail close to our night stop. Transferring from our cruise boat to a sampan craft, which is a small traditional boat that is regularly used by the villagers to travel along the delta, we complete our journey to our homestay close by. Set in a lovely garden setting with a main lounge area and dining room, accommodation is en-suite (shower and toilet) with traditional décor throughout. After settling into our simple but clean accommodation, we have a Vietnamese cooking lesson in the afternoon and the owners usually give a traditional dancing and singing show to entertain their guests.



Accommodation: Ut Trinh Homestay (or similar)



Simple Homestay

 Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 11 - Drive back to Ho Chi Minh City via Cai Be Floating Market

Leaving the homestay behind, we cruise along the delta to the famous Cai Be Floating Market. One of the most colourful attractions of the Mekong is its floating markets and we visit one of the biggest in the Delta at Cai Be. Spend some time cruising through the market and soaking up the atmosphere of this unique trading point. After our visit, we drive back to Saigon where the trip ends in the afternoon (Day rooms are available).

 Meals Provided: None

Family information

Minimum age

7

Why book this trip

This holiday is designed for families who want to explore a specific country in South East Asia and enjoy travelling on a variety of transport options - bus, train, boat, flight and bicycle. There are a number of easy active elements to this adventure including trying out Vietnams answer to Kung Fo, sea kayaking in the stunning Halong Bay, kite flying and cycling along the Delta - this adventure also allows us to meet local people and visit their homes including when we make kites and rice-paper. A great trip from one end of the country to the other.



What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 8
Lunch: 2
Dinner: 2



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Boat
Flight
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader
Boat Crew
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

1 nights simple homestay
7 nights standard hotel
1 nights standard junk
1 nights simple overnight train

Trip information

Country information

Vietnam Holidays & Tours

Climate

As Vietnam is a long, narrow country from north to south climate conditions vary considerably. The climate can be divided into three distinct patterns between the north, central and south regions. The climate in the north is generally humid and subtropical, although the winter months from November to March can be colder with temperatures from 10 - 15 degrees. Summer months, May to September can be quite hot with temperatures from 30 - 35 degrees. Meanwhile south Vietnam enjoys a tropical climate all year round, with little variation throughout the year (around 27 - 32 degrees), however May to November is the rainy season when short, heavy downpours are quite frequent. Central Vietnam lies somewhere in between. The coastal strip is usually dry and hotter from April to October while November to March is wetter and cooler. A light rain jacket and small umbrella are recommended year round.

Time difference to GMT

+7

Plugs

2 Pin Round

Religion

Mahayana Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism

Language

Vietnamese

Budgeting and packing

Optional activities

Hanoi - Water Puppets show from US\$ 5; Ho Chi Minh's Stilt House US\$ 1; Museums US\$ 1; Waterpark US\$ 15 Hoi An - Half day cooking classes from US\$ 39-45 Hue - Dong Ba Market US\$ 18.00 - US\$ 23 Ho Chi Minh City - Reunification Palace US\$ 2

Clothing

Pack essentially for hot weather although December through to February warmer clothing is needed for the North. Bear in mind that the region is tropical (humid) and can be hot. Lightweight rainwear is advisable at all times. The north is cold at night during the winter. Casual clothes are the most practical.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and daypack. Remember you are expected to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

Equipment

Binoculars, torch, water bottle, insect repellent, high factor suncream, good quality sunglasses and a lip salve with sun protection. An overnight bag and swimming gear and towel is also recommended.

Tipping

Explore leader

At your discretion you might also consider tipping your Tour Leader in appreciation of the efficiency and service you receive.

Local crew

Although entirely voluntary, tipping is a recognized part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. In order to make things easier for you, the Tour Leaders may organise a group's tips kitty and if this is the case, they will account for it throughout the tour. Accordingly, you should allow US\$ 30.

Country Information

Vietnam Holidays & Tours

Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Dinner price

£9

Beer price

£2.00 - 4.00

Water price

£0.5

Foreign Exchange

Local currency

Dong.

Recommended Currency For Exchange

Carry your money in US\$ Dollars cash. You can also take GBP but US\$ are easier to exchange. (Dollar bills can be used in some hotels and shops; change is often given in local currency).

Where To Exchange

Most towns.

ATM Availability

There are ATMs virtually everywhere in Vietnam and in Cambodia, though we also recommend bringing cash.

Credit Card Acceptance

Some shops in Hanoi, and Hoi An. The occasional restaurant.

Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques can usually be changed in the towns, but only during bank opening hours.

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Boat, Flight, Train

Accommodation notes

Booking a Single Room

All of our group tours are planned and operated on a twin-share basis, meaning that the standard cost is based either on individual travellers sharing accommodation with another group member of the same sex, or people who book together sharing accommodation. Please refer to the tour notes where the single room option availability is detailed on a night by night basis for this tour, and the price for the available nights is detailed on the dates & prices tab by departure date. For Self-Guided trips the Single Room supplement offers the option of a single room each and is charged per person. The Single Room supplement also applies to the third person in a party of three that will be accommodated in a single room.

Our hotel in Hanoi is located in the center overlooking the historical street of Hanoi and famous Westlake with the famous Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and the Old Quarter close by. The en-suite rooms are beautifully designed and have great views of the city skyline. The hotel also has an excellent restaurant, cafe with views of the city's Old Quarter. After time on the Junk Cruise boat, we travel to Hue where we stay in a recently built city centre hotel next to the Perfume River. There are three restaurants decorated in the Nguyen dynasty's style, a health club, swimming pool, bar, gym plus internet access. Moving onto Hoi An, our accommodation is designed with a Vietnamese and Chinese influence just a short walk from the ancient town. The restaurant and bar overlooks the swimming pool with free internet access in the lobby. Finally to Ho Chi Minh City where we stay in a centrally located hotel with the Ben Thanh market close by. Rooms have air conditioning, hairdryer, Wi Fi, safe and TV along with a facilities that include four restaurants, fitness and health centre with massage and spa treatment.

Family swimming

It is possible to swim at Halong Bay and Hoi An beach and hotel

Essential information

FCO Advice

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office advice click [here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, click [here](#)

Under 18 immigration guidance

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

Essential Information

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

Visa Information

Vietnam: Until 30th June 2018 'British Citizen' passport holders can visit Vietnam for up to 15 days without a visa. A visa will be required if you enter after this date or if you wish to re-enter within 30 days of your departure. For visits of up to 30 days, you can get an e-visa before you travel from <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/> For visits of longer than 30 days you must get a visa from the nearest Vietnamese embassy before travelling to Vietnam. If you want to make a second visit within 30 days of leaving Vietnam, you'll need to get a multiple entry visa to re-enter. Please note that it is a pre-requisite for entry into Vietnam that your passport is

valid for a minimum of 6 months from your date of entry All visa related issues including information for other nationalities should be confirmed with the relevant Embassy prior to departure.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may consider applying through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See www.travcour.com to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

Transfers

[Find out more about Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions before you book.](#)

Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will now receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The transfers will be from the Explore designated airport or train station to the joining point of your tour, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer click [here](#)

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

Flight information

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them [here](#).

Flight Information

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

Non refundable permits

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Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, we recommend protection against malaria, typhoid, tetanus, diphtheria, polio and hepatitis A. Consult your travel clinic for latest advice on Malaria and Zika Virus. Although not compulsory travellers may also wish to immunise themselves against Japanese encephalitis. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at <http://www.explore.co.uk/Travelhealth/> and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed before departure.

