

# EXPLORE!



**Tailormade North Vietnam Explorer**  
10 days

Vietnam - Trip code TMV11

## Tailormade North Vietnam Explorer

### Meet the locals

Bike rides, village visits, walks and saying a cheery 'hello' to residents of local villages, this itinerary explores the secret side of Vietnam. We've woven in all sorts of local experiences, so you can feel a real part of this friendly country, as well as a delightful cruise on-board a traditional junk in Halong Bay.

### Enriching tailormade journeys – for you

This bespoke journey features some of our favourite spots in Vietnam. You can choose to take our destination experts' recommendations and travel just as you see the itinerary here, or contact us to add your own special touches; maybe a five star hotel in Hanoi to start your trip or extra time spent with the local families. We're here to design your perfect holiday.

Call us on **01252 883 184**.

## Trip highlights

### ACCOMMODATION GRADE:

#### Premium

Our premium accommodation is hand-picked and chosen for its character, location or local importance. These properties have excellent facilities and a higher level of comfort and service. They provide the perfect wind down after an active day.

**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.

# Itinerary

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

## DAY 1 - Overnight flight from the UK to Vietnam

Fly from the UK to Hanoi.

 None

## DAY 2 - Hanoi

Arrive in Hanoi and check-in at the hotel. The remainder of the day is free to make your first impressions of the Vietnam's capital city. You may choose to take a walk around the shores of Hoan Kiem Lake. Situated in the centre of the city and translated as 'Lake of the Restored Sword', Hoan Kiem Lake was named after a legend in which Heaven gave the Emperor a sword used to drive the Chinese from Vietnam; after the war a turtle rose from the water and grabbed the sword taking it to the depths of the lake. If you are lucky you may even spot some turtles in the murky water.



**Accommodation: The Ann** (or similar)



Premium Hotel

 None

## DAY 3 - Hanoi


Like a French provincial town with tree-lined boulevards, Hanoi is wonderfully nostalgic and a walk through the engaging streets of its Old Quarter provides an ideal introduction. Named after the various crafts and specialities of the city's artisans, each street bears such descriptive monikers as Paper Street, Silk Street and Basket Street. This practice dates back to the 13th century, when the city's original 36 guilds established themselves here, adopting a street each to differentiate them from their neighbours. The maze of alleys presents a fascinating venue to explore on foot and the area is known for its interesting 'tube' houses, whose narrow frontages give way to long rooms that stretch back. Street vendors tempt you with noodles, snacks and stir-fried delights from shoulder panniers, all adding to the charm of Hanoi's historic heart. Explore on foot and on an exciting cyclo ride which will also take you to Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and The Temple of Literature. Founded in 1070 as a Confucian temple, the Temple of Literature was also Vietnam's first university, the Chinese style architecture and courtyards are not to be missed.



**Accommodation: The Ann** (or similar)



Premium Hotel

 Breakfast

## DAY 4 - Halong Bay

Drive to the incredible setting of Halong Bay, one of Vietnam's most spectacular natural attractions recently voted as one of the eight natural wonders of the world. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, Halong Bay boasts hundreds of jungle clad islands (over 1600 at the last count) that rise from the jade green waters of the bay like the scales of some great submerged dragon. Indeed Halong means where the dragon descends to the sea and local legends tells of a time when this rugged landscape was created by the pounding tail of a mighty dragon as he ran from the mountains into the glittering waters of the bay below. On arrival you will board your junk and set sail, threading your way through a flotilla of boats, junks and wooden sampans as they ply their way across the gentle waters of the bay. The plan for today is to sail through this stunning seascape, stopping off to swim and visit some of the limestone caverns that pepper the landscape.



**Accommodation: Bhaya Junk** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast Lunch Dinner

## DAY 5 - Halong Bay cruise and Hanoi

This morning you enjoy the romantic scenery of Halong Bay on a cruise amongst the islands. You'll have the chance to stop at a grotto beneath towering cliffs and perhaps visit a beach. It is interesting to see the curious assortment of tourist boats, traditional junks and wooden sampans gliding through the waters. In the afternoon you'll return to Hanoi for the evening. Perhaps you may like to see a performance of traditional water puppetry, a practice that dates back to the 15th century. Set on a flooded stage, the stories tell tales of legendary heroes and everyday life, with dragons and unicorns sharing the stage with ducks and frogs, and even fireworks and naval battles.



**Accommodation: The Ann** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

## DAY 6 - Mai Chau

Departing frantic Hanoi, your journey continues west to Mai Chau and Xam Khoe village. The fertile landscapes of Mai Chau are home to the minority White Thai people, who live in stilt-housed villages surrounded by rice paddies. The White Thai constitute one of the largest minority groups in the region and your time here will give you a chance to get to learn a little more about the traditions and customs of your hosts. After lunch you'll depart Xam Khoe village and walk to Buoc Village, enjoying the magnificent scenery as you go.



**Accommodation: Mai Chau Ecolodge** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Lunch Dinner

## DAY 7 - Mai Chau

Today you head out into the Mai Chau countryside on two wheels. Your easy cycle ride takes you alongside rice paddies and through pretty villages that lie in the shadow of the surrounding mountains. There will be the opportunity to dismount and wander amongst the friendly villages to meet the locals.



**Accommodation: Mai Chau Ecolodge** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Swimming pool available



Breakfast Lunch Dinner

## DAY 8 - Hanoi

After breakfast you depart Mai Chau and return back to Hanoi for your final night.



**Accommodation: The Ann** (or similar)



Premium Hotel



Breakfast

## DAY 9 - Hanoi

Free time in Hanoi for any last-minute sightseeing and shopping, before transferring to the airport for your flight to the UK.



Breakfast

## DAY 10 - Arrive UK

Arrive back in the UK.



None

# What's included?



## Included meals

Breakfast: 7  
Lunch: 3  
Dinner: 3



## Transport

Private car  
Boat  
Bicycle



## Trip staff

Local guide  
Driver(s)



## Accommodation

1 nights premium hotel  
6 nights premium hotel

# 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

### 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

### 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.

#### STANDARD

Light on your pocket but long on simple experiences, these tours are based in simple, sometimes local-style accommodation. If your idea of adventure travel is to experience real, everyday life then you will enjoy our Standard style of holiday. You will have the chance to stay at simple, family-run hotels and guesthouses where the lack of luxury is more than compensated for by the warm welcome and genuine insight into local life.

#### Anise Hotel

The Anise Hotel is a mid-sized boutique style property located in the centre of Hanoi, just a few minutes from the old quarter. The buffet restaurant on the 11th floor offers panoramic views of the city and serves both European and Vietnamese cuisine. Rooms are simple but comfortable enough for a few days stay. There is a small gymnasium.

#### Bai Tho Junk

The deluxe, refurbished Bai Tho Junk has only six cabins, all with air-conditioning. You can relax on the sofas in the salon or enjoy the open-air on the top deck – both with stunning views. Delicious local cuisine is served in the dining room, usually with vegetables made into intricate shapes (!), and there is also a bar.

#### Mai Chau Ecolodge

Mai Chau Lodge is located at the edge of Mai Chau village overlooking the surrounding countryside and lake. Comfortable rooms are furnished in traditional style, and each has a private balcony or terrace. There's a swimming pool and the restaurant serves fantastic local cuisine. The lodge even has its own private cave to explore!

## PREMIUM

On Premium level tailor-made holidays you will stay at comfortable mid-range hotels, chosen for their location, ambiance or local character. Your rooms will be clean and well-appointed, with en suite bathrooms and air-conditioning or heating as necessary. Premium level hotels normally have restaurants, bars and often other amenities such as a swimming pool and gardens, offering a good level of comfort at a reasonable price.

### The Ann

Offering an rooftop pool, a restaurant and a bar, The Ann hotel is located just a short walk from Hanoi's Old Quarter. Rooms are spacious, comfortable and modern, perfect for winding down after a day in the busy city.

### Bhaya Junk

Bhaya cruises offer four modern but traditionally designed junk boats all with comfortable cabins and facilities. There are between 15 and 20 cabins, all outward facing to make the most of the views. On-board you can enjoy a range of activities including fishing, tai chi and Vietnamese cooking demonstrations with your chef. There is also a spacious sundeck with sun loungers, a dining room and bar, and a small spa.

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## INDULGE

If you are looking for the best of both worlds, with adventurous days and indulgent nights, our Indulge level tailor-made holidays may be just the answer. On these tours you can enjoy busy days packed with adventure and activity, followed by relaxing evenings unwinding in the comfort of accommodation hand-picked for its high level of comfort and service. Some hotels are full of historical interest too: a converted palace in India for example, or a restored colonial mansion in Latin America.

### Melia Hotel

A large, contemporary property, Melia Hotel offers spacious rooms and a wide range of facilities including casino, outdoor pool and spa. It is a short 10 minute walk from the city centre where you can find local bars, restaurants and shops.

### Jasmine

On this wonderful junk, the decor is classic, 1930s Indochina, with lots of wood interiors and detailed ornamentation. Bedrooms, restaurants and bars are all air-conditioned, so you can relax and enjoy this opulent sailing experience.

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## 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](#)

## 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.

## **Vietnam Holidays & Tours**

### **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.

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