

EXPLORE!

Cycle Saigon to Hanoi

14 days

Vietnam - Trip code CVIE



Cycle Saigon to Hanoi

On this adventurous trip we bike along the rural backroads and into the highlands of Vietnam. Along the way we discover the cultural highlights of Saigon, Hoi An, Hue and Hanoi. There is also time to explore the Mekong Delta, the tropical beaches and islands of Nha Trang and the majestic beauty of Halong Bay on an overnight cruise.

Trip highlights

- ★ **Saigon** - Cycle out to the Cu Chi Tunnels and explore the Mekong Delta
- ★ **Cycle the Central Highlands** - Explore Vietnam's lush hill country and cycle over the Hon Giao Pass
- ★ **Beaches of Nha Trang** - Take a boat trip out to the tropical islands
- ★ **Halong Bay** - Cruise on a traditional junk amongst the bays and islands of one of South East Asia's most beautiful landscapes
- ★ **Hoi An** - World Heritage town. Visit My Lai and cross over the Hai Van Pass
- ★ **Hanoi** - Visit some of the highlights of the Vietnamese capital, including the city's Old Quarter
- ★ **Hue** - Explore Vietnam's old imperial capital by bike

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.

CYCLING GRADE:

Moderate

Medium length rides suitable for cyclists who are used to undulating routes with occasional energetic climbs. Mainly on trails and quiet roads and you should have a reasonable level of fitness.

GROUP SIZE:

10 - 16

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 Saigon; afternoon orientation tour

We arrive in Saigon today and, after a chance to freshen up, this afternoon take an orientation walking tour of the city. The tour includes the prominent sights of the Hotel de Ville (home of the city's People's Committee), Notre Dame Cathedral and the impressive French style architecture of the GPO building. Following the tour we then have some free time, with options available to pay a visit to the Reunification Palace or the emotive War Crimes Museum. Alternatively you might like to explore the bustling stalls of the Binh Tay Market, the largest wholesale market in southern Vietnam.



Accommodation: Huong Sen Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: None

DAY 2 - Cycle to Cu Chi Tunnels; late afternoon free in Saigon

Driving for an hour out of the busy city centre to reach the quieter suburbs this morning, we collect our bikes at Cu Chi bus station and ride about 30 km to Ben Duoc, the site of the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels on the outskirts of Saigon. Originally started during the French occupation of the country, the tunnels went on to achieve notoriety during the Vietnam War, when they formed an amazing underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops. We will explore the tunnels with a local guide this morning. Be warned though, the tunnels are low and narrow and can be claustrophobic. After lunch we continue cycling for about 20 km towards Ben Nay to further explore the area. Drive back to Saigon (c. 2 hours drive) and the rest of the afternoon is free relax or explore the city. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 50 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 50 meters, total accumulated descent 40 metres).



Accommodation: Huong Sen Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 3 - Drive to Mekong Delta then cycle backroads to Cai Be

Today gives us an opportunity to journey down into the Mekong Delta, to explore the fertile hinterland between the South China Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. Leaving Saigon, we drive first for two hours out of the busy city into the countryside to Binh Duc (My Tho), from where we begin cycling through a rich landscape of bustling markets, orchards and riverside villages. Here we can see local cottage industries and watch rice paper and coconut sweets being made as they have been for generations. After a tasty lunch of local produce we cycle on through Tan Phong and visit a beautifully restored traditional house in Ut Kiet, before finishing our ride at Cai Be's famous market. From here we drive for about three hours back into the centre of Saigon. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 51 kilometres, flat cycling.



Accommodation: Huong Sen Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast & Lunch

DAY 4 - Exploring Vietnam's Central Highlands

Departing Saigon this morning we head north into the southern Central Highlands towards the mountain town of Dalat (set at 1500 metres elevation). After an initial two hour drive to reach the countryside, we commence today's cycling from Trang Bom with a picturesque 35 kilometre ride through the hills of the Langbiang Plateau, negotiating our way along quiet back roads to the town of Gia Kiem and then Bao Loc. After a relaxing lunch in Bao Loc we board our bus again for a longer (around 4 hours) very scenic drive right across the mountains, giving us stunning views over the forested hills, to reach the bustling old French city of Dalat. The city has a European feel in its architecture and a cooler climate due to the higher altitude. Here, depending on the weather we may take to our bikes again to explore the back streets on a 20 kilometre ride, before checking into our hotel for the night. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 210 metres, total accumulated descent 150 metres).



Accommodation: TTC Dalat Hotel (Formerly Golf Dalat Hotel) (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 5 - Cycle over Hon Giao Pass then drive to Nha Trang

Driving out of Dalat City this morning we then begin cycling up to the Hon Giao Pass (1,700m), a challenging ride that takes us up through forests of pine and across a landscape of dramatic mountain scenery. After a chance to rest at the top and take in the views, we then descend towards the town of Khanh Vinh, where we meet our bus and finish the rest of the journey to Nha Trang by road.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 80 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 1460 metres, total accumulated descent 2962 metres).



Accommodation: Vien Dong Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 6 - Boat trip to tropical islands

Nha Trang is well known for its beautiful bays, golden beaches and turquoise waters. Weather permitting, this morning we take a cruise out to explore some of the surrounding islands. We aim to stop and visit one of the islands where you have the option to have a swim or hire snorkelling equipment (weather and conditions dependant). There will also be the option to enjoy a seafood lunch on the island (at your own expense). Returning to Nha Trang late this afternoon the rest of the day is free to enjoy the sights and sounds of this lovely coastal town. No cycling today - rest day.



Accommodation: Vien Dong Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 7 - Cycle and drive from Nha Trang to Quy Nhon

Using a combination of bus and bicycle this morning we continue along the coast to the city of Quy Nhon. We commence our ride from the hotel in Nha Trang and head out along the Pham Van Dong road and continue on to Ninh An toll fee station (a journey of some 50 kilometres). From here we then take the bus to Dai Lanh, where we have a chance to swim and relax, before continuing by bus over Ca Pass to Bai Tien Song Cau. From here we resume our journey by bike with a 30 km ride to complete the final leg to Quy Nhon and our hotel for the night. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 60 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 640 metres, total accumulated descent 775 metres).



Accommodation: Seagull Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 8 - Pedal over the Thi Nai sea bridge; drive to Hoi An

Departing Quy Nhon this morning we cycle out across Thi Nai Bridge, the longest sea bridge in Vietnam, which connects the city with the Phuong Mai Peninsula. Once across, we continue by bike along the Quy Nhon lagoon towards Phu My some 50 kilometres away. From Phu My we then travel by bus to Quang Ngai, the scene of the My Lai massacre - one of the most infamous episodes of the Vietnam War. We complete the final leg of our journey to Hoi An by bus. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 59 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 395 metres, total accumulated descent 390 metres).



Accommodation: Van Loi Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 9 - Morning walking tour of Hoi An; free afternoon

First colonised by the Portuguese in the 16th century, Hoi An went on to become one of the busiest trading outposts in South East Asia. This morning we take a walk through the historic heart of this World Heritage Site, taking in the city's famous Japanese Bridge and its museum, before wandering amongst its traditional wooden houses and Chinese temples. This afternoon is then free to perhaps take a gentle river cruise or pay a visit to one of Hoi An's renowned tailors' shops, or maybe explore further afield by bike. No cycling today - rest day.



Accommodation: Van Loi Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 10 - Cycle and drive to Hue via the Hai Van pass

Leaving Hoi An after breakfast, we start with a morning cycle ride to Xuan Thieu alongside the beaches of Danang and across Thuan Phuoc Bridge (a ride of about 45 km). From Xuan Thieu we drive up to the lofty heights of the Hai Van (Sea Cloud) Pass. This stunningly scenic region once marked the boundary between Vietnam and the Champa Kingdom to the south and, as we reach the summit of the pass, the panoramas before us are simply spectacular. Descending by bus we head next for Lang Co where we will stop for lunch. We drive on to Tu Hien Bridge before cycling along scenic back roads as we wind our way along the Cau Hai Lagoon to Thuan An (a ride of approximately 30 km). Meeting our bus in Thuan An, we then drive on to Hué on the shores of the Perfume River. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 80 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 52 metres, total accumulated descent 50 metres).



Accommodation: Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Swimming pool available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 11 - Cycling around Hue then overnight train to Hanoi

Once the capital of Vietnam and an inspiration for poets and artists alike for centuries, Hué's tranquil villages and picturesque countryside make it an ideal place to explore by bike. Today we spend some time cycling through bamboo groves and rural villages to the historic tile-roofed bridge at Thanh Toan. We also visit the 19th century Nguyen Tomb of Tu Duc and the Old Citadel that still dominates the left bank of the river. Returning to the hotel to freshen up we then drive to the railway station to catch the overnight train to Ha-noi. Our total cycling distance today is approximately 32 kilometres (total accumulated ascent 130 metres, total accumulated descent 115 metres).



Accommodation: Overnight Train from Hue to Hanoi



Simple Overnight Train



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 12 - Arrive in Hanoi; Drive to Halong bay for overnight cruise

Arriving in the Vietnamese capital early this morning we drive to the hotel in time for breakfast. Later this morning we then drive to the Gulf of Tonkin and the breathtaking scenery of Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the most visually impressive landscapes in South East Asia. Boarding the boat in time for lunch we set sail and visit Sung Sot Cave, spending this evening aboard the junk in twin-share, en suite cabins. Be aware the boat is not exclusive to Explore and we may be sharing with other tourists. No cycling, rest day.



Accommodation: Halong Bay Junk (or similar)



Standard Junk



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

DAY 13 - Morning cruise then drive to Hanoi then city tour

This morning we continue cruising through this wonderfully scenic landscape, enjoying the serenity of its limestone islands and visiting some of the caves (the optional cave visits can involve climbing some slippery steps). Returning to the shore we then drive back to Hanoi, a four hour journey that gets us into the capital in time to enjoy a short tour of the city. Our afternoon tour includes a visit to the Ba Dinh Square and the Temple of Literature, as well as a chance to explore a little something of the city's fascinating Old Quarter. No cycling, rest day.



Accommodation: Anise Hotel Hanoi (or similar)



Standard Hotel



Single room available



Single room available



Meals Provided: Breakfast

DAY 14 - Tour ends Hanoi

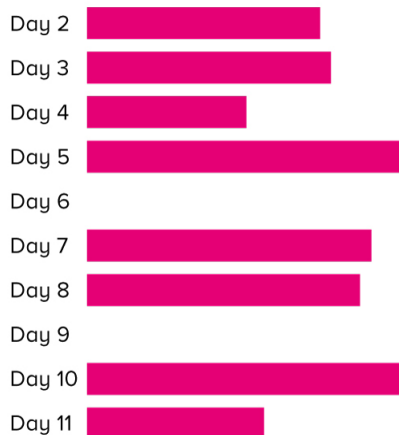
The tour ends in Hanoi this morning after breakfast.



Meals Provided: Breakfast

Cycling information

DAILY DISTANCE



General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 442 km over eight days (an average of 55 km per day) with further optional rides available. We mostly follow provincial roads with less car traffic but can have some motorbike traffic (90% tarmac roads, 10% earth/gravel roads). The terrain is generally flat except for the sections around Dalat which are in the hills. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour with the exception of part of the Mekong Delta route. We have graded the route as moderate.

Bike included

24 gear Giant or ATX mountain bikes with front suspension. Electric bikes (e-bikes) are available for an additional cost for the duration of the holiday (£95). You will be required to pay a refundable deposit upon collection of the e-bike in country. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

Bike information

Your included bike is an 24 gear Giant or ATX mountain bike and will be the correct frame size for your height. A rear pannier bag and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. A support vehicle accompanies the rides throughout the tour. We provide spare parts and take care of the day to day maintenance. All you need to bring is your own helmet. E-bikes are available upon request. We can offer a 21 gear Giant Lafree 970 hybrid e-bike with front suspension. Only available in a 17 inch size frame (size small). A rear pannier bag and water bottle holder are included as well as the facility to fit your own pedals or saddle if you wish to bring them. All you need to bring is your own helmet.

Cycling grade

Moderate



Why book this trip

Unlike many other operators, we include the hire of your bike in the overall cost of the holiday: you don't need to bring your own or pay extra to hire one locally. We also provide a support vehicle, spare parts and take care of day to day bike maintenance. All you need bring is your own helmet.

What's included?



Included meals

Breakfast: 13
Lunch: 2
Dinner: 1



Transport

Bus
Bicycle
Boat
Train



Trip staff

Explore Tour Leader / Cycle guide
Bike Mechanic
Driver(s)
Local Guide(s)



Accommodation

11 nights standard hotel
1 nights standard junk
1 nights simple overnight train

Trip information

Country information

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 from USD 8. Cyclo ride around Old quarter USD 6. Nha Trang - All beaches are private and you will need to pay for access, parasols and sun loungers if using. Snorkel equipment hire 10 USD. Hue - Perfume River half day boat trip from USD 6; Trip to countryside from USD 12. Hoi An - Cookery class from USD 25, Vegetable Village visit USD 3.

Clothing

Bring cycle shorts, quick drying cycle tops and gloves. From December through to February warmer clothing is needed for the North and the highlands. Days are hot and humid. Lightweight rainwear essential at all times. The northern region and highlands are cold at night during the winter.

Footwear

If you are not bringing cycle shoes then try to bring stiff-soled shoes as these are better for cycling - transmitting your energy into the pedals more efficiently. This becomes more relevant and recommended the more demanding the grade and distances to cover. SPD cycle shoes are not well suited to tours that combine sightseeing with cycling. Comfortable shoes, trainers, sandals or flip flops are useful when not on the bike.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

We recommend you bring a daypack and one main piece of luggage (total allowance: 44lb/20kg) which will be transported between hotels while you cycle. Check the bike details section to see if a pannier or handlebar bag is provided on the bike.

Equipment

On all Explore cycle holidays we strongly recommend you bring along and wear your cycle helmet. In case of an accident resulting in personal injury, certain insurance policies are invalidated in cases where a helmet was not being worn. Cycle glasses to protect against dust, pollen and the sun, padded cycle gloves and a water bottle or water delivery system (e.g. camelback or platypus) are also useful. You may choose to bring your own gel seat cover for added comfort. If a handle bar bag or pannier is not provided (check bike details) then you may like to bring a small rucksack to wear while cycling. Other items to consider bringing are a sunhat and sun cream, torch, earplugs and insect repellent. Even though clean bed linen is provided on the train journey, you may want to bring a cotton sleeping sheet (it can be purchased in Hanoi) and a small travel towel. Please carry some or all of your cycling equipment e.g. helmet as part of your hand luggage.

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\$ 35.

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, 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.

Standard - Our 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. The overnight Junk has twin share, en-suite cabins. It is not exclusive to Explore travellers. Simple - The overnight train has soft-sleeper four berth cabins, bunk bed style and bedding is provided. Both Western and Asian style toilets are at the end of each carriage.

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

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.
