

# EXPLORE!

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## Cycle Vietnam

VIETNAM - TRIP CODE CVN

CYCLING

### Why book this trip?

On this trip we discover the highlights of Vietnam by bike. Explore the charming cities of Hanoi, Hue, Old Saigon and Hoi An and experience the natural beauty of Halong Bay. Visit the ancient capital of the Cham Empire at My Son and discover the thriving Mekong Delta by boat and on two wheels.

- **Halong Bay** - cruise amongst the beautiful landscapes of Halong Bay
- **Bike Vietnam** - Get closer to Vietnam's fascinating sites and welcoming people from Hanoi to Saigon
- **Hue, Hoi An and My Son** - Cycle the Imperial sights and World Heritage monuments



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 13  
Lunch: 4



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



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus  
Bicycle  
Flight  
Train



**ACCOMMODATION**  
12 nights  
comfortable hotel  
1 nights simple  
overnight train



**CYCLING GRADE:**  
Easy



**GROUP SIZE:**  
10 - 16

## Itinerary

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

### DAY 1 - Join tour Hanoi. PM orientation of Hanoi's Old Quarter

Our journey starts in Hanoi - Vietnam's vibrant capital. Architecturally styled like a French provincial town, with tree-lined boulevards and low-rise buildings, a walk through the bustling streets of its Old Quarter provides an ideal introduction to its fascinating heritage. 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. Street food sellers tempt you with all manner of noodles, snacks and stir-fried delights from shoulder panniers, all adding to the charm of Hanoi's historic heart.

The Tour Leader plans to meet you in the hotel reception at 4pm for the welcome meeting followed by a walking tour through the Old Quarter. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to arrive into Noi Bai International Airport (HAN), which is 45 minutes from the hotel.

Please note that if you wish to join the afternoon orientation walk today, you must arrive at the hotel by 4pm. If you are booking your own flights, we recommend giving yourself 30 minutes to an hour to clear the airport. Therefore the latest your flight can arrive is about 1.30pm. Should you miss the welcome meeting, your Leader will inform you of any essential information by note left at the front desk.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Anise Hotel Hanoi (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel





SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## DAY 2 - AM Hanoi city tour. PM cycle ride around West Lake

After breakfast we will have the opportunity to check out our bikes and complete any necessary fine tuning. We then continue by bus for a morning sightseeing tour of the city in the company of our local guide. We will include visits to the 11th century Quan Thanh Taoist Temple, the charming One-Pillar Pagoda, the temple of literature and the Presidential Palace. Ho Chi Minh himself was a spartan living and scholarly who chose not to reside in the Presidential Palace itself, but himself preferred a simple teak, 2 - storey stilt house especially built for him in the grounds. We'll have a chance to visit this simple structure today, before heading back to the hotel. After lunch we will enjoy an afternoon's cycle ride around the nearby West Lake. A journey of some 17-20 kms, the ride takes us around the largest fresh water lake in the capital, a place steeped in legend and lying in the bustling heart of the city. Covering some 500 ha and surrounded by gardens, temples and some of Hanoi's most opulent real estate, the lake provides us with an ideal venue to test out our bikes. Our circuit will include stops at the Buddhist library of Thu Sacha and the Phu Tay Ho Temple, an especially lucky place for women who come here to ask for blessings.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 17 to 20 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:

Anise Hotel Hanoi (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 3 - Drive to Dong Ho; cycle through villages of the Red River Delta

Departing Hanoi this morning, we head first for the village of Dong Ho, situated to the east of the city. Famed for its folk paintings, the village has existed on the banks of the Duong River since the 16th century and its art reflects centuries old traditions. Hand printed on papyrus-like paper, the paintings traditionally reflect feelings of prosperity and happiness, their colours generated from locally acquired materials such as charred bamboo leaves and finely ground oyster shells. We will have an opportunity to

spend some time with the artisans this morning, before continuing our journey from here by bike, cycling along the dyke of the Duong River. The dyke system in the North of Vietnam is the longest in Indochina, stretching over 2400 kilometres. Cycling atop the dikes we will pass through commercial vegetable gardens providing much of the capitals fresh produce and encounter plenty of grazing cattle. After a distance of around 8kms we will arrive at But Thap, where we will visit the 17th century Pagoda before continuing on our bikes through lush landscapes to Kim Son. Here we will visit the Sui Pagoda, where novice monks are trained in the art of meditation. Nearby a small vegetable market will provide us the opportunity to see some of the produce from the dike gardens. Re-joining our bus here we then drive on to Phu Thi in the Red River Delta, for a home cooked lunch and a chance to learn a little about local customs and traditions from our hosts, before continuing by bus towards the Gulf of Tonkin and the stunning karst landscapes of Ha Long Bay.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 15 kilometres



**ACCOMMODATION:**

New Star Ha Long 2 Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH**

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#### **DAY 4 - AM Ha Long Bay cruise. PM drive to Ninh Binh via Nhan Muc**

One of South East Asia's most spectacular settings, where thousands of limestone islands rise from the jade green waters of the bay like the scales of some great submerged dragon, Ha Long Bay is a World Heritage site of natural majesty. Ha Long translates as the place \ where the dragon descends to the sea\ and local legend 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 sea. This morning we will board a charter boat for a cruise amongst its limestone islands, threading our way through a flotilla of boats, junks and wooden sampans as they ply their way across the gentle waters of the bay. The plan is to spend the morning sailing through this stunning seascape, stopping off to visit some of the limestone caverns that pepper the landscape and enjoy a delicious seafood lunch on board. This afternoon we then continue by road to the village of Nhan Muc, where we will enjoy a traditional water puppet show (a practice that dates back to the 15th century) and have a chance to interact with the locals, before we complete our journey to the town of Ninh Binh. We arrive to our hotel in the evening after a long yet rewarding day. No cycling, rest day.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Thuy Anh Hotel (or similar)

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## Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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## DAY 5 - Exploring rural scenes of Ninh Binh by bicycle. Overnight Reunification Express to Hué

Cycling the back roads to Hoa Lu this morning, we visit the country's ancient capital. Once the political and cultural centre of Dai Co Viet (Vietnam), the city ruled over the region's first centralised feudal state. Whilst many of its ancient monuments are long gone, we will get a chance this morning to visit the temple of King Dinh Tien Hoang, the man who unified the country and founded Vietnam's first feudal dynasty. From here we cycle along narrow concrete paths through picturesque local communities on to the 12th century Nguyen Saint Temple. After a break at the temple we head through rural countryside towards the spectacular limestone karst formations of Van Long, and finally on to the nearby village of Vuon Thi, where we enjoy a delicious traditional lunch. There may be an opportunity to try some traditional farming and fishing instruments in the yard. After lunch we cycle the short distance to the nearby dock for a tranquil sampan journey around the stunning caves and Karst scenery of the Van long Reservoir. Returning to Ninh Binh later this afternoon by bus, there will be some free time in the city and to freshen up in our hotel dayroom before we board the Reunification Express for the overnight journey to Hué.

We plan to sleep in 'soft-sleeper' four berth cabins, and bunk bed style and bedding is provided. Both Western and Asian style toilets are at the end of each carriage as well as a basin. The Leader will allocate beds keeping people together as far as possible but it may be necessary to share with other travellers.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 34 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:  
Overnight Train from Ninh Binh to Hue

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## Grade: Simple Overnight Train



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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## DAY 6 - Arrive Hué. PM biking tour of Hué.

Arriving in Hué this morning we transfer to the hotel and check in, after checking and adjusting our bikes the rest of the morning is free to relax and enjoy at your leisure. Once the capital of Vietnam and an inspiration for poets and artists alike for centuries, Hué is divided by the waters of the Perfume River, which separate the city's 19th century citadel from the suburbs that radiate from the eastern shore. Even today, its easy air of leisurely ambience makes it one of the most engaging cities in the country to explore and, after lunch, we will cycle our bikes on a tour of the imposing Citadel. Built by the Nguyen dynasty (Vietnam's ruling emperors from the early 1800s to 1945), the Citadel still dominates the left bank of the Perfumed River. Its formal moats and impressive ramparts were constructed to be an exact copy of the Forbidden City in Beijing, and whilst much of the inner city suffered badly during the heavy bombardments of the Tet Offensive in 1968, the huge outer walls and the West Wing remain an eloquent reminder of the palace's former glory. Later today we will cycle out to the lovely tile-roofed bridge at Thanh Toan. Built over two centuries ago, the arched wooden bridge spans a canal that runs through the village and has long been an iconic and cultural landmark in the area. Late in the afternoon the old folk gather on the bridge to talk and reminisce. After enjoying the tranquil atmosphere around the bridge we will cycle back to our hotel.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 18 kilometres



### ACCOMMODATION:

Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## DAY 7 - AM Exploring around Hué by bicycle. PM Perfume River optional.

This morning we will enjoy the peaceful leafy backstreets of this charming city, cycling out to explore the countryside around Hué. We begin with a visit to the Ho Quyen amphitheatre, where the emperor presided over duels between tigers and elephants. Continuing on to the 19th century Nguyen Tomb of Tu Duc, we will enjoy the beautiful complex of ornate temples, pavilions and tombs built beside a picturesque lake. After a visit to the eunuch tombs at the Tu Hieu Pagoda, a gentle ascent of Vong Canh Hill rewards us with spectacular views. From the pine forest atop the hill we can look over the Perfume River and the surrounding countryside and tombs of the Nguyen dynasty. We finish our morning cycling



further out to the vast 19th century tomb of Minh Mang, possibly the finest of all the imperial tombs. Returning to Hué by bus around lunch time, the rest of the day is then free. There is the option to take a half day excursion along the Perfume River, visiting the iconic Thien Mu Pagoda, home to the oldest monastery in the city, whose 21m high tower has become something of a symbol for Hué. Dedicated to the Manushi-Buddha, the existing temple was constructed in the middle years of the 19th century, under the auspices of the Emperor Thieu Tri, and within its confines you can find a number of superb Buddhist statues, as well as an enormous cast bell that weighs in at over 2000 kg and is reputed to be audible over 10 km away.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 35 kilometres



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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## **DAY 8 - Bus and bike to Hoi An, via Hai Van Pass and Danang**

20 This morning we drive south for about an hour to reach Phouc Tuong Pass where today's ride commences. We cycle firstly past arable lands and later beside a large lagoon after which the cycle ride finishes. Getting back in the vehicle we start our drive south, and time permitting we will stop at Lang Co, a section of the famed China Beach, to enjoy a spot of swimming. Known locally as My Khe, the name China Beach was accorded by US troops who came here for R & R during the Vietnam War. After our break to relax here we follow the coastal road towards the Truong Son Mountains and the lofty heights of the Hai Van (Sea Cloud) Pass. This scenic region once marked the boundary between Vietnam and the Champa Kingdom to the south and as we reach the pass itself the views before us are simply spectacular. After a short stop at the pass we drive downhill towards the major city of Danang, accompanied by stunning panoramas of mountains, islands and ocean. We soon encounter Thuan Phuoc Bridge - the longest suspension bridge in the country at 1850 metres in length - spanning the Han River, then we continue our onward journey to the bustling port of Hoi An. First colonised by the Portuguese in the 16th century, by the 17th and 18th centuries, Hoi An had become one of the busiest international trading posts in South East Asia and, even today, it still retains the engaging charm of a medieval port, with many of its old buildings superbly preserved. The rest of the day has been left free to wander through the historic heart of this World Heritage Site at your leisure. You might like to pay a visit to the Japanese Bridge, Hoi An's emblematic symbol, believed to have been constructed to quell the violent rumblings of

a restless monster, or perhaps explore the traditional wooden houses and Chinese temples that line the streets. Other alternatives include visits to the local cloth mill and the hire of rowing boats to explore the landscapes along the river.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 28 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:

Vinh Hung Old Town Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 9 - Around Hoi An: river trip, cycling and free time**

This morning we board another boat, for a cruise down the river to the busy village of Kim Bong. However, in the company of an appointed village guide, we will uncover a hive of cottage industries amongst old colonial houses and temples. Biking through lush rural landscapes we will see local people producing boats, straw matting and rice noodles. Continuing by river on to the pottery village of Thanh Ha, we then have an opportunity to visit a traditional workshop and watch local artisans continuing a tradition that has existed in this village since the 16th century. We cycle the few kilometres back to Hoi An with the rest of the day free for more personal sightseeing. There is an opportunity to extend today's cycling with an optional visit to Tra Que village to learn about organic vegetable and herb farming. Here you can also enjoy a delicious lunch and even a herbal footbath and massage (at your own expense) in a local house in the village.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 8 kilometres with an additional optional 12 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:

Vinh Hung Old Town Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**







SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 10 - Visit to My Son

Today we start our day with a short bus journey to a place called Nam Phuoc from where we will cycle our way through to My Son. My Son has been dubbed as a UNESCO World Heritage site and has ruins of structures from ancient Champa Kingdom which flourished between the 2nd and 15th Centuries. For those hankering for culture and history, this presents an ideal opportunity to explore the most evocative of Vietnam's Cham sites at My Son. The Chams were dynastic lords who rejected the authority of China in 2AD and established their own kingdom. For 1000 years they managed to stave off attacks by the Vietnamese and Chinese, before being overcome by the Vietnamese in the 15th century. The site contains several impressive groupings of Cham temples and present probably the finest example of Cham masonry skills in the country. We take a bus back to our hotel in Hoi An.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 30 kilometres



ACCOMMODATION:

Vinh Hung Old Town Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 11 - Fly to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City); afternoon downtown orientation

After first transferring to Danang airport this morning, we fly south to Vietnam's largest and most

vibrant city - Ho Chi Minh City. Still commonly referred to by its old colonial title, Saigon is an eclectic mix of the traditional and the new, where pagodas and markets compete alongside the trappings of Vietnam's newly discovered entrepreneurial spirit. After a short flight from Danang, we'll transfer to the hotel and check in, after which we will take a brief orientation tour of the city on foot. As part of our tour we will include the prominent sights of the Hotel de Ville, whose ornate grandeur is today the home of the People's Committee. We also take in the Opera House (formerly the National Assembly building), the Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and the impressive French style edifice that is the GPO building. Afterwards you will be free to enjoy some personal exploration, affording a chance to visit some of the many temples that lie dotted around the city, or perhaps to do some shopping amongst the bustling stalls of the Binh Tay Market, the largest wholesale market in southern Vietnam and a fabulous place to stroll and meet the locals. No visit to Saigon would be complete without exploring something of its tragic recent history too and this afternoon also offers a chance to visit the remarkable Reunification Palace and the emotive War Crimes Museum, where you can find some poignant and moving reminders of Vietnam's colonial wars.

No cycling, rest day.



**ACCOMMODATION:**

Huong Sen Annex Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



**SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE**



**SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE**



**MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST**

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## **DAY 12 - Cycle to the Cu Chi Tunnels. Freetime in Saigon**

This morning we drive out of the city to Cu Chi (1.5 hours), from where we cycle out visit to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels. 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 and were a major part of the Tet Offensive. This area was the centre of intense fighting during the war, much of it falling prey to the incessant carpet bombing, napalm and defoliants utilised by the Americans in an attempt to dislodge the Viet Cong from their underground shelters. There is little evidence of any of that now and the landscape has returned to something of its pre-war beauty, but exploring the tunnels of Ben Dinh and Ben Bihn gives some idea as to the conditions that the Vietnamese and their American adversaries had to endure. Be warned, the tunnels are low and narrow and can be claustrophobic. Driving back to Saigon after lunch, the remainder of the afternoon is free to enjoy a last look at this remarkable city.

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 25 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Huong Sen Annex Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### **DAY 13 - Cycling in the Mekong Delta**

Today we journey by vehicle, boat and bike into the Mekong Delta to explore these fascinating waterways. Firstly we make our way by bus from Saigon to Cai Lay (2 hours), where we start cycling alongside calm canals and rivers. Along the way we will learn more about local life, taking in the verdant gardens and orchards as we go. After an included lunch we take a boat trip to see local cottage industries making such things as rice paper, coconut sweets and rice cakes, before returning to Saigon later in the afternoon (3-4 hour drive).

Our total cycling distance today is approximately 20 kilometres.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Huong Sen Annex Hotel (or similar)



**Grade: Comfortable Hotel**



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & LUNCH

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### DAY 14 - Tour ends Saigon

The trip ends after breakfast at our hotel in Ho Chi Minh City.

There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Ho Chi Minh City at any time. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at our hotel. If you would like to receive a complimentary airport transfer today, you'll need to depart from Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN), which is 30 minutes from the airport.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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## Trip information

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### Climate and country information

#### Vietnam

##### 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

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### Budgeting and packing

## Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

Hanoi - Water Puppets from USD 8. Cyclo ride around Old quarter USD 6.

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

Bear in mind that the area is tropical with high humidity. Lightweight clothing are needed all year round. Other additions that you may find useful are a swimming costume, cycle gloves, cycling shorts/trousers and quick drying cycle tops. You may wish to bring a swimming costume. Please note shorts are not permitted in certain temples.

## 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

Tipping isn't compulsory, and we work hard to ensure that our leaders all receive a fair wage. You may however, want to recognise a leader that's done a great job or really added to your trip by giving them a tip. We're often asked about the recommended amount. It's a tricky one, and down to personal preference, but we'd recommend between £15 to £20 per person per week as a guideline.

## 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\$ 45.

## Vietnam

### 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	Beer price	Water price
£9	£2.00 - 4.00	£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

Credit card's are widely accepted throughout Vietnam

#### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are not recommended as they can be difficult to exchange



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## Transport, Accommodation & Meals

### Transport Information

Bus, Bicycle, Flight, Train

### Accommodation notes

Comfortable - 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.

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.

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## Essential Information

### Government Travel Safety 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, Commonwealth & Development 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.

### Price Guarantee

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 and Passport Information

Vietnam: Until 30th June 2021 '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.

Visa's are required for citizens of the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. eVisa's can be applied for via <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn>

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 be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://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.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## **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 receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

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, Polar, 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. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. 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.

## **Ability to swim**

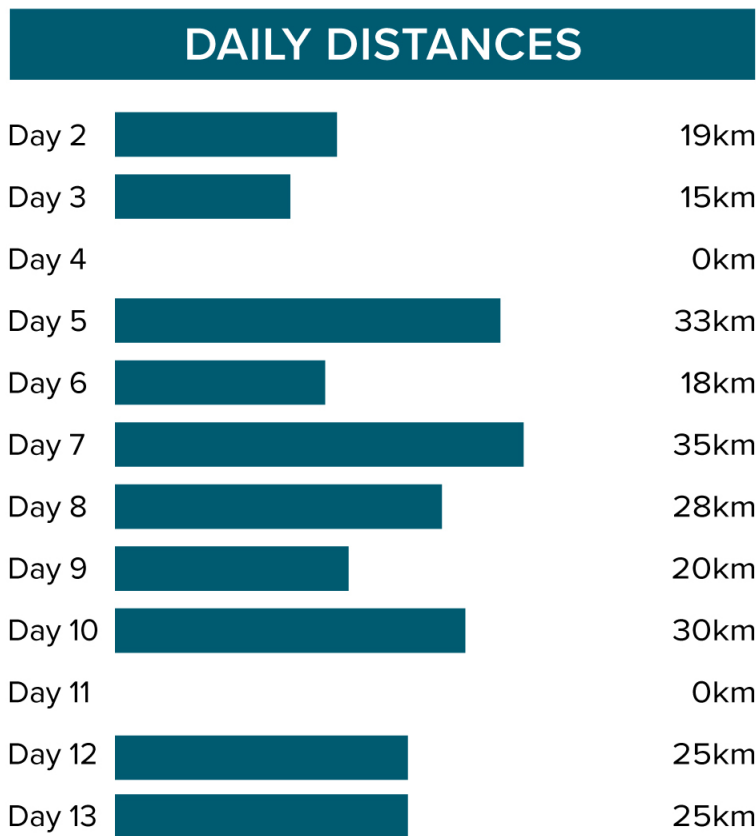
An ability to swim is essential for your safe enjoyment of the water based activities on this trip. If you wish to participate in these activities then we insist that you are able to swim.

## **Vietnam**

### **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. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. 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 Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

## Cycling information



Cycle Vietnam Jersey

## General cycling information

On this tour we cycle 232 km over ten days (an average of 23 km per day). The route follows mainly level terrain with about 90% on tarmac and 10% on earth/gravel. A support vehicle accompanies

the rides on days 3, 5, 8, 12 and 13. Around 75% of the route is on quieter roads and the busiest sections are when we cycle in Hanoi and Hue. You should be comfortable cycling in traffic. We have graded the route as easy.

### **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. Please contact us for more details or to request your e-bike.

### **Bike information**

Your included bike is a 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 on days 3, 5, 8 and 13. 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**

Easy

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### **Additional Information**



Cycle Vietnam Jersey - [Click here to order](#)

## 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.



# Reviews

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AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS