

EXPLORE!



Vietnam Explorer + Cambodia Extension

VIETNAM - TRIP CODE VEC

DISCOVERY

Why book this trip?

Take an in-depth journey across Vietnam and Cambodia, following part of the Ho Chi Minh Trail through the beautiful Central Highlands where we trek, raft and visit tribal villages. We also explore beyond Halong Bay and discover the once-hidden jungle temples of Angkor.

- **Halong Bay** - Take an extended 2 night junk cruise through its jade green waters
- **Central Highlands** - Stay in a tented camp and trek, raft whilst visiting tribal villages
- **Siem Reap** - Watch the sunset at Angkor Wat and crawl through the tree-consumed temple of Ta Prohm



INCLUDED MEALS
Breakfast: 25
Lunch: 5
Dinner: 6



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



TRANSPORT
Bus
Boat
Flight
Train



ACCOMMODATION
2 nights simple boat
20 nights
comfortable hotel
2 nights
comfortable junk
1 nights simple
overnight train
1 nights
comfortable tented
camp



TRIP PACE:
Moderate



GROUP SIZE:
12 - 18

Itinerary

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

DAY 1 - Join tour in Hanoi

Arrive 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 wonderfully nostalgic city to explore and this afternoon we have some free time to do so. You may choose to take a walk around the shores of Hoan Kiem Lake.



ACCOMMODATION:
Nesta Hanoi Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 2 - Discover the sights of Hanoi including the Old Quarter

This morning we make a tour of the main sights of Hanoi. Among the interesting sights are the charming One-Pillar Pagoda and the Presidential Palace, a very fine example of French colonial architecture. Ho Chi Minh himself, a spartan-living and scholarly man, chose not to live in the Presidential Palace; he preferred instead a simple teak 2-storied stilt-house specially built for him in the grounds. In the afternoon we visit the Old Quarter of Hanoi. The streets are named after various crafts or specialities: Paper Street, Silk Street, Basket Street etc. The shops themselves have very narrow frontages but are actually quite deep; they are known locally as 'tube' shops.



ACCOMMODATION:

Nesta Hanoi Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 3 - Free time in Hanoi, drive to Halong Bay; overnight on boat

This morning we drive out towards the magnificent Halong Bay in the Gulf of Tonkin. Thousands of jagged limestone islands rise out of the jade green waters like the hairy scales of a submerged dragon. In fact Ha Long means 'where the dragon descends to the sea' as legend tells that the rugged seascape was created by the pounding tail of a dragon as he ran from the mountains into the sea, carving islands in his wake. We enjoy the romantic scenery while cruising amongst the islands. We'll have the chance to stop at a grotto beneath towering cliffs and perhaps pull into a beach where you will have time to relax or kayak (optional). It is also interesting to see the curious assortment of boats, junks and wooden sampans, their sails hoisted, gliding through the waters. We enjoy an included seafood lunch on board the boat. In the evening we'll transfer to our overnight boat. Accommodation will be in twin cabins, bedding and mattresses provided.



ACCOMMODATION:

Halong Bay Junk (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Junk



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 4 - In Halong Bay; sea kayaking and visit floating village; overnight on boat

We'll have the chance to stop at an island or Three Peaches beach under towering cliffs and fringed with thick jungle. You will have the opportunity to sea kayak through stunning limestone scenery - we carry our own kayaks and lifejackets and instruction is provided (this activity is optional, but at no extra expense). Late in the afternoon we visit Cua Van floating fishing village to experience some local life of the people in this part of the bay. Again in the evening we'll transfer to our overnight boat.



ACCOMMODATION:
Halong Bay Junk (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Junk



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 5 - Drive to Hanoi; sleeper train to Hue

This morning we board local rowing boats cruising through Bai Tu Long Bay. Enjoying our brunch while on the boat we get to see Bai Tho mountains and Ha Long market. During our cruise we sail to the beautiful caves of Hang Luon. We then return to Hanoi where we have day rooms before boarding the overnight sleeper train for the journey to Hué - bedding provided.



ACCOMMODATION:
Overnight train from Hanoi to Hue



Grade: Simple Overnight Train



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 6 - Arrive in Hue; boat along Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda

We arrive in Hué, one of the great cultural and religious centres of Vietnam, a quietly impressive place and a major highlight of our trip. The Perfume River divides the city in two and it has been the inspiration for poets and painters for many centuries. In the afternoon we take a trip by boat on the Perfume River to the Thien Mu Pagoda. This lovely monastery is the oldest in Hué.



ACCOMMODATION:

Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

DAY 7 - In Hue, visit the Imperial Citadel; free afternoon

To appreciate Hue's fascinating history we'll tour the Old Citadel in the morning. The citadel/palace built by the Nguyen dynasty (early 1800's to 1945) has formal moats and impressive ramparts and was an exact copy of the Forbidden City in Beijing. Although most of the Inner City was destroyed during the Tet Offensive (1968), the vast outer walls and the West Wing remain and are an eloquent reminder of the palace's former glory. The afternoon is free to wander at your own pace. You may choose to hire a bike or wander the back streets and lively markets (optional).



ACCOMMODATION:

Thanh Lich Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 8 - Scenic drive via Danang to Hoi An

Early this morning there is the option to drive out to the peaceful setting of Tu Hieu Pagoda, nestled in a pine forest a short distance outside the city. Here we can witness the morning chanting before taking part in a meditation lesson led by the head monk. The monk will explain how meditation is central to Buddhism, promoting a peace of mind and a healthy mental balance. He will then lead a meditation session for us in the quiet back corner of the temple. We return to Hue for breakfast, before driving on to Hoi An.

We enjoy a scenic drive across the spectacular Col des Nuages, otherwise known as the Hai Van Pass observing rural scenes of thatched, wooden houses and lime-green rice paddies as well as enjoying panoramic sea views. Pausing in Danang, once the centre of the Kingdom of Champa (2nd century AD - 1720) we visit the Cham Museum, home to a fine collection of Cham sculptures. Our next stop is at the nearby five peaks of the Marble Mountains, said to represent the five elements of water, wood, fire, gold and earth. Naturally formed grottoes have been transformed into heavily carved Buddhist sanctuaries. A short distance from the mountains we find the white sands of My Khe Beach (nicknamed China Beach by American troops)- an ideal spot for a brief rest. Finally we reach our destination - the UNESCO World Heritage town of Hoi An.



ACCOMMODATION:
Acacia Heritage Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 9 - From Hoi An, visit ancient My Son; free afternoon in Hoi An

The Portuguese arrived here in the 16th century and by the 18th century it had become one of the busiest international trading ports of South-East Asia. Hoi An still retains its medieval charm with old buildings and colourful markets. During our stay here we include an excursion to My Son. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, My Son is a striking complex of tower temples located in a secluded valley. The rest of our time is left free for personal exploration.

A cookery class at one of Hoi An's restaurants is a popular choice, as is the lantern-making workshop where you can learn how to make the beautiful lanterns that are ubiquitous in Hoi An.



ACCOMMODATION:
Acacia Heritage Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 10 - Free day to explore Hoi An; optional visit to My Lai

Bicycles here are inexpensive and a great way to get out into the surrounding countryside or perhaps take a trip to the nearby beaches. Hoi An is also renowned for its many craft and tailors' shops. You may wish to take an optional excursion to Quang Ngai, the site of the My Lai Massacre Memorial. The massacre was a significant turning point in the Vietnam War and the horrific story is told through a photo presentation - an emotional experience. Another option would be to take a fishing trip out to the Thu Bon River Delta, where we learn how to fish using a traditional cast net. We travel out by boat where we meet local fisherman and try our hand at cast net fishing as well as trying the bamboo winches used to haul in the huge drop nets from the river. We also have a chance to go out in a Vietnamese 'basket boat' - a circular boat constructed from bamboo that takes some practice to row!



ACCOMMODATION:
Acacia Heritage Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 11 - Drive through mountains to Kon Tum in Central Highlands

Our journey takes us inland through the mountains of the Central Highlands to the market town of Kon Tum. It is a long day of travel but the stunning scenery and opportunity to see this rural area more than make up for it.



ACCOMMODATION:
Indochine Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 12 - In Kon Tum, walk through tribal villages

On our second day here we walk out to Kon Ko Tu, one of the many Bahnar tribal villages in the surrounding area (approx 5 hours walking, graded easy to moderate). We walk through cassava and sugar plantations and pass several stilted villages en route. After lunch there is an opportunity to float back to the village on local dugout canoes. In the evening we can visit the Village Rong or communal house which is the most important building in the village - not only is it used for festivals and village meetings, but it acts as the court where people are tried for tribal offences.





ACCOMMODATION:
Indochine Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 13 - Drive to Western Highlands; take boat on Lake Lak

We drive south today through the Central Highlands, to Buon Me Thuot, Dak Lak Province's administrative centre and the Western Highlands' unofficial capital. Although a nondescript town, there are many minority Ede villages in this region, and we head south to Lak Lake to spend a night in a bungalow near the shores. After settling in to our picturesque accommodation, we have some free time to explore the area by foot, bicycle or by kayak.



ACCOMMODATION:
Lak Tented Camp (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Tented Camp



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST & DINNER

DAY 14 - Drive to coastal Nha Trang

We rise early this morning to take a boat out onto Lak Lake for sunrise. We then continue on foot to Yang Tao village where we learn about how this small community produces pottery and harvests its plentiful cacao supply to support the village.

Later, we continue south by bus, where our drive sees us descending to the coastal plains, as we make our way to the fishing town and beach resort of Nha Trang. Some of the most impressive Cham towers can be seen on the outskirts of the town on our arrival.



ACCOMMODATION:
Tran Vien Dong Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 15 - In Nha Trang, boat cruise on Ninh Van Bay

Today we enjoy this seaside town, famed for its clear warm water, delicious seafood and white sand beach. We plan a boat trip to some of the outlying islands to swim and relax (dependent on local weather conditions).



ACCOMMODATION:
Tran Vien Dong Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 16 - Fly to Ho Chi Minh City; explore Old Saigon; free afternoon

Today we fly to Ho Chi Minh City where we have a walking tour of the city's central sights including the National Assembly, Hotel de Ville, Notre Dame Cathedral, the Independence Palace and the War Crimes Museum. The afternoon is free for you to walk around this charming city.

This afternoon we will experience a different side of Ho Chi Minh City, away from the major sights where we take a walk through Old Saigon's back alleys. We make our way to District 3 and turn off the main thoroughfare and into the maze of narrow streets of this bustling district. Our walk takes us past ramshackle shopfronts, through local markets selling anything from colourful fruit to bootleg DVDs, and past houses, churches and schools, all squeezed into the small buildings that line the narrow alleys. It's a fascinating inter-connected community here that is a stones-throw from the city centre, yet feels a far cry from the modern buildings and throngs of tourists. We stop at a local stall for a traditional Vietnamese coffee (brewed coffee served sweet with condensed milk) where we can also sample 'Banh Mi' - a Vietnamese take on the humble French baguette - freshly baked and packed with a combo of traditional and more exotic, aromatic ingredients.

The walk ends at a previously-secret weapons' bunker. A small unassuming 'tube house' nestled in a quiet neighbourhood hides a trap door in the floor, concealing a basement stocked full of rifles, grenades and ammunition. The bunker played a key role in the TET Offensive of 1968, it was the base from which the Viet Cong's "Team 5" launched their assault, and its location was only revealed after the end of the war. We have some time to explore the house and bunker, filled with decommissioned weapons and photographs, news clippings and memorabilia from the wartime.



ACCOMMODATION:

Prostyle Hotel Ho Chi Minh (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 17 - Drive to Mekong Delta; cruise Mekong River; overnight on boat

This morning we drive to Can Duoc, where we board our specially chartered river boat. Travelling along the backwaters by boat is by far the best way to see the delta, passing villages of stilted houses, abundant rice fields and a variety of cottage industries as we go. We travel down the Mekong River to Cho Gao,

where we disembark for a walk around the local market. We then continue to Thoi Son Island where we'll meet the friendly locals and take a sampan ride through palm-shaded creeks. Back on our boat, we'll cruise to Cai Be, where we moor up for the night. Our accommodation is simple dormitory-style bunks on board the boat.



ACCOMMODATION:
Cai Be Boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 18 - In Mekong Delta, option to visit early morning floating market; overnight on boat

It is worth rising early to see the superb floating market at Cai Be. As it links the various towns and provinces, Cai Be is a very social and colourful place with the vendors advertising their wares on long poles. We spend some time paddling through the market and enjoying the friendliness of the locals before continuing on our boat journey. We stop off several times today to visit rural islands and some of the many family businesses along the canals. We then continue down the river to Long Xuyen Sadec, where we visit the Quach Temple and the colourful local market. We continue through the Lap Vo Canal to Long Xuyen.



ACCOMMODATION:
Cai Be Boat (or similar)



Grade: Simple Boat



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST, LUNCH & DINNER

DAY 19 - Drive to Ho Chi Minh City

This morning we bid farewell to our boat crew and rejoin our vehicle and make the long journey back to Ho Chi Minh City, where we have the further chance to enjoy this bustling city.



ACCOMMODATION:

Prostyle Hotel Ho Chi Minh (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 20 - From Ho Chi Minh City, visit Cu Chi Tunnels

This morning we take a short drive out of the city to the infamous Cu Chi Tunnels, which formed an incredible underground command base for 10,000 Viet Cong troops and were a major part of the 1968 Tet Offensive. The site is a fascinating insight into the resourcefulness of the Vietnamese. There is the opportunity to crawl through a small specially adapted section of the tunnels should you wish to sample the claustrophobic conditions the Viet Cong lived in. Afterwards we bid farewell to our tour leader who continues back to Ho Chi Minh City while you continue by road into Cambodia. Border formalities take place at Moc Bai (Vietnam) and Bavet (Cambodia) crossing point. Our final destination is Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital.



ACCOMMODATION:
Silver River Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 21 - Discover the sights of Phnom Penh; free afternoon

Phnom Penh took over from Angkor as Cambodia's capital city in the 1440s. It is now a lively city with many French colonial buildings and plenty to see. Accompanied by a local guide we visit the National

Museum, a treasure trove of beautifully preserved carvings and lintels rescued from Angkor; the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda as well as the temple of Wat Phnom.

This afternoon we visit the emotive Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, formerly a high school that became the Khmer Rouge's main torture and interrogation centre; and the Killing Fields of Choeung Ek - the memorial stupa is a glass tower filled with human skulls - a gruesome reminder of the scale of Pol Pot's atrocities before returning back in the city.



ACCOMMODATION:
Silver River Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 22 - Free day in Phnom Penh; optional visit to Silk Island

Today is free allowing you the opportunity to explore the city or its surrounds further. Optional excursions close to the city include a trip to Silk Island, Chiso Mountain or the abandoned Royal City of Oudong. Each of these excursions are half a day in duration and may be combined, your tour leader will discuss in more detail. Silk Island or Koh Dach is reached by a short ferry journey along the Mekong where the majority of villagers on the island earn a living through producing handicrafts. It is a great opportunity to learn more about traditional ways of life and interact with locals as you learn about the island's iconic silk weaving. Chiso Mountain (380m), located in Sia village about 62 km south of Phnom Penh, is topped by the ruins of an 11th century Khmer Brahmanic Temple with fine views of the surrounding paddy fields. Oudong is about an hour north of the capital and offers the opportunity to explore attractive historic temples and stupas.



ACCOMMODATION:
Silver River Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 23 - Drive to Siem Reap; cruise on Tonle Sap Lake

This morning we make an early start for our drive to Siem Reap, stopping somewhere for lunch on the way. Later in the day we journey to nearby Tonle Sap Lake where we board our charter boat for a leisurely cruise through the fascinating floating village of Chong Kneas, where we see stilt houses, floating markets and an array of boats.



ACCOMMODATION:
MotherHome Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 24 - From Siem Reap, explore Angkor temples with sunset

Our exact programme over the next three days may change slightly at our local guide's discretion (to avoid crowds, coincide with sunsets, etc.). Angkor was actually a series of cities, built between the 9th and the 13th centuries by the Khmer kings, with a population of 750,000 in its heyday. The Angkor complex is spread out over some 155 square kilometres, scattered with magnificent carved stone temples, elegant sculptures and incredible bas reliefs. We visit the Rolous group, which are some of the earliest temples. In the afternoon we visit the temples of Banteay Srei, a small but beautiful temples with exquisite carvings. We end the day at East Mebon, with a visit to Pre Rup temple for sunset.



ACCOMMODATION:
MotherHome Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 25 - From Siem Reap, explore Angkor Thom

We continue our exploration with a visit to the temples of King Jayavarman VII, reputedly Angkor's greatest king. The fortified city of Angkor Thom, which he built at the end of the 12th century is enclosed by a square wall with five monumental gates decorated with stone elephant trunks. Originally, crocodiles inhabited the moat and huge statues of 54 different gods protected each gate. The city contains another of Angkor's true gems - The Bayon. Although not as impressive as Angkor Wat from a distance, The Bayon is nevertheless incredible for its maze of corridors, gothic style towers and magical central temples. We'll explore The Terrace of the Elephants and the Leper King, the Baphuon and Phimeanakas, and some of the surrounding temples such as Preah Khan.



ACCOMMODATION:
MotherHome Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 26 - From Siem Reap, explore Ta Prohm and Angkor Wat

On our final day we make a visit to the 2nd Angkor capital that includes the temples of Prasat Kravan, Banteay Kdei and Takeo. A highlight for many is a visit to the atmospheric temple of Ta Prohm, where the

film Tomb Raider was filmed, lying half consumed by the jungle. We leave the best known and most breathtaking of all the sights, Angkor Wat, to the end - where we stay until the sun sets on the last night of our adventure.



ACCOMMODATION:
MotherHome Inn (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



SWIMMING POOL AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

DAY 27 - Tour ends in Siem Reap

Tour ends after breakfast. If you have time you may choose to browse the old market for some last minute bargains, or enjoy afternoon tea at The Foreign Correspondent's Club.



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

Trip information

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

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 Show from US\$5; Cyclo tour of Old Quarter US\$6

Hoi An - Half day trip to My Son from US\$25; Cookery class US\$15

Nha Trang - Mud baths from US\$6

Phnom Penh - Sunset cruise US\$ 10, Koh Dach Island - US \$24, Oudong Mountain - US \$32, Chiso Mountain - US \$35

Siem Reap - Scenic helicopter flight over Angkor temples from US\$ 135-260; Apsara traditional khmer dance and dinner US\$ 22, Tonle Sap boat optional US\$ 42; cookery class US\$ 12; National Museum Culture Show US\$ 12 - US\$20 (limited availability during low season May - September)

The prices stated are based on a minimum number of participants (usually 5-6). Please be aware that the optional excursions can run with fewer people but the price may be higher. Likewise, a slightly reduced price may be applicable where the participation greater. The prices listed are generally only entrance fees and do not include the price of transport to and from the excursion, Your Explore Leader will quote this when you are on tour, as the price for transport will depend on the number of participants.

These excursions are generally run via our agent in the country. Local companies may offer similar excursions at a cheaper price. Should you want to use these companies please be aware that a lower price may mean that not all costs are included (entrance fees etc.) or services will not operate at the same safety and quality standards.

Clothing

From 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 and the Central Highlands can be chilly. Casual clothes are the most practical.

Footwear

Comfortable walking shoes, trainers and sandals.

Luggage

20kg

Luggage: On tour

One main piece of lockable baggage, an overnight bag for your two night trip to Halong Bay and the Mekong Delta when your main luggage is left behind, and a daypack.

Equipment

Bring a small torch. Even though 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.

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\$ 55.

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

Transport, Accommodation & Meals

Transport Information

Bus, Boat, Flight, Train

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.

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.

Cambodia: A single visa is required by UK, New Zealand, Australian, US & Canadian citizens and can be obtained on arrival. The current cost is 20USD, a passport sized photograph for immigration will also be required. Alternatively, you can arrange your visa in advance in the form of an e-Visa. To make your application, and for more information contact the Cambodian Ministry of Foreign Affairs direct at www.mfaic.gov.kh.

You should confirm all visa related questions 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 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 now 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.

Additional Information



Reviews



**AWARD WINNING
EXPLORE LEADERS**



**PRICE GUARANTEE
PROMISE**



**AIRPORT
TRANSFERS**