

# Vibrant Vietnam

Explore the natural wonders, historic treasures and cultural heritage of Vietnam in Hanoi, Halong Bay, Sapa, Hue, My Son, Hoi An, and Saigon

14 Days / 12 Nights

well tested itinerary and ready-to-go for any group size - pick your own dates



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## Tour Program Summary

**VIETNAM** is a country of natural beauty, turbulent history, and charming national and regional cultures. It offers a unique blend of the East and West with plenty of sights, sounds and smell. Vietnamese cuisine is a gourmet delight with a mixture of Chinese, French and a little Thai and is one of the most sophisticated cuisines in Asia.

Your exploration starts in **Hanoi**, capital of Vietnam. This charming city still retains the mystery and charm of past centuries. Narrow lanes and traditional shop houses invite exploration by cyclo (pedi cab), while its many beautiful public spaces - lakes, parks, tree-lined boulevards and monuments - give the city an air of elegance and harmony with nature unique among Asian capitals. Legacies of Chinese and French influence are evident in many parts of the city.

Drive through the Red River Delta and travel from Hanoi to your boat in **Halong Bay**. A day spent cruising gently between the imposing limestone islets is hard to beat, but an evening spent watching the stars come out over the bay is a truly magical experience. You get both, plus kayaking and swimming in the turquoise water of Halong Bay. The train journey up to the mountainous town of **Sapa** lead you into the world of Vietnam's northern minorities, cheerful, resilient, and stick to traditions, they are among the most friendly people you will ever meet.

A short flight takes you to **Da Nang** in Central Vietnam. Take a day excursion to **Hue**, the imperial city of Vietnam. The Imperial Citadel, a vast complex built in the early 19th century, was modeled after the Forbidden City in Beijing. The original walls stretched for 10 km and were surrounded by a wide moat. Most of the buildings were destroyed due to bombings during the war, but the monuments that remain provide a fascinating glimpse into the court life of the Nguyen Dynasty. Also explore the mysterious **My Son** site and the ancient merchant town of **Hoi An** and the charming countryside surrounding the city.

Fly down south to **Saigon** (Ho Chi Minh City), a vibrant metropolis teeming with energy, activity and motion. Everywhere you look, you see the meeting of traditional and modern life. The emerging modern skyline stands cheek by jowl with colonial buildings and traditional temples. Outside on the streets, young professionals zip by on motorcycles, chatting on cell phones; inside the quiet temple courtyards, worshippers pray amidst clouds of incense.

Fly home from Saigon or continue travel to your next destination in Asia.

# Tour Daily Itinerary

Day 01 → depart Fly from North America to Hanoi, Vietnam on your own int'l flight

Day 02 **Hanoi** Welcome to South East Asia! After a long flight, you arrive in Hanoi, Vietnam. After clearing customs, meet your private professional English-speaking guide and transfer to hotel in the city center for check-in.

This evening, enjoy a **Vietnamese Cuisine Dinner** in one of the hotel restaurants. Stay at [Hotel de L'Opera Hanoi \(deluxe room\)](#). <B-D>

Day 03 **Hanoi** After breakfast in hotel, start your tour at the miniature [One Pillar Pagoda](#). Dating from the 11th century, this monument was rebuilt after being destroyed in 1954.

Next, visit the vast [Ho Chi Minh Memorial Complex](#), a lovely park setting which is home to Ho Chi Minh's final resting place, as well as a museum and other memorials.

Begin at the [Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum](#), where visitors can pay respects to the embalmed body of Ho Chi Minh. Continue through the park to [Ho Chi Minh's Stilt House](#), the simple two-room dwelling where Ho Chi Minh lived from 1948 until his final days.

Then, visit the [Temple of Literature](#), a peaceful series of walled courtyards and graceful gateways, and one of the best surviving examples of traditional Vietnamese architecture.



In the afternoon, visit one of Hanoi's museums, either the [History Museum](#) or the [Museum of Ethnology](#). The [History Museum](#) is housed in an elegant building from the 1930s and includes exhibits spanning the entirety of Vietnam's history including prehistory, proto-Vietnamese civilizations, the Dong Son Culture, the Oc-Eo Culture and the Khmer Kingdoms.

The alternative to visiting the History Museum is the [Museum of Ethnology](#) (close on Monday), which brings to life the astonishing ethnic diversity in Vietnam, with art and artifacts from the 54 different ethnic groups that inhabit the country.

Finally, go to see a [Water Puppet Show](#), a fantastic art form originating in Northern Vietnam, best seen in Hanoi. Return to the hotel and dinner is on your own. <B-L>

Day 04 **Hanoi** 🚌 🌊 **Halong Bay** Breakfast in the hotel; met by your guide in the hotel lobby and travel to [Halong Bay](#) by a private vehicle; you will be welcomed aboard a luxury small cruise ship and set sail through the bay while **lunch** is served, passing through

the magical bay, where thousands of sculpted limestone islands rise from the waves like dragons' teeth.

After lunch on board, you will take a short trek to a nearby summit for a panoramic view of the bay dotted with golden sails, and then go swimming on a quiet beach or sunbathing; return to the ship for a rest before enjoying cocktails on the deck while watching the sunset.

In the evening, unwind at a lavish dinner and enjoy the night stars atop the deck or on your private balcony. Stay overnight aboard [Paradise Luxury Cruise Ship \(deluxe balcony cabin\)](#). <B-L-D>



Day 05 **Halong Bay**  
 **Hanoi**  
 **Sapa**

Begin your day with a morning Tai Chi Session, with an opportunity to view the sunrise over the bay; after an early light breakfast, you will visit an amazing limestone cave in a beautiful limestone grotto. Then return to the boat for a final glimpse of Halong Bay while cruising back to the dock.

Check out of your cruise ship and return to shore by noon; drive back to Hanoi in the afternoon and continue your exploration.

Head to Hoan Kiem Lake, located in heart of Hanoi, which contains an islet with the tiny Tortoise Pagoda. From the lake, begin exploring the Old Quarter by Cyclo. This fascinating network of narrow alleys and shop houses is also known as 'The 36 Streets,' each street being named after the merchandise traditionally sold there, ranging from fabrics to crafts to medicines to tombstones. A handicraft-lover's paradise and an endlessly interesting place to explore local life.

Later on, you will pass by colonial landmarks such as the magnificent Opera House (may be seen from the outside only) and St. Joseph's Cathedral. Enjoy dinner before boarding the overnight [Victoria Express Train \(2200-0610+1; deluxe cabin\)](#) to Lao Cai in Sapa. <B-L-D>



Day 06 **Sapa**

Upon arrival by train in Lao Cai, transfer to Sapa for an excursion to Cat Cat Village. Travel down a winding road to the Black Hmong village of Cat Cat, past beautiful mountain scenery. Wander through the village, visiting the traditional houses and observing the rural way of life.

Afterwards, continue to the handicraft village of Ta Phin, inhabited by the Red Dzao, known for their distinctive red headscarves. Overnight in

the nice mountain resort [Victoria Sapa Resort & Spa \(superior room\)](#). <B-L>

Day 07 **Sapa** 📍  
**Hanoi**

Breakfast in hotel. From Sapa, travel by SUV to the village of [Lao Chai](#), where the hiking begins. Visit the HMong, Dzay and Dzao people, while enjoying spectacular scenery of terraced rice paddies, waterfalls and the small bamboo forests that are unique to the northern region.

From [Ta Van](#), continue to [Giang Ta Chai](#), another minority village populated by Hmong and Dzay, after which visitors transfer by SUV back to Sapa for [Local Cuisine Dinner](#).

Transfer to Lao Cai train station and take an overnight [Victoria Express Train \(2105-0509 +1; deluxe cabin\)](#) from Lao Cai to Hanoi. <B-L-D>

Day 08 **Hanoi** ➔  
**Da Nang**

Arrive by train early morning and transfer to a nice hotel restaurant for breakfast. After that, transfer to Hanoi Noi Bai International Airport for a [Flight \(TBA\)](#) to Da Nang in Central Vietnam.

Met upon arrival by your private guide and transfer to the super enchanting [Naman Retreat Da Nang \(babylon room\)](#); rest of the day is free for your own leisure and dinner is on your own. <B>



Day 09 **Da Nang**  
↔️ **Hue**

Breakfast in resort; met by your guide in the hotel lobby and begin a full-day sightseeing excursion (*approx. 2 hrs drive*) to Hue, ancient capital of Vietnam.

Start the tour at the [Imperial Citadel](#), a vast complex built in the early 19th century and modeled after the Forbidden City of Beijing. In the compound, attractive structures include the striking [Flag Tower](#), the imposing [Ngo Mon Gate](#), [Dien Tho Residence \(Dien Tho Palace\)](#), [Thai Hoa Palace](#), the magnificently decorated reception hall, the [Halls of the Mandarins](#), and the original [Nine Dynastic Urns](#), among other sites.

In the afternoon, embark on a local boat and cruise down the [Perfume River](#) to the iconic [Thien Mu Pagoda](#), an elegant seven-tiered octagonal tower that has become Hue's most widely recognizable monument. Have a [Vietnamese Cuisine Lunch](#) in a local restaurant.

Travel back to your Da Nang resort in the late afternoon and evening is free for your won relaxation.

Day 10 **Da Nang** 📍  
↔️ **My Son**

Breakfast in your resort; met by your guide in the hotel lobby and take a full-day excursion to [My Son](#) today to have a comprehensive tour of the ruins from the ancient [Champa Kingdoms](#) - a sophisticated civilization which held sway over the region from the 4th to the 13th centuries.

Today, all that are left are five archaeological sites from different periods, in a beautifully green setting of hills and winding streams. After a

brief visit to the Visitor Center for an overview of Champa history and culture, visit each ruin in turn, walking along forested paths.

Have **lunch** in a local restaurant in My Son. Travel back to Da Nang in late afternoon and evening is free for your own relaxation. <B-L>



Day 11 **Da Nang** 🚗  
↔️ 🚗 **Hoi An**  
➔️ **Saigon** Breakfast in your resort; meet your guide in the hotel lobby and take a half-day excursion to Hoi An today. The colorful storefront houses and temples reflect a diverse heritage, dating back to the 16th and 17th century, when it was a major port for Western, Chinese and Japanese traders. Today it is a thriving center of traditional crafts and a shopper's paradise, best explored on a walking tour through the narrow winding streets of the old quarter. Visit the Chua Ong Pagoda, Chinese Assembly Hall, the 200-year-old Tam Ky Ancestral House, and the well-known Japanese Bridge. Also explore the market street and the small harbor where colorful boats are moored. Have **lunch** in a local restaurant.

Transfer to Da Nang Airport in the afternoon and fly to Saigon. Met upon arrival and transfer to Caravelle Hotel Saigon (deluxe room). Remainder of the day is free for your own relaxation; dinner is on your own tonight. <B-L>

Day 12 **Saigon** Enjoy breakfast in hotel; meet your private guide in the hotel lobby and begin your tour of this exciting city with a stroll along Dong Khoi Street in the historic center, formerly known as the Rue Catinat, the main shopping thoroughfare and heart of old colonial Saigon.

Pass by classic European-style landmarks such as the ornate City Hall (Hotel De Ville), the old Opera House (both may only be viewed from the outside), and pay a quick visit to the neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office. Enjoy **lunch** at a local restaurant.



Afterwards, dive into modern history with a tour of the Reunification Palace. Formerly the Independence Palace of the South Vietnamese president, this 60s style building was famously stormed by tanks on April 30, 1975 signifying the fall of South Vietnam.

Continue to the sad and harrowing War Remnants Museum, which

comprehensively documents the travails of the long Vietnam - American War. Tonight, enjoy a wonderful **Vietnamese Cuisine Dinner**. <B-L-D>

Day 13 **Saigon**

Breakfast in hotel. Today's excursion is to visit Cai Be Floating Market. From Saigon, drive into the heart of the Mekong Delta to Cai Be, and embark on one of the local boats to explore Cai Be Floating Market, a lively

market of fruit and vegetable barges with a picturesque Catholic cathedral on the river banks.

Continue along smaller waterways and canals, stopping at the Mekong River Islands to visit orchards and local cottage industries. Enjoy watching how the delta residents make traditional treats such as dried longyans, rice pancakes and puffed rice candies, with the chance to sample the local delicacies. Enjoy **lunch** at a local restaurant.

Disembark in Vinh Long and drive back to Saigon. Visit Cao Dai Temple at Ben Luc on the way. The unique Cao Dai religion represents a fusion of Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Christianity, Islam and native Vietnamese spiritual beliefs.

Late afternoon transfer back to Saigon and rest of the day is free for your own relaxation; dinner is on your own. <B-L>

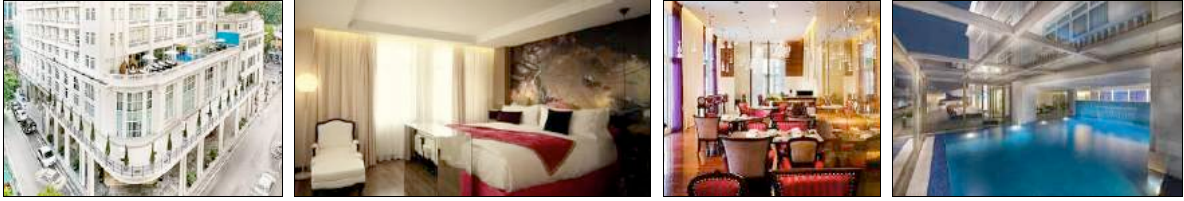


Day 14 → return Breakfast in the hotel. Picked up by your guide and private transfer to the Saigon Airport and fly home. Service ends. <B>

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**Changes to Itinerary:** Access China Tours has made all possible attempts to ensure the accuracy of tour itineraries. Circumstances beyond our control may occur. We reserve the right to change itineraries, sightseeing activities, and common carriers, and to substitute hotels when necessary. Service of a similar category and standard will be maintained if such changes are made. The Service Voucher in your last pre-departure packet will provide the operational itinerary summary, final transport and hotel information.

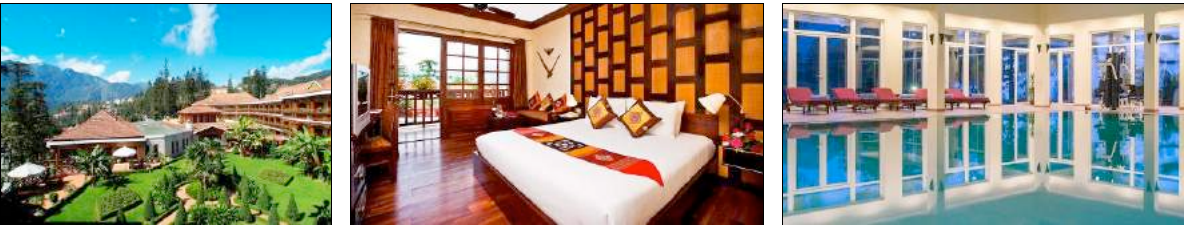
## Luxury & Deluxe Hotels/Resorts Selected for This Tour



Hotel de l'Opera Hanoi



Paradise Luxury Cruise Halong Bay



Victoria Sapa Resort & Spa



Naman Retreat Da Nang



Caravelle Hotel Saigon



## Tour Land Price Inclusions & Exclusions

**Tour Land Prices:** from **\$3,680 USD** per person, double occupancy (for a group of 2-5 travelers)  
from **\$3,450 USD** per person, double occupancy (for a group of 6-9 travelers)

### **What's Included in 'Tour Land Prices'**

- Luxury and deluxe category hotel double occupancy accommodations with breakfast
- Deluxe cruise boat in Halong Bay double occupancy accommodations with meals
- Coach class intra region and domestic air tickets for 6 segments total
- Deluxe cabin double occupancy on Hanoi-Sapa tourist train
- Air-conditioned motor coach ground transportation
- All tour related domestic taxes in the destination countries
- Arrival and departure transfers on tour dates
- Transfers and luggage (1 piece of 45 pounds per person for domestic flights) handling
- Pre-departure information packets
- All sightseeing, visits, cultural events, and activities listed in the itinerary
- All meals as specified in the itinerary
- Service of a private English-speaking local guide in each city or region
- Private, clean, and newer motor coach with air-conditioning and a professional driver

### **What's Not Included in 'Tour Land Prices'**

- International air tickets (*will quote separately if requested*)
- Tourist visa and visa processing fee
- Trip cancellation, baggage, accident, and medical insurance
- Meals not indicated as included and optional activities and events
- Gratuities to your local guides and drivers
- Items not listed and/or specified as included in the itinerary

**Cancellation Policy:** **\$600 USD pp deposit is required at sign up.** All cancellation notices must be received in writing and will become effective as of the date of receipt by *Access China Tours*. We assess cancellation fees of all tours according to the following schedule:

90 days or more prior to departure .....	\$300 per person *
89 to 60 days prior to departure .....	\$600 per person *
59 to 30 days prior to departure .....	\$900 per person *
29 to 15 days prior to departure .....	\$1200 per person *

\* Plus any charges assessed by government agencies, land suppliers, cruise companies and airlines.

Within 14 days of departure .....100% forfeiture of the tour price per person

*Access China Tours* will not grant partial refunds for any unused trip arrangements after the trip has commenced or any refunds to participants who do not complete any portion of the itinerary. Any airline tickets issued are subject to the carrier's refund and cancellation policy. **We strongly recommend you purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance to protect your travel investment.** If a tour is forced to be cancelled due to government's travel warnings, declared or undeclared wars, hostilities, civil disturbances, strike, riot, epidemic, and quarantines, *Access China Tours* will refund all participants' payment less any irretrievable expenses and loss (visa fees, airline penalties, communication cost, and non-refundable booking cost, etc.). However, *Access China Tours* will not be responsible for any expenses incurred by tour participants (e.g., non-refundable "advance purchase" air tickets, insurance & medical expenses, passport and visa expenses, etc.).