


Small Group Journeys Itineraries

Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Japan - Validity 01 November 2024 – 31 March 2026

<p>Essence of Vietnam and Cambodia</p> <p>Tour will change to be 15-days from 10 April 2025 onwards</p>	<p>14 / 15 Days</p> <p>IJDB-SGJ-14</p>
	<p>Embark on a one-night river cruise through the Mekong Delta, meandering along canals and engaging with local communities. Experience the delta's beauty before taking a speedboat to the lively city of Phnom Penh. Discover Angkor Wat by torchlight on a unique tuk-tuk ride, offering a rare and enchanting view of the ancient temples. In Saigon, immerse yourself in the local culture as you explore the city's vibrant streets aboard a traditional tuk-tuk. This journey blends scenic river cruises, historical exploration, and authentic local travel, providing a rich and diverse experience of Southeast Asia's wonders.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Itinerary until 31 March 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day 1: Arrival and Xin Chao to Hanoi <p>On arrival in Hanoi, transfer to your hotel and enjoy free time until your tour briefing and welcome drinks with your fellow travelers. Stay the next two nights in Ha Noi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day 2: Hanoi (B) <p>This morning, meet your guide at your hotel and depart on your tour after breakfast. Your first stop will be the popular Hoan Kiem Lake, situated in the heart of Hanoi city and Dong Xuan market. Your next stop will be Ho Chi Minh complex comprising Ba Dinh Square, Presidential Palace (for outside photo taken), as well as his private residence from 1954 until 1969. The wooden ethnic minority style house, which was built on stilts, is surrounded by lovely peaceful gardens. In the same complex you will see the One Pillar Pagoda, founded by King Ly Thai To in 1049. This structure has become an important symbol for the people of Hanoi. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant before (guests' own account) continuing on to the Temple Of Literature, Vietnam's first university. Constructed in 1070, the gardens and well-preserved architecture offer a relaxing glimpse into Vietnam's past. You will then visit Hoa Lo Prison (formerly known as the "Hanoi Hilton" during the American war). Your tour will also include the historical St Joseph's Cathedral. The last stop of the day before returning to your hotel will be the visit inside the Opera House ending with a wonderful afternoon tea. Overnight in Hanoi.</p>	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Day 3: Hanoi to Halong Bay (B/L/D)</p> <p>Drive past scenes of traditional rural life as you travel from Hanoi to Halong City, the gateway to Halong Bay. On arrival, board a well-appointed junk boat, enjoy a delicious lunch and begin cruising among some of the 3,000 islands which rise from the sea. In the evening, retreat to your private cabin, or relax on the main deck or at the bar. Overnight on-board.</p> <p>• Day 4: Halong Bay to Hoi An (B)</p> <p>Continue your exploration of Halong Bay before enjoying brunch on board. Cruise back to port for disembarkation, before you drive to Hanoi for your onwards flight to Danang. On arrival, transfer to your hotel in the charming town of Hoi An. Enjoy an evening of free time. Overnight in Hoi An</p> <p>• Day 5: Hoi An (B)</p> <p>Half day walking tour In the afternoon, we start the walking tour at the Museum of Folk Culture where you will learn about the history of this charming and peaceful town before you walk around the small market. Walk along the main street to the Chinese Assembly Hall of Fujien Chinese community. The hall, built in 1697, has been used as the worshipping place to dedicate to Thien Hau (the Goddess of the Sea or Holy Mother). Continue to the river bank along narrow streets - on both sides are old houses transformed into beautifully decorated shops with colorful lanterns in different shapes. Next, we'll stop to see the Japanese covered bridge built in the early 17th century by Japanese traders who settled in the town. The special pagoda-shaped bridge is now the official symbol of Hoi An. We finish with a visit to a historic old house of this UNESCO-recognized town. The afternoon is free for you to do as much or as little as you like. Choose to explore the old town, have a tailor custom make a new wardrobe or cycle to An Bang Beach. Overnight in Hoi An.</p> <p>• Day 6: Hoi An to Saigon (B)</p> <p>Enjoy more free time in Hoi An before flying to Saigon. On arrival, transfer to your hotel for check in and enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Stay the next two nights at the Hotel Equatorial (or similar).</p> <p>• Day 7: Saigon (B)</p> <p>Half day Cu Chi tour Cu Chi used to be a bitter battleground for many years during the Vietnam War. Visitors cannot miss a visit to this 'underground village ', an intricate network of over 200km-long tunnels, 75km from Ho Chi Minh City. Try a very short segment of this labyrinth of interlaced tunnels and you will find it incredible. Then you can test your marksmanship with an AK rifle at local rifle range (optional). Half day Saigon city After lunch, depart from your hotel for a half day tour of vibrant Saigon. This dynamic city has a unique life of its own. Visit the former Presidential Palace, it was towards this modern building that North Vietnamese resistance fighters tanks (Viet Cong) rolled on the morning of April 30, 1975 as Saigon fell. From the palace you will go on foot (your car will be available at all times) to visit the major sights of colonial Ho Chi Minh City including the red-brick Catholic cathedral of Notre-Dame, the nearby 19th century Empire-style Post Office, and the next door 'Hotel de Ville' or City Hall all look indomitably European, Dong Khoi Street (formerly Rue Catinat), Opera House. Continue your tour by stopping at Ben Thanh market, one of the biggest market in the downtown area of Saigon. The market is one of the earliest</p> 	

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<p>surviving structures in Saigon and today is considered one of symbol of Saigon, popular with tourists seeking local handicrafts, textiles, "ao dai" (Vietnamese traditional custom), and souvenirs, as well as local cuisine. Overnight in Saigon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 8: Saigon to Mekong Delta (B/L/D)</p> <p>Boarding at Can Tho at Ninh Kieu pier. Welcome drink, introduction to the ship and crew, check into the cabins. Departure downstream of the Hau river. Lunch on board while en route. Turning into Nicolai canal, towards the Mang Thit river. Rest on the upper deck in a scenery of rice fields, sugar cane, woods on the near banks. By mid-afternoon, the Bassac casts anchor for a visit on shore: past the first tree line, quiet discovery of the peaceful life in the delta's countryside, of rice fields, fruit trees and the welcoming inhabitants, or, at your option, short cycling tour of the surrounding area. Boarding back, complimentary drink as a welcome back on board. Rest on the deck or around the bar enjoying the sunset. The Bassac sets anchor just downstream from Tra On for the night.</p> <p>Day 9: Can Tho (B)</p> <p>The boat departs at 06:00, as the ship passes by Tra On. The ship then departs towards Can Tho. The breakfast is available at 7:00. Arrival in Cần Thơ, transfer onto a local boat to visit the Cai Rang floating market (8:45), then a noodle factory and return to the Ninh Kieu pier (10:00 AM). After that, meet your guide and drive to visit Binh Thuy ancient house - The unique aspect of Binh Thuy ancient house is that it bears the clear imprint of Eastern feng-shui, resulting in a harmonious combination of the two cultures of the East and West. As a result, visitors can see the luxury French style and the old villa style in the design of the ancient house. Overnight at hotel in Can Tho.</p> <p>Day 10: Can Tho to Chau Doc (B)</p> <p>After breakfast at the hotel, meet our guide and drive to Chau Doc. Arrive Chau Doc and if time permits, continue your tour by visiting a beautiful Khmer temple, and later visit the floating houses that double as catfish farms, now a huge industry for the country. Check in the hotel. Overnight in Chau Doc.</p> <p>Day 11: Chau Doc to Phnom Penh (B)</p> <p>After breakfast, transfer to the pier and board the speedboat to the Cambodian border and after clearing custom and immigration formalities with the Cambodian authorities, cruise along the Mekong River to Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. After arrival at Phnom Penh's port, you will be welcome by our local guide and transfer to hotel for check in – check in time at 1400 – welcome drink served at the hotel lobby. In the afternoon, continue to visit Toul Sleng genocide museum and the Killing Fields. Toul Sleng Genocide Museum: prior to 1975, Toul Sleng was a high school. When the Khmer Rouge came to power it was converted into the S-21 prison and interrogation facility. Enjoy a sunset cocktail at the Le Moon Bar overlooking to the beautiful Mekong River.</p> 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 12: Phnom Penh to Siem Reap (B)</p> <p>Explore Phnom Penh with Cyclo (Bicycle Rickshaw), a chaotic, energetic and always fascinating city. Start our tour at Wat Phnom, the birthplace of the capital. Then, visit to the Royal Palace, the residence of King Norodom Sihamoni, the Silver Pagoda, and the National Museum, which contains a comprehensive collection of Khmer art. Afterwards overland to Siem Reap (ca. 6 hours driving time). On the way you will make a stop at the infamous Spider and Insect Market in Skun and at the stone mason village near Phnom Santuk. If time permits another short stop at the Naga Bridge in Kampong Kdei can be added. Arrival in Siem Reap during the early evening.</p> <p>Day 13: Siem Reap (B/D)</p> <p>In the morning visit the Southern Gate of Angkor Thom ‘Great City’. This will include many of the finest Temples of King Jayavarman VII, who ruled from 1181 to 1220. At the southern gate of Angkor Thom, you will marvel at the imposing 23m (75-foot) high stone faces of Avalokiteshvara, featured in the Tomb Raider movie. These astonishing carvings inspire awe and wonder in all who view them. At the centre of this citadel lies the state temple of Bayon, which we will also visit. This temple-mountain, built at the end of the 12th century, is adorned with hundreds of gigantic stone faces. This tour also includes the Terrace of Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper King. Later in the day you will discover the most famous temples from the 11th century: Baphuon, Phimeanakas. Then visit Ta Prohm. It is unforgettable due to the massive trees with thick roots that entangle the walls. They were left here intentionally by the archeologists working on the site. While clearing back the forest it was decided to leave them in place to serve as a reminder of how the original discoverers found it and other temples. Many of the trees have grown around and through the remains, and soar high above the temple. End of program today, explore the magnificent Angkor Wat, built under Suryavarman II. DINNER WITH APSARA THEATRE Step back in time with the only air-condition theatre in town, Dancers, Singers and Musicians will bring Khmer Ancient culture back in time in a spectacular surrounding while you enjoy one of the finest cuisine in town.</p> <p>Day 14: Departure from Siem Reap (B)</p> <p>Enjoy these last moments in Siem Reap before our guide and driver transfer you to the airport for your onward journey.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">New Tour Itinerary from 01 April 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 1: Arrival and Xin Chao to Hanoi</p> <p>On arrival in Hanoi, transfer to your hotel and enjoy free time until your tour briefing and welcome drinks with your fellow travellers. Stay the next two nights at Le Jardin Hotel & Spa.</p> <p>Day 2: Hanoi (B)</p> <p>Full day city tour this morning, meet your guide at your hotel and depart on your tour after breakfast. Your first stop will be the popular Hoan Kiem Lake, situated in the heart of Hanoi city and Dong Xuan market. Your next stop will be Ho Chi Minh complex comprising Ba Dinh Square, Presidential Palace (for outside photo taken), as well as his private residence from 1954 until 1969.</p> 	

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<p>The wooden ethnic minority style house, which was built on stilts, is surrounded by lovely peaceful gardens. In the same complex you will see the One Pillar Pagoda, founded by King Ly Thai To in 1049. This structure has become an important symbol for the people of Hanoi. Enjoy lunch at KOTO Van Mieu before continuing on to the Temple Of Literature, Vietnam’s first university. Constructed in 1070, the gardens and well-preserved architecture offer a relaxing glimpse into Vietnam’s past. You will then visit Hoa Lo Prison (formerly known as the “Hanoi Hilton” during the American war). Your tour will also include the historical St Joseph’s Cathedral. The last stop of the day before returning to your hotel will be the visit inside the Opera House ending with a wonderful afternoon tea. Overnight in Hanoi.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 3: Hanoi to Halong Bay (B/L/D) <p>Drive past scenes of traditional rural life as you travel from Hanoi to Halong City, the gateway to Halong Bay. On arrival, board a well-appointed junk boat, enjoy a delicious lunch and begin cruising among some of the 3,000 islands which rise from the sea. In the evening, retreat to your private cabin, or relax on the main deck or at the bar. Overnight on-board of Victoria Star (or similar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 4: Halong Bay to Hoi An (B) <p>Continue your exploration of Halong Bay before enjoying brunch on board. Cruise back to port for disembarkation, before you drive to Hanoi for your onwards flight to Danang. On arrival, transfer to your hotel in the charming town of Hoi An. Enjoy an evening of free time. Stay the next two nights at Hoi An Central Boutique Hotel & Spa (or similar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 5: Hoi An (B) <p>Half day walking tour in the morning, we start the walking tour at the Museum of Folk Culture where you will learn about the history of this charming and peaceful town before you walk around the small market. Walk along the main street to the Chinese Assembly Hall of Fujien Chinese community. The hall, built in 1697, has been used as the worshipping place to dedicate to Thien Hau (the Goddess of the Sea or Holy Mother). Continue to the river bank along narrow streets - on both sides are old houses transformed into beautifully decorated shops with colorful lanterns in different shapes. Next, we'll stop to see the Japanese covered bridge built in the early 17th century by Japanese traders who settled in the town. The special pagoda-shaped bridge is now the official symbol of Hoi An. We finish with a visit to a historic old house of this UNESCO-recognized town. The afternoon is free for you to do as much or as little as you like. Choose to explore the old town, have a tailor custom make a new wardrobe or cycle to An Bang Beach. Overnight in Hoi An.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 6: Hoi An to Saigon (B) <p>Enjoy more free time in Hoi An before flying to Saigon. On arrival, transfer to your hotel for check in and enjoy an afternoon at leisure. Stay the next two nights at the Hotel Equatorial (or similar).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 7: Saigon (B/L) <p>Cu Chi used to be a bitter battleground for many years during the Vietnam War. Visitors cannot miss a visit to this 'underground village ', an intricate network of over 200km-long tunnels, 75km</p>	

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<p>from Ho Chi Minh City. Try a very short segment of this labyrinth of interlaced tunnels and you will find it incredible. Then you can test your marksmanship with an AK rifle at local rifle range (optional). Half day Saigon city After lunch at a local restaurant, depart from your hotel for a half day tour of vibrant Saigon. This dynamic city has a unique life of its own. Visit the former Presidential Palace, it was towards this modern building that North Vietnamese resistance fighters tanks (Viet Cong) rolled on the morning of April 30, 1975 as Saigon fell. From the palace you will go on foot (your car will be available at all times) to visit the major sights of colonial Ho Chi Minh City including the red-brick Catholic cathedral of Notre-Dame, the nearby 19th century Empire-style Post Office, and the next door 'Hotel de Ville' or City Hall all look indomitably European, Dong Khoi Street (formerly Rue Catinat), Opera House. Continue your tour by stopping at Ben Thanh market, one of the biggest market in the downtown area of Saigon. The market is one of the earliest surviving structures in Saigon and today is considered one of symbol of Saigon, popular with tourists seeking local handicrafts, textiles, "ao dai" (Vietnamese traditional custom), and souvenirs, as well as local cuisine. Overnight in Saigon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 8: Saigon to Mekong Delta (B/L/D)</p> <p>Can Tho – Cai Be Boarding at Can Tho at Ninh Kieu pier. Welcome drink, introduction to the ship and crew, check into the cabins. Departure downstream of the Hau River. Lunch on board while en route. Turning into Nicolai canal, towards the Mang Thit River. Rest on the upper deck in a scenery of rice fields, sugar cane, woods on the near banks. By mid-afternoon, the Bassac casts anchor for a visit on shore: past the first tree line, quiet discovery of the peaceful life in the delta's countryside, of rice fields, fruit trees and the welcoming inhabitants, or, at your option, short cycling tour of the surrounding area. Boarding back, complimentary drink as a welcome back on board. Rest on the deck or around the bar enjoying the sunset. The Bassac sets anchor just downstream from Tra On for the night.</p> <p>Day 9: Can Tho (B)</p> <p>The boat departs at 06:00, as the ship passes by Tra On. The ship then departs towards Can Tho. The breakfast is available at 7:00. Arrival in Cần Thơ, transfer onto a local boat to visit the Cai Rang floating market (8:45), then a noodle factory and return to the Ninh Kieu pier (10:00 AM). After that, meet your guide and drive to visit Binh Thuy ancient house - The unique aspect of Binh Thuy ancient house is that it bears the clear imprint of Eastern feng-shui, resulting in a harmonious combination of the two cultures of the East and West. As a result, visitors can see the luxury French style and the old villa style in the design of the ancient house. Overnight at hotel in Can Tho.</p> <p>Day 10: Can Tho to Chau Doc (B)</p> <p>After breakfast at the hotel, meet our guide and drive to Chau Doc. Arrive Chau Doc and if time permits, continue your tour by visiting a beautiful Khmer temple, and later visit the floating houses that double as catfish farms, now a huge industry for the country. Check in the hotel. Overnight in Chau Doc.</p> 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Day 11: Chau Doc to Phnom Penh (B)</p> <p>After breakfast, transfer to the pier and board the speedboat to the Cambodian border and after clearing custom and immigration formalities with the Cambodian authorities, cruise along the Mekong River to Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. Travel tip: Speedboat trip takes around 5.5 hours. Please prepare yourself light snack and a bottle of water. The boat is open for natural air and has no AC, so you should wear casual clothes. After arrival at Phnom Penh’s port (around 14 h), you will be welcomed by our local guide. Transfer to your hotel for check in (check in time from 14 h). The Welcome Drink is served at the hotel lobby. Free time for lunch (not included) and to freshen up. At around 16 h start a short walking tour over a local market in the heart of Phnom Penh to get an insight into the daily shopping habits of the Phnom Penh people. You have the opportunity to taste local snacks like Khmer sweets or fruits at the small market stalls. Overnight in Phnom Penh</p> <p>• Day 12: Phnom Penh (B)</p> <p>Explore Phnom Penh with Cyclo (Bicycle Rickshaw), a chaotic, energetic and always fascinating city. Start our tour at Wat Phnom, the birthplace of the capital. Then, visit to the Royal Palace, the residence of King Norodom Sihamoni, the Silver Pagoda, and the National Museum, which contains a comprehensive collection of Khmer art. In the afternoon, continue to visit Toul Sleng genocide museum and the Killing Fields. Toul Sleng Genocide Museum: prior to 1975, Toul Sleng was a high school. When the Khmer Rouge came to power it was converted into the S-21 prison and interrogation facility. Enjoy a sunset cocktail at a terrace bar overlooking to the beautiful Mekong River. Overnight in Phnom Penh</p> <p>• Day 13: Phnom Penh to Siem Reap (B)</p> <p>In the morning depart from Phnom Penh. Overland to Siem Reap (ca. 6 hours driving time, excl. stops along the way). On the way you will make a stop at the infamous Spider and Insect Market in Skun and at the stone mason village near Phnom Santuk. Another short stop is at the Naga Bridge in Kampong Kdei. Arrival in Siem Reap during the afternoon. Overnight in Siem Reap</p> <p>• Day 14: Siem Reap (B/D)</p> <p>In the morning visit the Southern Gate of Angkor Thom ‘Great City’. This will include many of the finest Temples of King Jayavarman VII, who ruled from 1181 to 1220. At the southern gate of Angkor Thom, you will marvel at the imposing 23m (75-foot) high stone faces of Avalokiteshvara, featured in the Tomb Raider movie. These astonishing carvings inspire awe and wonder in all who view them. At the centre of this citadel lies the state temple of Bayon, which we will also visit. This temple-mountain, built at the end of the 12th century, is adorned with hundreds of gigantic stone faces. This tour also includes the Terrace of Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper King. Later in the day you will discover the most famous temples from the 11th century: Baphuon, Phimeanakas. Then visit Ta Prohm. It is unforgettable due to the massive trees with thick roots that entangle the walls. They were left here intentionally by the archaeologists working on the site. While clearing back the forest it was decided to leave them in place to serve as a reminder of how the original discoverers found it and other temples. Many of the trees have grown around and through the remains, and soar high above the temple. End of program today, explore the magnificent Angkor</p> 	

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<p>Wat, built under Suryavarman II. In the evening, indulge in a delightful Khmer Farewell Dinner at a charming local restaurant. Overnight in Siem Reap.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Day 15: Departure from Siem Reap (B) <p>Enjoy these last moments in Siem Reap before our guide and driver transfer you to the airport for your onward journey.</p>	