


Small Group Journeys Itineraries

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

<p>Vietnam Insight</p>	<p>11 Days IJDB-SGJ-6</p>
	<p>Discover Vietnam with our Insider Experiences: Immerse yourself in the vibrant culture of Hanoi and Saigon, where the smiling locals and bustling streets create a lively atmosphere. Sail through the stunning emerald waters of Halong Bay on a traditional junk boat, a UNESCO World Heritage site. Wander through the ancient towns of Hanoi and Hue, rich in history and cultural relics. Experience the serene beauty of the Mekong Delta, with its tranquil villages, bustling floating markets, and diverse cultural tapestry. This journey offers a captivating blend of city excitement, natural beauty, and historical exploration.</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 (or similar)</p> <p>Day 2: Hanoi (B/L)</p> <p>Full day Hanoi City Tour This morning you will be met at your hotel by your guide at 8am to begin your city tour with an orientation drive past some of Hanoi's unique sites including Long Bien Bridge, St Joseph's Church & the Opera House. Continue with a walking tour through the fascinating Old Quarter - 36 ancient streets where you can observe the daily bustle of life around the markets where peddlers continue to trade as they have done for centuries. We then visit the Ho Chi Minh Quarter, dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam – Uncle Ho, to see his mausoleum, the Presidential Palace, his 'house on stilts' and the One Pillar Pagoda. A short drive to take a look at the Citadel & Flag Tower which was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2010. After stopping for lunch at KOTO Van Mieu restaurant continue your tour with a visit to the Temple of Literature - Vietnam's first university now dedicated to Confucian worship. Also visit Tran Quoc and Ngoc Son Temples and then the “Hanoi Hilton” - the nickname given to the place where U.S pilots shot down over North Vietnamese airspace were imprisoned during the Vietnam War - now converted into a small museum. Return to your hotel where your tour ends. (Lunch included)</p> <p>Important message Please note that the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed on Mondays and Fridays; The Ho Chi Minh Museum & the Citadel are closed on Mondays. The Presidential Palace can only be viewed from the outside. The Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum has annual maintenance</p> 	

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<p>normally from September for 2 to 3 months and can only be viewed from the outside. All other sites in the Ho Chi Minh complex are still accessible during this period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 3: Hanoi to Ninh Binh (B)</p> <p>Full day Hoa Lu & Trang An Landscape Complex This morning you will be met at 8am at your hotel by your guide for your 90km drive south to Hoa Lu, the ancient capital of Vietnam dating back to the 10th century. Visit the famous sanctuary of Dinh Tien Hoang, a former emperor of the Dinh Dynasty, and the temple dedicated to the Le Emperor. Following the demise of the Le dynasty the capital was moved to Ha Noi. After lunch (own arrangement) we visit the Trang An Landscape Complex. A spectacular landscape of limestone karst peaks permeated with valleys, many of them partly submerged and surrounded by steep, almost vertical cliffs. Exploration of caves at different altitudes has revealed archaeological traces of human activity over a continuous period of more than 30,000 years. Recently awarded UNESCO world heritage status we take a small boat through this magnificent area before transferring to your hotel in Ninh Binh for check-in. Lunch not included. Enjoy your stay for the coming evening at the Ninh Binh Hidden Charm Hotel (or similar).</p> <p>Day 4: Ninh Binh to Halong Bay (B/L/D)</p> <p>Marvel at the towering limestone karsts and vast paddy fields as you make your way from Ninh Binh to Halong City, the gateway to Halong Bay. Dotted with 3,000 limestones karsts, Halong Bay is one of Vietnam’s stunning natural wonders. Board a beautifully appointed junk boat and begin to cruise the impressive emerald waters of Halong Bay. Enjoy a sumptuous lunch before stopping to explore the many secluded corners of the bay. In the evening, retreat to your private cabin, or relax on the main deck or at the bar. Overnight on-board of Victoria Star Cruise (or similar)</p> <p>Day 5: Halong Bay to Hue (B)</p> <p>Rise early to enjoy a Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck, or choose to relax and take in your final moments in this majestic location before feasting on a delicious buffet brunch. After disembarkation, drive back to Hanoi for your onwards flight to the former imperial capital of Hue, situated on the banks of the Perfume River. Enjoy your stay for the coming evening at Silk Path Grand Hue Hotel And Spa (or similar).</p> <p>Day 6: Hue to Hoi An (B)</p> <p>This morning you will be met at your hotel at 8am by your guide for a half day city tour of Hue. We start by viewing the tomb of the fourth emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty Tu Duc which is set beautifully amongst lakes & frangipani trees. Continue with a stop at Bunker Hill which overlooks the Perfume River with panoramic views of the plains that stretch towards the mountains in the west & then a brief stop at the Tiger Colossium. Next we explore the impressive home of the Nguyen Dynasty emperors - the Citadel. Graded as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1993, much of the Citadel was destroyed during the Tet Offensive in 1968 but is gradually being restored. We finish with a short boat trip to the much-revered Thien Mu Pagoda, Hue’s oldest and most beautiful. After your own lunch, you will leave Hue for Hoi An. The guide and driver will take you over the beautiful Hai Van Pass - Vietnam's geographical and psychological boundary between north and south. The peak of the pass lies perpetually shrouded in clouds. Upon arrival, transfer to</p> 	

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<p>hotel for check-in. This evening is free for you to explore Hoi An at leisure. Stay the next two nights at Little Residence - Little Boutique (or similar).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Day 7: Hoi An (B)</p> <p>Early morning departure by bike for a ride to Cam Kim Island. Cycle for about 13km mainly on small paved paths in the middle of the island, through rice and corn fields, passing by beautiful hamlets. Visit Kim Bong carpentry village where traditional skill sets have been utilized for a long history of building boats, beautiful wooden houses and furniture in the old town dating from the 18th century. Experience a family making noodles and rice paper in the village. Proceed to Tra Nhieu fishing village, where you talk with the family about lifestyle and tradition you can have fun with a fisherman by trying to cast a fishing-net for fish, shrimp, and crab. Finally, you will take a boat for 1-hour boat trip from Tra Nhieu village back to Hoi An town.</p> <p>Please note from April 2025 the bike tour will be discontinued and only the Hoi An walking tour will take place.</p> <p>This morning, you will begin your walking tour of this UNESCO world heritage site. Hoi An was once Vietnam’s most active trading centre and over many centuries the Old Town has been largely preserved. The architecture of the city reflects the influence of Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, French and British traders. Hoi An is also the town where French Missionary Alexandre De Rhodes introduced Catholicism to Vietnam as well as the Romanised script that has become the standard Vietnamese script. Today you will be guided on a walking tour through the streets of enchanting Hoi An. You will visit a traditional ancient house, the Hoi An Museum, a Chinese Assembly Hall, Chau Ong pagoda and the Japanese Covered Bridge. The tour will end in Hoi An Ancient Town where you can enjoy more time at your leisure. Overnight in Hoian.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Day 8: Hoi An to Saigon (B)</p> <p>After breakfast, take a short drive to Danang for your flight to Saigon. Upon arrival at Saigon airport, your guide and private car will pick up and begin your journey out to Cu Chi Tunnels. On arrival you will watch a short DVD explaining the history of the tunnel network. Following this you will be guided through the famous tunnels as used by the communist guerrillas during the Vietnam War. The tunnel network stretches over 250km and extends to three levels underground providing you with a remarkable insight into the hardships, courage, determination and terror of a guerrilla war. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous North Vietnamese fighters. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces, and helped to counter the growing American military effort. The vast majority of the network has been recreated above ground however you will have the option to head underground & experience what life was like below the surface. Return to Saigon and check-in at hotel. On returning to Saigon, spend the remainder of day enjoying the various sights and sounds of the boisterous city. Overnight at Equatorial Hotel (or similar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Day 9: Saigon to Mekong Delta / Can Tho (B/L)</p> <p>An early morning departure from your hotel takes you to Cai Be, deep in the heart of the Mekong Delta. Join your wooden boat excursion on the charming Mekong Queen to explore the Mekong</p> 	

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<p>Delta’s unique market and, also the symbol of the region, Cai Be floating market. This is not the biggest floating market, but it is good to understand the life of the river, one of the tourist magnets of the Mekong Delta. Just only 2 hours away from Saigon, beautiful countryside sceneries and surprisingly hospitable people are waiting for you. Board our traditional boat at the local Cai Be pier and start cruising along the floating market while sampling our tropical fresh fruits, letting the cool breeze touch your hair, you will find the place a truly destination to spend the day relaxing. You will be surprised by the way the locals trade and advertise their products. Disembark the boat temporarily to explore deeper about the local life by visiting the town’s business and craft factories. Have fun with a leisure sampan ride through canals before we transfer you to an ancient house where a delicious home hosted lunch with Mekong’s specialties awaits. After lunch, continue to cruise upstream the Mighty Mekong toward Vinh Long. Along the way, you will observe the typical Mekong Delta rural local life with stops at a local brick & pottery making factory and a floating fish farm before we take you back to the mainland where your car already waiting to take you to Can Tho for overnight. Enjoy your stay for the coming evening in Can Tho. Overnight at Wink Can Tho (or similar)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 10: Can Tho to Saigon (B/D) <p>Can Tho is a university town on the confluence of three rivers in the heart of the delta. The Mekong Delta was once part of the Khmer Kingdom, and today many ethnic Khmers still live here. You make an early start this morning to visit the floating markets of Cai Rang which are in full swing at 0700. You’ll take a small boat and explore the waterways, which are packed with people who have come from the surrounding rural areas to sell all manner of fruits and vegetables. It’s a lively and colourful scene. Return to Saigon by mid-afternoon for check in to your hotel. This evening, join your group for a farewell dinner at a nice, authentic Home Vietnamese restaurant. Enjoy your stay in Sai Gon.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day 11: Departure from Saigon (B) <p>Today you will be met at your hotel by your guide for a morning walking tour through the heart of Saigon’s famous and historic city landmarks including Dong Khoi Street, the Rex Hotel, Municipal Theatre, Hotel de Ville, Nguyen Hue Boulevard, Post Office & Notre Dame Cathedral. You will then join your vehicle and drive to the site of the former US Embassy (now the US consulate) before visiting the impressive Reunification Palace and War Remnants Museum. Later travel to Binh Thanh district and visit Ba Chieu local wholesale market in the East of Saigon, before visiting the Ngoc Hoang (Jade Emperor) Pagoda. This popular 124-year-old pagoda, houses a number of intricate sculptures and woodcarvings. Return to your hotel where your tour ends. Enjoy these last moments in Saigon before you transfer to the airport for your onward journey.</p>	