



## **Vietnam Insight**

### **10 Nights / 11 Days**

#### **Hanoi – Ninh Binh – Halong Bay – Hue – Hoi An – Saigon – Can Tho**

Be enchanted by the smiling locals and bustling streets of Hanoi and Saigon, the two largest cities in Vietnam. Cruise the pristine emerald waters of World Heritage listed Halong Bay on a traditional junk boat. Explore the relics and living history in Vietnam's ancient towns of Hoi An and Hue. Explore the Mekong Delta with its tranquil villages, floating markets and diverse culture.

#### **Day 1 Arrival to Hanoi**

On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel. Tonight meet your fellow travellers over welcome drinks while your Tour Leader explains some important details and logistics of the journey ahead.

#### **Day 2 Hanoi**

Today experience the charm of Hanoi. 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. 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 observe the Citadel & Flag Tower which was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2010. After lunch at KOTO restaurant continue with a visit to the Temple of Literature – Vietnam's first university now dedicated to Confucian worship. Visit the Women's Museum which gives you a fascinating insight into the lifestyle, culture and customs of Vietnamese women. Also visit Tran Quoc and Ngoc Son Temples then the "Hanoi Hilton" – the nickname given to the place where captured U.S pilots were imprisoned during the Vietnam War – now converted into a small museum before returning to your hotel. Note: 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 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. (B, L)

#### **Day 3 Hanoi to Ninh Binh**

This morning travel some 90kms south to you 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 expense) 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 has revealed evidence of 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. Continue to Ninh Binh for your overnight stay. (B)

#### **Day 4 Ninh Binh to Halong Bay**

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 limestone 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. (B, L, D)

#### **Day 5 Halong Bay to Hue**

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 disembarking, drive back to Hanoi for your onwards flight to the former imperial capital of Hue, situated on the banks of the Perfume River. (B)

#### **Day 6 Hue to Hoi An**

Depart your hotel for your half day tour of Hue, the former imperial capital of Vietnam. View the tomb of the fourth emperor of the Nguyen Dynasty Tu Duc set beautifully amongst lakes & frangipani trees. Continue with a stop at Bunker Hill overlooking 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 drive to the much-revered Thien Mu Pagoda, Hue's oldest and most beautiful. After lunch (own expense) depart Hue for Hoi An 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 hotel for check-in. This evening is free for you to explore Hoi An at leisure. (B)

#### **Day 7 Hoi An**

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. In the afternoon, 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. Walk through the streets of enchanting Hoi An and 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. (B, L)

#### **Day 8 Hoi An to Saigon**

Drive to Danang before flying to Saigon, Vietnam's commercial capital. Upon arrival journey to the Cu Chi Tunnels. Discover the network of underground tunnels while learning about their role in the Vietnam War. The 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 spend the remainder of day at leisure enjoying the various sights and sounds of the boisterous city. (B)

### **Day 9 Saigon to Can Tho**

An early morning departure from your hotel takes you to Cai Be, deep in the heart of the Mekong Delta. Embark on your wooden boat to explore the Mekong 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 back to Can Tho for overnight. (B, L)

### **Day 10 Can Tho to Saigon**

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. (B, D)

### **Day 11 Departure from Saigon**

Depart from your hotel 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. Your vehicle will then take you 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. A transfer will take you to the airport for your onward travels. (B)

### **Includes:**

- 10 nights in described Hotel or similar
- Daily Breakfast for 2 Persons
- 3 Lunches and 1 Brunch
- 2 Dinners
- All flights as specified in the itinerary
- Transport in air-conditioned vehicles
- Small group touring

- All Entrance fees
- English speaking tour leader
- All Tipping
- Arrival and departure transfers



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