


Small Group Journeys Itineraries

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

<p>Highlights of Vietnam</p>	<p>9 Days IJDB-SGJ-68</p>
 <p>The map shows the route of the 9-day journey through Vietnam. It starts in Hanoi, goes to Halong Bay, then Hue, Hoi An, Saigon, and finally the Mekong Delta. Neighboring countries like Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, and China are also labeled.</p>	<p>Explore Vietnam’s vibrant culture and history on this 9-day journey. Begin in Hanoi with a city tour, visiting Hoan Kiem Lake, the Ho Chi Minh complex, and the Temple of Literature. Cruise Halong Bay, then head to Hue to see the Imperial City and Thien Mu Pagoda. Discover Hoi An’s preserved Old Town and its unique blend of architectural influences. In Saigon, visit the Cu Chi Tunnels and Mekong Delta, experiencing local life and cuisine. Conclude with a city tour of Saigon’s landmarks before departure. Enjoy a blend of historical sights, cultural experiences, and scenic beauty.</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. Stay the next two nights at Flower Garden Hotel Hanoi (or similar).</p> <p>Day 2: Hanoi (B)</p> <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. After your own lunch, 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 the Opera House then stroll around the bustling Old Quarter, find a street side café and sip a cup of traditional Vietnamese coffee especially coffee with eggs while watching a bit of people passing by. Overnight in Hanoi.</p> <p>Day 3: Hanoi to Halong Bay (B/L/D)</p> <p>Pick up at your hotel around 7:30 AM and transfer by shuttle bus 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</p> 	

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<p>your private cabin, or relax on the main deck or at the bar. Overnight on-board Victory Star Cruise (or similar).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Day 4: Halong Bay to Hue (B)</p> <p>Take part in a sunrise Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck before enjoying brunch on board. Cruise back to port to disembark. Drive back to Hanoi by shuttle bus and drop off at a point where you will meet the driver and move to the airport. Fly to the former imperial capital of Hue. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel for check in and an afternoon at leisure. Enjoy your stay for the coming evening at the Alba Spa Hotel (or similar).</p> <p>Day 5: 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. 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 that, 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 hotel for check-in. This evening is free for you to explore Hoi An at leisure. Stay the next two nights at Hoian Central Boutique Hotel (or similar).</p> <p>Day 6: Hoi An (B)</p> <p>In the 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> <p>Day 7: 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</p> 	

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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. Enjoy your stay for the coming evening at Paragon Hotel (or similar).

- **Day 8: Saigon to Mekong Delta (B/L/D)**

This morning you will be met at your hotel at 8am by your guide for a full day tour traveling south from Ho Chi Minh City, to the small town of Ben Tre in the Mekong Delta. Known as the "rice bowl" of Vietnam, the Delta is the most fertile region in the country and the main producer of rice and tropical fruits. Board your boat to begin your exploration of the mighty Mekong River as well as its narrow canals, gaining a real insight into the lives of the local people. Visit a local factory to see bricks being hand-made the old-fashioned way using traditional kiln technique. Stop at a riverside coconut processing factory and in the home of a local family who weave mats using local materials. Take a Pedicab & head for a delicious lunch featuring local specialties including Elephant Ear Fish. On your return from the Delta, make a brief stop at a Cao Dai pagoda, a uniquely Vietnamese sect that is a dizzying combination all the world's great religion's including Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. Return to your hotel late afternoon where your tour ends. Lunch included. Arrive back to Saigon to join your group for a farewell dinner at an authentic Vietnamese restaurant: HOME Vietnamese Sai Gon. Overnight in Saigon.

- **Day 9: Departure from Saigon (B)**

08:00- 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 and Reunification Palace (outside only). You will then join your vehicle and drive to the site of the former US Embassy (now the US consulate) before visiting 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. (Late checkout not included) Enjoy these last moments in Saigon before our guide and driver transfer you to the airport for your onward journey.