

## Vietnam Experience

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**Country(ies):** Vietnam

**Tour type:** Private

**Transport:** AC minibus, junk boat, train & flights

**Group size:** Min: 1 | Max: 0

**Days:** 8 Days

**Start location:** Hanoi, Vietnam

**End location:** Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

**Departs On:** Any day

**Meals:** Breakfasts - 12, Lunches - 8, Dinners - 2

**Highlights:**

Trekking in Mai Chau, night on a junk in Halong Bay, hustle & bustle of Hanoi's Old Quarter, traditional riverside town of Hoi An, energetic Ho Chi Minh City, waterways of the Mekong Delta, relaxing by the sea in Phu Quoc

**Places Visited:** Hanoi, Mai Chau, Halong Bay, Hoi An, Ho Chi Minh City, Vinh Long & Phu Quoc



# Itinerary

## Day 1: Arrive Hanoi and transfer to hotel

Arrive Hanoi Airport. After customs and immigration formalities you will be met by our representative and transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free for you to rest and recover after you flight, or start to explore the area around your hotel.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hanoi hotel

**MEALS:** None

**EXTRAS:** Extra day in Hanoi - pre-tour || Single room supplement (VETMVE)

## Day 2: Hanoi full day city tour

This city tour takes in Hanoi's essential sites. There is a morning and afternoon schedule, as well as an organised lunch.

You are met at 08:30am in the hotel lobby.

Morning:

- Ho Chi Minh Complex including the Mausoleum, his former stilt-house residence, the Presidential Palace and the Ho Chi Minh Museum
- The Temple of Literature - Vietnam's National University- first university dating back to 1070
- A local Vietnamese lunch

Afternoon:

- Museum of Ethnology, widely acknowledged as the best in the country, containing an extensive display of life-size structures dedicated to Vietnam's 54 ethnic minority peoples
- Ngoc Son Temple and Hoan Kiem Lake - the Ngoc Son Temple is set on a tiny island on Hoan Kiem Lake, its history dating back to the 13th century
- A one-hour cyclo tour through the narrow, chaotic streets of the Old Quarter - a must for any visitor to Hanoi!
- A traditional performance of the famous Vietnamese water puppets

**Please note:** the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed all day on Monday and Fridays, as well as from 1st October to 30th November (approx.) for annual conservation.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hanoi hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 3: Hanoi, Mai Chau

Mai Chau is only four hours away from bustling Hanoi but feels like another world. You are transferred into the lush mountains, home to remote hill tribes and visited by surprisingly few tourists. Arrive at noon, check-in and have lunch. There is an optional afternoon cycling tour through the valley or you can just relax back at the lodge. After dinner enjoy a traditional dance performance.

**OVERNIGHT:** Mai Chau homestay

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 4: Mai Chau, Hanoi

After breakfast, you can take a walk to two nearby Thai villages - Pom Coong and Lac, to see traditional village life and meet the locals. Lunch is served back at the lodge before returning to Hanoi around 17:00pm

**OVERNIGHT:** Hanoi hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 5: Halong Bay Cruise (Shared group tour)

In the morning, transfer from the hotel in Hanoi to Halong Bay - about 3.5 hours with a refreshment break en route. Meet the crew upon boarding the traditional wooden junk, then relax and enjoy lunch while the boat heads towards the secluded islands. Visit ancient limestone caves and go sea kayaking and swimming if the weather permits. Return to the junk refreshed and invigorated and relax on deck with a drink to watch the sunset. Enjoy a freshly prepared seafood dinner under the stars.

**OVERNIGHT:** Halong Bay junk boat

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 6: Halong Bay, Hanoi then train to Danang

Enjoy an early morning swim followed by breakfast. The tour then visits the "Cave of Surprises" before cruising back to the main harbour for the return drive to Hanoi.

In the evening you are transferred to the train station for the overnight journey on the Reunification Express southwards to Danang. Accommodation aboard the train in four berth shared cabins, which are simple but comfortable.

**Note:** Day use room in Hanoi is not included.

**OVERNIGHT:** Sleeper train

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 7: Hoi An Walking City Tour

Upon arrival in Danang, transfer directly to your hotel in Hoi An. Early check-in is based on room availability.

From the 16th to 18th centuries, Hoi An was a thriving international commercial port for Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Arab merchants. Today, Hoi An is a quaint riverside town, renowned for its silk and popular with tourists for its eclectic architecture, tailors shops and numerous cafes. Some of the buildings in the narrow streets have remained unchanged for more than a century and much of the town is now heritage-listed.

After lunch, enjoy a half day walking tour through the narrow winding streets of the Ancient Quarter visiting Chua Ong Pagoda, Assembly Hall, 200-year-old Tam Ky house and the Japanese Covered Bridge.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hoi An hotel

**MEALS:** Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 8: Hoi An Farmer and Fisherman

This exciting full day tour gives you an insight into the lives of the farming and fishing communities in this beautiful region of Vietnam. Begin your adventure by cycling out into the countryside through emerald green rice paddies. After a short ride you will arrive at the village of Tra Que. This charming little settlement, on the edge of Hoi An, is famous for its sweet scented green vegetables that spice up Hoi An's famous delicacies such as Cao Lau and Mi Quang. On arrival you will be introduced to the history of the village and the cultivation of the vegetables they grow. Continue with a walk around the vegetable garden and join the farmers in preparing the land and planting some crops. Finish off your village experience with a fun cooking demonstration. Later, return to Hoi An and board the Eco Tour boat for a river cruise to meet and engage with local fisherman. You are sure to enjoy the hands on experience of river net fishing with the locals. Next, you have the opportunity to paddle a unique bamboo basket boat, known as a coracle, as you explore the area's coconut palmed waterways.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hoi An hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 9: Hoi An free day

Spend the day at leisure on the beach or having clothes made by one of the expert, inexpensive tailors Hoi An is famous for.

**OVERNIGHT:** Hoi An hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 10: Fly to Ho Chi Minh City, half day city tour

Transfer to the airport in Danang. Take a flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Upon arrival, you are met by your guide for your half day city tour (See details below).

Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as the city is still frequently referred to, is Vietnam's largest city. It is a fast-paced metropolis full of contrasts, with street vendors selling fruit and vegetables next to glitzy western-style bars and boutiques. Amazingly, the city's history dates back only 300 years. In 1859 the city was captured by the French and became the capital of Cochinchina. From 1956 until April 1975 it was the capital of the US-backed Republic of Vietnam. Today, Ho Chi Minh City is very much the heart of Vietnamese business and entrepreneurial activity. The French left their mark with some fine colonial-era buildings such as the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office.

Some information on the sightseeing:

- The Notre Dame Cathedral and Old Post Office: Built between 1877 and 1883, the Notre Dame Cathedral, this is one of the best examples of classical French colonial architecture. Remarkably every stone used in its creation was shipped from France to Vietnam. Her two forty metre towers, topped with iron spires, still dominate the city's skyline. The Old Post Office is another example of French colonial architecture and is also the country's largest post office.
- Dong Khoi Street, the Opera House and the Peoples' Committee Building: built in 1897 by French architect Ferret Eugene, the 800 seat Opera House was used as the home of the Lower House Assembly of South Vietnam after 1956. It was not until 1975 that it was again used for performances. The structure was restored in 1995. The Opera House is located on the historical Dong Khoi Street which is home to many boutiques and fine restaurants. Just around the corner are the iconic Rex hotel and the beautiful Peoples' Committee Building.
- The Reunification Palace: This is one of the most important buildings in the city. Here on April 30th 1975 the

'American War' officially ended when tank number 843 of the North Vietnamese Army crashed through the gates of what was, at the time the residence of the President of the Republic of Vietnam.

- The War Remnants Museum: Formerly known as the Museum of American War Crimes, this is a poignant display of the futility of war. Some of the black and white photography in the 'Requiem' exhibit are particularly touching, dedicated to both foreign and Vietnamese journalists and photographers who perished during the conflict. The courtyard outside contains the spoils of war, namely rusting jets, tanks and cannons captured from the American military machine.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ho Chi Minh City hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 11: Mekong Delta (Shared group tour)

Our one day cruise excursion starts from Ho Chi Minh City with a drive to Cai Be - Phu An where you board the Cai Be Princess at around 10:00am. The tour will start with a visit of Cai Be's colourful floating market. Visit some local home factories such as rice paste making, rice pop corn, coco candies and drying longans.

The trip continues along the Mekong canals to Dong Hoa Hiep Island located between Vinh Long and Cai Be. During the cruise you will see beautiful landscapes along the river and observe the typical Mekong delta rural life. These evergreen islands among the Mekong River still remain unknown to many people.

Lunch awaits you at Le Longanier restaurant at La Residence de Phu An Resort, a superb Indochine style resort. After a short walk along a narrow canal, the excursion will end at around 15:30pm where the vehicle will await you for your transfer back to Ho Chi Minh City.

**OVERNIGHT:** Ho Chi Minh City hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast, Lunch

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 12: Ho Chi Minh City fly to Phu Quoc island

At leisure, until you are transferred from the hotel to the airport for your flight to Phu Quoc Island.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phu Quoc hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 13: Phu Quoc free day

Free day to relax on the beach and soak up the sun.

**OVERNIGHT:** Phu Quoc hotel

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** None

## Day 14: Phu Quoc return Ho Chi Minh City

At leisure, until you are transferred from the hotel to the airport for your flight to Ho Chi Minh city to catch your connecting flight home.

**OVERNIGHT:** N/A

**MEALS:** Breakfast

**EXTRAS:** Cambodia Extension || Extra day in Ho Chi Minh - post-tour

## Included

- All accommodation with breakfast daily (Check in 2pm, Check out 12pm)
- Internal economy flights between Danang and Ho Chi Minh City & Ho Chi Minh City and Phu Quoc return
- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private a/c vehicle (unless stated)
- English speaking guide on land tours
- Sightseeing fees and permits during guided time
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

## Excluded

- International Flights in and out of Vietnam
- Vietnam visa fee
- International airport departure tax
- Early/late check in/out service at hotels
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)
- Meals not indicated in the itinerary
- Drinks, snacks, tips and other personal expenses (e.g. laundry)
- Any other items not mentioned above

# Options

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Our tours are designed to include all that you need to enjoy a really special time in the destination you're visiting.

However, we do also offer some extra options to complement the tour and add some additional sightseeing or activities, or some extra time at either end of the tour.

All accommodation based options (e.g. Single supplements, extra nights, cruise upgrades) should be booked and paid for in advance so that we can make the appropriate arrangements.

Other options may either be booked and paid for in advance or while you are on the tour, though we recommend booking in advance to ensure there are no issues with availability.

Many options are priced the same throughout the year, but some may incur single or high season supplements - full details are given on the tour reservation form or on request.

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## 1. Accommodation

We use good quality hotels rated at the local 3 and 4-star level on this tour, together with a comfortable stay onboard a deluxe Junk boat in Halong Bay. Hotel rooms all have air-conditioning and en-suite bathrooms. All couples will be given a private double room.

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## 2. Transport

Our trips feature a mix of different transport options. We want you to feel like you're really experiencing the country you're travelling through, but at the same time we want you to finish journeys refreshed enough to enjoy the next stage of the tour. With this in mind we use public transport where we think it offers a good local experience, this may include overnight sleeper trains, local buses and local ferries. We also use private transportation including jeeps, rickshaws or pickup trucks, and mini buses for sightseeing tours where required.

### Sleeper trains:

The sleeper trains in Vietnam are of a good standard and are popular with tourists. Each carriage has its own steward who ensures the train is kept clean and tidy. You will stay in a 4-berth cabin with 3 other passengers. Supplements can be paid to book a private cabin. Bedding is provided onboard the train. The berths are on two tiers and we cannot pre-book lower tier berths. A ladder is provided but you therefore need a reasonable degree of mobility to climb up to the top tier berths.

When travelling in a group, we cannot guarantee that everyone in the group will be seated together in the same cabins. However, the train stewards are generally very helpful at arranging seat swaps, and the local travellers on the train are friendly and interesting to talk to during your journey too.

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## 3. Transfers

Our South East Asia tours all include a 24-hour arrival and departure airport-hotel transfer service, and all other transfers throughout the tour. If you are already in the country then we will provide you with your first hotel details, contact numbers for our local representatives, and details of your first meeting time.

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## 4. International Flights

We want to give you as much flexibility as possible when it comes to booking your holiday with us. So, to take account of people with varying travel plans, we don't include your international flights in the main tour price. We are however very happy to suggest flights to go with the tour. Please contact us with your preferred dates and departure airport and we'll give you a selection of airlines, times and fares to choose from.

Your airport arrival & departure transfers are included on the first and last days of the tour.

Our Vietnam tours start and finish in either Hanoi airport (HAN) or Ho Chi Minh airport (SGN).

If you are booking a tour that combines Vietnam and Cambodia we may not include the connecting flight between the two countries in the tour price (see the inclusions/exclusions or extension option sections for details). This flight can often be built into your main international flight ticket, or we may be able to book this flight for you separately if you prefer - please contact us and we will advise you on available airlines, times and prices.

We do also sometimes advertise flight inclusive packages from selected airports. Where these are shown on our website, prices are correct at the time of quoting, but are subject to continued availability of the fare used. Prices will be reconfirmed at the time of booking, and we will also provide the flight times and airline details before tickets are issued.

Flight inclusive prices are based on the cheapest Economy ticket class available which is generally non-refundable



and non-changeable unless the flight is cancelled for reasons such as Covid-19, in which case the airlines are more flexible. More flexible ticket options, as well as Premium Economy and Business Class tickets are available on request for an additional supplement. Any changes made to flight inclusive bookings will be subject to the airline rules on your ticket.

### **Flight CO2 Emissions:**

Traveling by air is an amazing way to explore the world, but flights also contribute to carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions that impact the environment. By considering the airline's CO2 emissions when you choose your flight, you can help minimize your travel footprint.

When selecting your international flights and airline, we do therefore recommend that you try and also take into account the flight CO2 emissions. Some airlines and flight search websites (eg. Google Flights, Skyscanner) do publish this information, so you can compare between your flight options and make an informed decision. Thankfully, many airlines are working towards sustainability efforts, and choosing a greener option allows you to contribute to positive change while still enjoying your incredible adventure.

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## **5. Group Size/Tour Leaders/Guides**

As we don't offer guaranteed group departures on this tour we can run the itinerary for however many people you happen to be travelling with, starting from 1 upwards. The prices given for this tour are based on a minimum of 2 passengers travelling, so if you have a different number of passengers in your group please contact us for a customised quotation.

In Vietnam we provide fully trained, local English-speaking guides for all of the sightseeing tours. A small groups we'll generally use different guides in each cities and as such this is the way the tour has been priced. If you'd prefer to have an escort guide then we'll be happy to quote based on this. At Encounters Travel we only use local guides and reps. We feel this gives you the best experience of the country and the sites you are seeing.

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## **6. Entrance Fees**

The tour price includes entrance fees to all the tourist sites mentioned in the itinerary. You will need to cover the cost of entrance to any other extra sites that you may wish to visit.

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## **7. Tipping**

Tipping is not part of culture in South East Asia in the same way that it is standard practice in other parts of the world. However it has become more customary but not compulsory in the tourist and service industry. Tipping is always optional, and any amounts paid should reflect excellent service. You may therefore wish to tip your guide and driver at the end of the tour. You should not feel obliged to tip any particular amount, and should consider your personal budget. We are often asked to provide a guide however, and can suggest that approx. USD 5-10 per person per day would be appropriate for your guide(s).

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## **8. Health and Vaccinations**

You should ensure you are fully insured for medical emergencies including emergency evacuation and repatriation.

Recommended vaccinations and other health protection measures vary according to the country you are visiting and where you are travelling from. We recommend you contact your GP/medical practitioner or a travel clinic for current information on vaccinations needed for your destination. You should ensure that you are up to date with vaccines and boosters recommended for your normal life at home, including for example, vaccines required for occupational risk of exposure, lifestyle risks and underlying medical conditions. In addition, additional courses or boosters

normally recommended for the countries in this region are:

[Thailand](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Vietnam](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

[Cambodia](#): Additional vaccinations: Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from or having transitted through an infected area.

[Laos](#): Additional vaccinations: Diptheria, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis A, Tetanus, Typhoid. [Malaria map](#). Yellow Fever certificate: Required if arriving from an infected area.

The above information can change at short notice. For up to date health information & vaccination requirements we recommend that you contact your medical practitioner or a travel clinic.

**Malaria:** Vaccinations are not available against Malaria, which is a disease transmitted by mosquitoes that can be very serious and sometimes fatal. You should avoid mosquito bites by covering up bare skin with clothing such as long sleeves and long trousers and applying insect repellents to exposed skin. When necessary, sleep under a mosquito net. Mosquitoes are most active during and after sunset. You should consult with your GP/medical practitioner/travel clinic about the most appropriate malaria prophylactic medication to take for the regions you are visiting.

**Yellow Fever:** This disease is spread by infected mosquitoes that bite during the day. A Yellow Fever Certificate of vaccination may be required as a condition of entry depending on which country you are arriving from, or that you have travelled or transitted through recently (including connecting flights with stopovers of over 12 hours). You can view this [US CDC information](#) about where the virus is present and follow the links to further information detailing which countries need you to have a Yellow Fever vaccination as part of their entry requirements. Please ensure you have this certificate with you and to hand if necessary.

Please inform us of any pre-existing conditions such as diabetes or asthma and any prescription medicine you may be taking. We also need to know about any food allergies or physical disabilities that you may have.

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## 9. Passports and Visas - Vietnam

Passports should be valid for at least six months after your departure from the country. Please do not bring an almost full or almost expired passport. Visa arrangements are the responsibility of the traveller, and requirements are subject to change by the local authorities.

British citizens (plus Japan, South Korea, Denmark, Russian, Sweden, Norway, Finland, , France, Germany, Italy, Spain) are currently subject to a visa exemption scheme, so no visa is required for stays in Vietnam of up to 15 days. Other nationalities and those staying longer in Vietnam will need to obtain a visa in advance. As this isn't always convenient we offer the option of obtaining a visa on arrival approval letter which means that you can then purchase you visa on arrival in Vietnam. However if you try to board the flight without this letter or a visa you'll be refused board. Visa approval letter fees are normally USD 10 p/p for single entry, or USD 15 p/p for multiple entry visas. The visa stamp fee on arrival at the immigration desk is then USD 25 p/p for single entry, or USD 50 p/p for multiple entry. These fees are given as a guide and may vary over time and subject to nationality. Please contact us if you have any queries.

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## 10. Time

The time in Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos is GMT plus 7 hours. Daylight saving adjustments are not observed.

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## 11. Voltage

Sockets are two round or flat pronged and 220 volts (Type A, B, C). Universal adaptors are available in most airport shops if you don't have one already. Standard European adapters will work fine, though sometimes they may feel a little loose in the sockets. All hotel rooms have electrical sockets where you can re-charge cameras, phones etc.

Hair dryers are normally available on request from the hotel reception if not in your room already. If you have US appliances (110 volts) you will need a voltage converter as well as a plug adapter.

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## 12. Money - Vietnam

The Vietnamese currency is the 'Dong' (VND). Most people prefer to be paid in Dong rather than US dollars. It can sometimes be difficult to change large notes at smaller villages so try to keep a stash of smaller notes with you.

You can also change all major currencies with any private moneychangers, at the local markets, shops or hotels, or at a bank. Banks usually open from 8.00am to 3.00pm, except Saturday afternoons and Sundays. Although all major currencies are usually accepted, the US\$ is by far the most widely accepted and preferred currency, with large notes (\$50 and \$100 bills) getting a better exchange rate. Travellers' cheques in major currencies are accepted at all banks, though a commission will be charged.

At banks throughout Vietnam you can draw cash, in both dong and dollars on all major credit cards. Approx. 3% commission will be charged for this service. Many souvenir shops, restaurants and hotels will accept payment with credit cards. There is, however, a 3-4% surcharge.

There are ATMs in Major cities like Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi and Hué, which accept major credit cards. We recommend that you consider bringing both credit cards, some cash in a hard currency (e.g. GB Pounds, Euros, US Dollars), and some travellers' cheques.

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## 13. What to take

**Luggage:** Suitcases, rucksacks or fabric holdalls are all fine to bring with you to Vietnam, though if your itinerary has many stops and different travel included within it, we recommend packing light and not bring any large cases. You should also bring a small daypack/bag to take out during the day. Your main luggage will normally be left in the hotel during your sightseeing trips - you will not need to carry it far, and there are nearly always hotel porters to assist.

**Luggage limits:** There is no luggage limit for this tour. However, most airlines restrict you to between 20kg and 25kg for your hold luggage and between 5kg and 10kg for hand luggage. Please check with your airline before travelling to the airport.

**Climate and Clothing:** There are three reasonably well-defined seasons in Vietnam, but unlike in Europe, where seasons are temperature based, Vietnam is tropical and generally speaking warm all year round. Take light clothes with something warmer for the winter nights. Some light raingear would be useful in the wet season.

**Other items:** We recommend you also bring:

- Cool footwear (sandals are ideal). If you are interested in exploring the reefs, a pair of reef shoes is recommended to avoid injuries. If you are trekking, then bring comfortable and sturdy walking shoes or light walking boots.
  - Swimming costumes - rash-guards/t-shirts are recommended for snorkelling to avoid sunburn.
  - Sunscreens, after sun lotions and personal hygiene products - Please adhere to 100ml restrictions for anything you wish to carry on hand-luggage on flights.
  - Prescription medications (if required) - please bring supporting documents.
  - Power adapter for phones, laptops etc
  - Sunglasses and hats
  - Basic first aid kit and toiletries
  - Money belt
  - Small torch
  - Dive certification card and log book if you intend to participate in SCUBA diving.
  - Sleeping bag if your tour includes any hill-tribe or village trekking
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## 14. Dates & Prices

This tour is designed as a sample tailor-made tour itinerary. As such we do not offer set group departure dates that you can join. Rather, the tour is available for you to do privately starting on any date of the year. Guideline seasonal prices are given below, based on 2 people travelling. If you would like to adjust the tour itinerary, or there will be more or less people travelling, please contact us and we will customise a price for you.

For many people planning a trip to Vietnam, the weather will be a determining factor in choosing when to travel. In general there isn't really a 'bad' time to visit Vietnam as you'll normally experience a mix of sunshine and rainy days at most times of the year. In the north of Vietnam May to October generally experiences hot, humid weather with high rainfall and November to April is generally a bit cooler with little rainfall. Central Vietnam generally experiences hot and dry weather from January to August and high rainfall from September to November. In the South of Vietnam you'll generally experience hot and dry weather from November to April and rainfall from May to October. Please speak with our reservations team who will be happy to help you in selecting an appropriate time for your tour.

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## 15. Booking & Payment

If you would like to book a place on this tour, please complete the online reservation form on our website (via the Dates & Prices tab on the tour page). You may make a deposit or full payment online, or just hold a reservation if you prefer (full payments are due 8 weeks before departure). We will then contact you with more details about how to complete your booking. Payments may be made by debit or credit card (subject to a card processing fee), or by making a bank transfer, or posting us a cheque/bank draft. Full details will be provided in your booking confirmation email. Please [contact us](#) if you would like any more information or have any questions before making a booking.

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## 16. Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all of our tours and needs to cover personal accident & liability, medical expenses and repatriation, travel delay & abandonment. We also strongly recommend that you take out cover against cancellation and lost/stolen baggage. Personal medical insurance does not normally provide sufficient cover and is generally not suitable for travel on our tours. You will not be able to join your tour if you have not provided us with details of your insurance or if you arrive without cover in place (no refunds will be due in this event). [More information...](#)

You may arrange your own insurance, or you can take advantage of a comprehensive policy that we can arrange for you through Endsleigh Insurance which has been designed to be suitable for our tours. The policy is available to travellers of all nationalities and you do not need to live in the UK to take out the policy. For full details of cover provided, prices and to apply for one of our policies, please complete [travel insurance application form](#).

Note: Any country that borders the Mediterranean is considered as 'Europe' for the purposes of travel insurance (including Turkey, Israel, Egypt and Morocco). If you are doing a tour that visits one country in 'Europe' and one that is 'Worldwide' (for example, an Egypt and Jordan tour), then you need a 'Worldwide' policy. When completing the form you should enter your travel dates including any extra days involved in overnight flights or connecting travel between your home and the tour. Our policies are not able to cover any extra time or activities other than your tour and options booked with us and your travel to & from home.

Note - to comply with insurance sales regulations, our travel insurance policies are only available to customers booking directly with us. If you have booked through a travel agent you will need to arrange your own insurance.

If your tour includes car hire, or if you plan to arrange a hot air balloon flight locally or do some scuba diving during your tour, you should check the small print in your policy to make sure these are covered (these are covered in our policy). Please also check the maximum altitude that you will be reaching and that full cover including emergency evacuation is provided up to this altitude.

If you are taking expensive camera gear or other electronic equipment with you then please check the coverage and the fine print of your policy to ensure that you have sufficient cover.

**IMPORTANT:** We must have your travel insurance details (policy number and type of insurance) before you depart or you may not be allowed to join the tour. If you haven't told us already, please let us know the details when you

can. You should take a paper copy of your insurance policy with you as you may be asked to show this at the start of the tour.

## **Covid-19**

**Before purchasing any travel insurance, please check the coverage provided for situations related to Covid-19, and for the rules about government travel advice. Your normal policy may not be suitable. Details about our own policies cover levels are given [on our website](#).**

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## **17. Financial Security**

We are a UK registered company and are committed to providing our customers with financial protection to provide peace of mind and to allow you to book with confidence.

We have therefore partnered with Trust My Travel Ltd., which provides financial protection services to over 2000 partners around the world. Funds paid to us by our customers are protected via an Insurance policy held by Trust My Travel. Each traveller and the description of services sold is declared against Trust My Travel's insurance policy directly against our financial failure. In the event of our insolvency, you will be refunded for any unfulfilled products and/or repatriation to the UK (where applicable). Please see [our website](#) or [booking conditions](#) for more information.

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## **18. Responsible Tourism**

It is impossible not to have an impact on the local environment, cultures and eco-systems when you travel. However, it is very possible to try and ensure that these impacts are as limited, or positive as possible. We are committed to ensuring that we try to leave our host countries in a better state than we found them and encourage and assist our travellers to help us with this.

The following are a few simple tips that require very little effort on your part but which will help ensure that any effect you have on the locations you visit is positive rather than negative.

- Don't prejudice: Things in different countries will almost certainly be different. That doesn't make them worse or inferior, just different.
- Communicate: Don't expect locals to speak your language. Take the trouble to learn a few words or phrases of the local language. Don't worry about sounding silly. Most locals are patient and accommodating and appreciate you making the effort to communicate in their language.
- Conserve energy: Be careful not to waste valuable resources. Use local resources sparingly. Switch off lights, air-conditioning and fans when you leave the hotel room and don't waste water. Remove superfluous packaging. Many countries have far less efficient waste disposal systems than ours. Remove packaging from newly acquired items before leaving home.
- Don't litter: No matter how untidy or dirty the country you're travelling in may look to you, avoid littering, as there is no need to add to the environment's stress. Many of the countries we visit have a tough challenge dealing with rubbish and waste. Please consider taking home as much plastic waste as you can (e.g. water bottles).
- Choose environmentally friendly products: By using environmentally friendly (bio degradable) sun creams, shampoos and detergents you can help reduce pollution.
- Respect local customs and traditions: As you are a guest in these countries, you should also comply with the local customs. If you are friendly and well mannered, the locals will reciprocate and it will only enhance your experience. It's important to follow dress and behaviour guidelines especially when visiting religious or sacred sites (your tour leader will advise you how best to do this).
- If a client commits an illegal act the client may be excluded from the tour and Encounters Travel shall cease to have responsibility to/for them. No refund will be given for any unused services.

All porters are employed and equipped following guidelines set by the International Porter Protection Group (IPPG).

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## **19. Follow Us Online**

You can stay in touch with us online by following us on Facebook and Twitter. We post updates on relevant travel news in our destination countries, special offers and discounts and other interesting travel related news and information.

[www.facebook.com/encounterstravel](https://www.facebook.com/encounterstravel)

[www.twitter.com/encounterstravl](https://www.twitter.com/encounterstravl) (yes, without the 'e')

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## 20. Before you travel

It is important when considering and preparing to travel anywhere in the world that you have a good understanding of the country you are visiting, its laws and customs, and the possible risks and situations that may occur. This includes specific risks related to your itinerary (eg. does it involve water & can you swim, are you fit enough for the activities included), as well as more general risks such as terrorism and natural disasters.

General details and links to more information about health risks, visa requirements, money, and travel insurance are given in these tour notes. We recommend that you re-read all these before your departure as well as the small print of your travel insurance policy so you know exactly what is covered and what is not.

You should take copies of your important travel documents with you and ideally also store them online securely as a backup. Make sure that you have given us your emergency contact details and told that person where and when you are travelling. Ensure you take enough money with you and that you have access to emergency funds.

Finally, you should read through and stay updated with the current [official government travel advice](#) for your destination. We are registered partners with the UK Foreign Office's ['Travel Aware' campaign](#) which provides further useful and invaluable information.



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**Note:** Please [download an up-to-date copy](#) of these tour notes shortly before you travel as itineraries and information does change from time to time.

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