

Vietnam Classic

Customised Tours**8 Nights/9 Days**

Itinerary

**Day
1****SAIGON**

Arrival in Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Transfer to Hotel & check in. Rest of the day at Leisure.

**Day
2****SAIGON (B)**

Sightseeing in Saigon and Cholon (Chinatown) (8 hours)

A vibrant metropolis, Saigon teems with energy, activity and motion. Everywhere you look, you see the convergence of traditional and modern life. Begin with a tour of the historic centre, strolling along Dong Khoi Street, formerly known as the Rue Catinat, the main shopping thoroughfare and heart of old colonial Saigon. Pass by classic European-style landmarks such as the ornate City Hall (Hotel De Ville), the old Opera House (both may only be viewed from the outside), and pay a quick visit to the neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office. Afterwards dive into modern history with a tour of the Reunification Palace. Formerly the Independence Palace of the South Vietnamese president, this 60s style building was famously stormed by tanks on April 30, 1975 signifying the fall of South Vietnam. It has been preserved in its original state, and the original tanks remain on display near the entrance gates. Continue to the harrowing War Remnants Museum, which comprehensively documents the travails of the long Vietnam- American War. Inside are detailed photographic exhibitions; outside is a collection of tanks, planes and weapons. A powerful experience, this museum is guaranteed to provoke strong emotions. Then visit the Emperor of Jade Pagoda, one of Saigon's most interesting pagodas. In the afternoon, head out to Cholon (Chinatown). Explore the highlights of this fascinating area, beginning with a walking tour from Tran Hung Dao Street through Nguyen Trai and Soai Kinh Lam market (cloth wholesale market), visit Cha Tam Church. Continue to Thien Hau Pagoda, built by the Cantonese congregation and dedicated to the heavenly goddess. End the tour at the central Ben Thanh Market, where vendors display a vast array of goods and handicrafts, appealing to every taste.

**Day
3**

SAIGON (B)

Excursion to My Tho with a boat trip to Mekong River islands (Full day) (8 hours)

From Saigon, transfer to My Tho, a bustling town in the rich agricultural region of the Mekong Delta and visit the Vinh Trang Pagoda, a beautiful temple which illustrates the splendid harmonious fusion of Asian and European architectural styles. Afterwards board a local boat to explore the Mekong River Islands, stopping at a fruit orchard to enjoy fruit and tea while listening to local music and Thoi Son islet. The trip also includes a brief sampan ride through the tiny waterways that thread the island.

Overnight in Saigon

**Day
4**

SAIGON - DANANG - HOI AN (B)

Transfer to Danang. By vehicle from Danang airport to Hoi An (35 kms)

Walking tour around Hoi An (2.5 hours)

Hoi An is a picturesque riverside town south of Danang. Known as Faifo to early western traders, it was one of South East Asia's major international ports during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Now, this beautifully preserved historic city is best seen on foot. See the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge - the first bridge on this site was constructed in 1593 by the Japanese community of Hoi An to link the town with the Chinese quarters across the stream. The bridge was provided with a roof so it could be used as a shelter from rain and sun. Visit the nearby Sa Huynh Museum, which contains exhibitions from the earliest period of Hoi An's history. Stroll to the Tran Family Chapel, a house for worshipping ancestors that was built about 200 years ago with donations from family members. The Tran family traces its origins to China and moved to Vietnam around 1700. The architecture of the building reflects the influence of Chinese and Japanese styles. Visit the Phuoc Kien Assembly Hall, a Chinese pagoda built around 1690 and then restored and enlarged in 1900. It is typical of the Chinese clans that were established in the Hoi An area. The temple is dedicated to Thien Hau Thanh Mau (Goddess of the Sea and Protector of Sailors and Fishermen). Finally, visit a lantern making workshop, one of many in Hoi An. The framework for the lanterns is made beforehand and clients can observe locals adorning silk cloth on the lantern.

Overnight in Hoi An

**Day
5**

HOI AN - HUE (B)

By vehicle from Hoi An to Hue (140 kms)

Sightseeing in the Imperial Citadel (3 hours)

Located in the heart of Hue is the Imperial Citadel, a vast complex built in the early 19th century and modelled after the Forbidden City of Peking. The original walls stretched for 10 km and were surrounded by a wide moat. Today, most of the buildings have been destroyed due to bombing during the Vietnam-American War, but the monuments that remain provide a fascinating glimpse into the court life of the Nguyen Dynasty. Approach the city past the striking Flag Tower, where a giant Vietnamese flag waves proudly overhead, to the imposing Ngo Mon Gate, the main entrance to the Imperial Enclosure. Enter into an area of spacious courtyards and serene lotus ponds, and stroll around the Dien Tho Residence (Dien Tho Palace) where the Queen mother lived. Visit the Thai Hoa Palace, the magnificently decorated reception hall, the Halls of the Mandarins, and the original Nine Dynastic Urns, among other sites.

Visit the Imperial Tomb of Emperor Minh Mang (1 hour)

Minh Mang is a complex built in 1840 by King Minh Mang that is known for its magnificent architecture, military statuary and elaborate decorations. It is perhaps the most beautiful of Hue's pagodas and tombs.

Overnight in Hue

**Day
6**

HUE - HANOI - HALONG (B)

Excursion to Thien Mu Pagoda with a boat trip on the Perfume river (2 hours)

Embark on a local boat and cruise down the Perfume River to the iconic Thien Mu Pagoda, an elegant seven-tiered octagonal tower which has become Hue's most widely recognizable monuments. During the early 1960s, this became a centre of anti-government protests, and the site of the famous self-immolation by the monk Thich Quang Duc.

Transfer (15 kms)

Arrival in Hanoi. By vehicle from Hanoi (Noi Bai Airport) to Halong (160 kms)

Overnight in Halong

**Day
7**

HALONG - HANOI (B)

Excursion by boat through Halong Bay including lunch (12 hours)

Arrival at Tuan Chau Marina port, board a traditional wooden junk and begin cruising through the beautiful Halong Bay. Enjoy lunch while passing strange rock formations including Stone Dog, Incense Burner (Dinh Huong) and Fighting Cock (Ga Choi). Visit one of the caves in the centre of the islands such as Thien Cung (Heavenly Residence Grotto). Cruise back to Halong Pier, disembark at the port. End of program.

Transfer to/from Tuan Chau Marina Port (10 kms)

By vehicle from Halong to Hanoi (city) (160 kms)

Overnight in Hanoi

**Day
8**

HANOI (B)

Sightseeing in Hanoi (70 kms)

Visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (2-3 hours)

Visit the One Pillar Pagoda

Built of wood on a single stone pillar, the One Pillar Pagoda is designed to resemble a lotus blossom, the symbol of purity, rising out of a sea of sorrow which was rebuilt after being destroyed by the French in 1954.

Visit the Temple of Literature

The Temple of Literature has a peaceful series of walled courtyards and graceful gateways, and this monument is one of the best-preserved examples of traditional Vietnamese architecture. Founded in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius, this was also the site of Vietnam's first university. In one courtyard, giant stone tortoises bear stele on their backs, listing the accomplishments of graduating scholars.

Visit Tran Quoc Pagoda (on Ho Tay Lake)

Tran Quoc Pagoda is one of the oldest pagodas in Vietnam, and located on West Lake. The pagoda is quite beautiful and done in a traditional Vietnamese style. An 11 floor Buddhist tower makes this pagoda a sacred spot for pilgrimages from all over the country.

Visit the Old Quarter by cyclo

Discover the Old Quarter of Hanoi by cyclo. This fascinating network of narrow alleys and shop houses is also known as The 36 Streets, each street being named after the merchandise traditionally sold there, ranging from fabrics to crafts to medicines to tombstones. Drop off to visit Ngoc Son temple & Hoan Kiem lake.

Overnight in Hanoi

**Day
9**

HANOI (B)

After Breakfast. Check out from Hotel and Transfer to airport for departure back home.