



**A peek into ancient traditions.**

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**VIETNAM | 8DAYS / 7NIGHTS**

**Route:** From Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh

**Type of tour:** Culture

## TOUR OVERVIEW

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Encompassing all the main highlights of Vietnam and focusing on the country's cultural and natural diversity, this tour takes you from the charming capital city of Hanoi and the stunningly beautiful Halong Bay to the World Heritage sites of Hoi An and Hue; from colourful and teeming Ho Chi Minh City to the wonderful scenery and floating markets of the Mekong Delta. This is the perfect tour for an insight into traditional Vietnamese culture and people.

## DAY BY DAY

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### DAY 1 | ARRIVAL HANOI

Upon arrival at Noi Bai Airport, pass through normal airport and immigration controls. Collect your luggage and find your guide awaiting you in the airport for your transfer to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure.

### DAY 2 | HANOI – HALONG – HANOI

This morning you are picked up at around 08.00 by our local guide for the three-hour drive to Halong Bay, listed as a World Heritage Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, means "dragon descending to the sea", for its picturesque seascape of more than 1,500 limestone islets rising from the sea. Enjoy a relaxing boat trip with fresh seafood lunch prepared and served on board. Late afternoon transfer back to Hanoi.

- **Overnight stay in Hanoi on a half-board basis.**

### DAY 3 | HANOI

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart for a visit to Ba Dinh Square where silent sentries guard the mausoleum where Ho Chi Minh lies in state (closed every Friday, Monday, and October/November). See the simple cottage where 'Uncle Ho' lived and worked and visit the nearby museum, the Temple of Literature. Return to hotel with rest of the day at leisure.

- **Overnight stay in Hanoi on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

### DAY 4 | HANOI – DANANG – HOI AN

After breakfast, check out and transfer to Hanoi Airport for flight to Danang. Upon arrival at Danang Airport, meet and transfer to hotel in Hoi An. Then explore Hoi An, a World Heritage Site and florid trading town on the Silk Road since the 16th century. We visit a traditional house, the Japanese covered bridge as well as the Hoi An fish and produce market.

- **Overnight stay in Hoi An on a bed-and-breakfast basis.**

### DAY 5 | HOI AN – HUE

Breakfast at the hotel, check out and transfer by road through the recently opened Hai Van Tunnel to Hue with stopover to visiting of Cham Museum, founded in 1915 by the Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient. The museum building is lovely in its own right. As you wander past the exhibits you can look out on a courtyard full of frangipani trees and smell the salty sea air. But what makes this place worth visiting are the statues, which date from the 7th to 15th centuries. The Chams were masterful carvers; their religious statues are serene, playful and sensual. Lunch break at Lang Co Beach Resort. Arrive in Hue in the late morning and check in at hotel. In the afternoon, you will start the visit at Thien Mu Pagoda, about 3km from Hue, on the banks of the Perfume River. This Mahayana Buddhist temple is a peaceful place to spend time. It's the oldest monastery in Hue, dating back to the 17th century. Its octagonal seven-tier stupa has long been regarded as the symbol of Hue. The best way to get to Thien Mu Pagoda is by a leisurely cruise along the Perfume River. The legend tells how, during the time of the Chams, an old woman dressed in red and green was seen seated on a heap of bricks. She ordered a pagoda to be built on that auspicious spot and then disappeared into the clouds. The sanctuary itself is an impressive monument overlooking the Perfume River and offers a nice view of the area. Then continue on to the Royal Citadel and the Imperial City, the past glory of Hue. Emperor Gia Long modelled the Royal Citadel in the Forbidden City in Beijing, China. The Royal Citadel is composed of three walled enclosures, each within the other – a city within a city. Visit the Imperial City, which housed the palaces, pavilions, civil and religious ceremonies and official audiences with the civil mandarins. Then visit the Forbidden Purple City, located within the Imperial City, was the royal palace used only by the imperial family and the concubines and eunuchs, who served them. This part of the Imperial City suffered the most extensive damage during the Vietnam War and little remains of the original structures; today there are just ruins. Return to hotel for time at leisure.

- **Overnight stay in Hue on a half-board basis.**



## DAY 6 | HUE – HO CHI MINH

Breakfast at the hotel, check out and transfer along the banks of the Perfume River outside the imperial city are the tombs of the 13 Nguyen rulers. You will visit the Tomb of Khai Dinh. The spectacular entryway with its dragon pillars is the highlight of the Tomb. The architecture is in a modern style with a blend of European and Eastern design. Inside the main hall are colourful glass mosaic frescoes and a life-size bronze statue of Khai Dinh. Next stop will be the Tomb of Tu Duc. A peaceful resting place enclosed by walls, it features pine woods and a lakeside pavilion with lotus blossoms where the emperor once fished, listened to music, and wrote poetry. The tomb was more of a pleasure garden than a tomb - the emperor used it as a second residence, where he indulged in extravagant 50-course meals of incredible delicacies. The mausoleum was constructed between 1864 and 1867 by a force of 3,000 labourers. Transfer back to Hue Airport for departure flight to Ho Chi Minh. Upon arrival at Ho Chi Minh Airport, meet and transfer to hotel.

- Overnight stay in Ho Chi Minh on a half-board basis.

## DAY 7 | HO CHI MINH – MY THO – MEKONG DELTA

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart hotel by exploring the fascinating Mekong Delta. By travelling along Vietnam's most important highway, you will pass through seemingly endless paddy fields. At My Tho, you visit the ancient Vinh Trang Pagoda. Next, a motorised sampan will take you on a fascinating tour through the vast estuary of the Mekong Delta. All daily life and agricultural activities are centred on the countless branches of the river. Because of its abundance of rice fields and water, this region is called the 'Rice Bowl of Vietnam'. Visit a local fruit orchard on one of the countless islands. Wander through the green heart of the Mekong Delta to visit a Rice Farmer's House.

- Overnight stay in Ho Chi Minh on a half-board basis.

## DAY 8 | DEPARTURE HO CHI MINH

After breakfast at the hotel, we depart hotel to see the city's major sights on this essential half-day tour. Start at the elegant Historical Museum and trace the country's history from the ancient Dongson period until recent time. Admire an enchanting performance of traditional water puppetry. En route, see the twin-spired Notre Dame Cathedral and the City Hall. Explore the old Presidential Palace with its remarkable network of underground bunkers. Venture through bustling Chinatown, locally known as Cholon, with its colourful atmosphere and mysterious temples. Visit the lively Thien Hao Pagoda, with the enormous burning incense-coils that never fail to impress. Lunch at local restaurant and transfer back to hotel before check-out.

### END OF SERVICES

#### INCLUDED

##### ACCOMMODATION:

- Accommodation at the indicated/selected hotel

##### ENTRANCE FEES AND ACTIVITIES:

- All entrance fees as appropriated

##### TRANSPORT:

- Air-conditioned transportation

#### NOT INCLUDED

- Expenditures of personal nature and gratuity for guide and driver
- Optional tours
- Compulsory Christmas/New Year/Peak Season supplements as separately stated
- Domestic and/or international airline tickets and airport taxes