



Vietnam – The Far East by Bike and Boat Tour (2024)
Guided or Individual Self-Guided
15 days / 14 nights



Vietnam is a thrilling country full of contrasts, overwhelmingly spectacular nature, and mysterious monuments of times gone by. The country is home to bustling, vibrant cities and rural districts with deep-rooted traditions and an irrepressible optimism. Vietnam boasts ever changing landscapes and one of the most diverse cuisine cultures in the world. Spend two weeks actively exploring this fascinating country and immerse yourself in the vibrant far eastern flair. Explore the rocky fairy-tale world of the famous Ha Long Bay sailing on a traditional junk. Admire the lush green rice fields and meet the friendly water buffaloes, visit colourful temples and pagodas, and let the emerald-green waters of the South China Sea enchant you. Explore the impressive monuments of the Vietnamese emperors as well as the historical town of Hoi An, a World Heritage Site, in Central Vietnam, and the expansive water labyrinth of the Mekong Delta in South Vietnam.

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Itinerary Day to Day

1st Day (Sun) Hanoi (Arrival)

Once you have arrived at Hanoi Airport, a shuttle bus takes you to the hotel in the heart of Hanoi's old quarter. Despite its three million inhabitants, you can feel Hanoi's traditional charm. The historic old town district is considered one of the best preserved in Southeast Asia. There may be time to enjoy a walk through the vibrant, lively streets before meeting your fellow travellers at the hotel in the late afternoon. During a visit to the famous water puppet theatre, a traditional Vietnamese art form, and dinner at a local restaurant, everyone has the chance to get to know each other better. Overnight stay at the hotel in Hanoi. (Meals: D)

2nd Day (Mon) Hanoi – Ninh Binh (Van Long) – Hoa Lu – Tam Coc (aprx. 14 mi./22 km + 6 mi./10 km)

After breakfast, our shuttle bus takes us in the direction of the rural province of Ninh Binh. This is the starting point of our first cycling tour which leads along vibrant green rice fields to Hoa Lu, the former capital of Vietnam. After exploring the fascinating



historical site with its well-preserved relics of past dynasties, we continue our cycling tour through Vietnam's most spectacular landscapes. Along the way we stop in the quaint village of Trang An Farm where we try some local specialties for lunch. After lunch, we cycle on for a few kilometres to Tam Coc where we enjoy the most spectacular view of limestone karst peaks looming out of serene rice fields. Here we leave the bikes and board a traditional rowboat, which takes us into the heart of a hidden valley. The last activity for today is a visit to a local bird sanctuary. The flock of birds returning to their nests in the evening is a truly spectacular sight. Overnight stay at the hotel in Tam Coc. (Meals: B, L, D)

3rd Day (Tue) Tam Coc - Ha Long Bay

After breakfast, we visit a hidden valley nestled in a dramatic rocky landscape and home to a Buddhist temple. Afterwards, we take a four-hour transfer to Ha Long Bay, where we board a junk (a traditional wooden boat) and enjoy our lunch. Soon after we leave the harbour for our first boat passage through the spectacular UNESCO protected island world of Ha Long Bay with its wonderful, bizarre rock formations. Here we get a first impression of the lush vegetation of the islands and the numerous caves

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that have formed over the millennia in the bay. In the late afternoon a sunset kayak tour is offered to those who wish to take part. The night is spent on anchor. (Meals: B, L, D)

4th Day (Wed) Halong Bay – Viet Hai Village (Cat Ba Island) (aprx. 12 mi./ 18 km)

After breakfast we cruise, via a smaller boat, to the national park of Cat Ba Island. Once we have arrived, we begin our cycling tour to a small tribal village of the Việt Hải minority. We park the bikes here and enjoy a guided walk through the protected old-growth forest where wild, unspoilt nature rules. The destination is the highest peak of the island which, on a good day, offers breath-taking views over the island and out to Hạ Long Bay. We then cruise east of Bo Hon Island to the so-called ‘Virgin Cave’ (Trinh Nu Cave). A visit to this cave combines the incredible beauty of Halong Bay with the folklore of Vietnamese heritage. We will enjoy dinner followed by an overnight on the ship. (Meals: B, L, D)

5th Day (Thu) Ha Long Bay and Lan Ha Bay (Kayak-day)

In the morning, we disembark the junk and take a transfer boat to Lan Ha Bay, where we enjoy a guided kayak tour around the lagoon-like shoreline. Our first stop is a beautiful hidden beach. After a picnic and a lengthy relaxing swim break, we continue with a kayak tour past floating houses to Cat Ba, the next destination of our journey. A short transfer takes us to a beautiful resort, where the evening can be enjoyed on the hotel’s very own sandy beach or by the pool. (Meals: B, L, D)

6th Day (Fri) Cát Bà Island – Hai Phong - Hội An

After a morning visit to the Cat Ba market, we can enjoy a free morning by the beach (late hotel checkout until 2:00pm). We then take a transfer to Hai Phong / Hanoi Airport for a late afternoon flight to Danang. Dinner and overnight will be enjoyed in a hotel in Hội An. Note: in the event the original flight to Danang (from Hai Phong) is cancelled or changed, we will transfer guests to Hanoi to catch a connecting flight. (Meals: B, L, D)



7th Day (Sat) Hội An – Cycle to Tra Que Vegetable Village (B, L) (aprx. 11 mi./17 km)

Today we have the opportunity to experience the everyday life and work of the local farmers. After breakfast, we ride through the quiet countryside of Hội An towards Tra Que Village. The name of the area originates from a sweet-scented vegetable often used by the locals to spice up their meals: a totally new and foreign speciality! We prepare a meal with our host who familiarises us with the exotic

ingredients. The afternoon can be spent as you wish: A stroll through the picturesque old town or a relaxing afternoon swim at the white beach of Cửa Đại or at An Bang Beach. Overnight stay at a hotel in Hội An. (Meals: B, L)



8th Day (Sun) Hội An

We have the full day to explore (on foot) the sights and sounds of Hội An. Its narrow streets, lantern-lit storefronts and fusion of various styles of traditional Asian architecture give it a charming feel. Two of the city's main specialties are clothing and food. Also, don't miss visiting the Japanese Bridge and Quan Cong Temple. In the afternoon you can enjoy all the benefits of your luxurious hotel resort and end the day at the palm tree shaded pool. Overnight at the Hotel in Hội An. (Meals: B, L)

9th Day (Mon) Hội An – Hue (aprx. 18 mi./30 km)

After breakfast we check out of the hotel and make our way to the former imperial city of Huế. Our transfer takes us over the Cloud Pass, the weather line between North and South Vietnam. After a short stopover on Lăng Cô Beach (incl. lunch break), we have the opportunity to cycle all the way along the coastline to Thuan An beach. You can decide for yourself how many kilometres you wish to travel by bike or by bus. If weather conditions allow, we can stay for a refreshing swim before continuing to Huế. After checking into our lodge, the evening offers us some leisure time to explore the city for ourselves. Overnight stay at a hotel in Huế. (Meals: B, L, D)

10th Day (Tue) Huế countryside (aprx. 10 mi./ 16 km)

Today is dedicated to the old imperial city Huế, charmingly situated between hills and rice fields on the bend of the Perfume River. It is here that the spiritual heart of Vietnam beats with more than 300 temples and pagodas. After breakfast, we enjoy a relatively easy ride toward Thanh Thuy Village. After exploring the village (with its unique architecture, temples & bridges) we bike back to Huế where guests will eat lunch before taking a tour of the Imperial Citadel. After lunch, we visit the extensive citadel with its “Forbidden Purple City”, which was once exclusively for the use of the emperors of the Nguyen dynasty. The evening can be spent as you wish with plenty of time to explore the lively centre of Huế. (Meals: B, L,)



11th Day (Wed) Huế – Hồ Chí Minh City– Mekong Delta (aprx. 12.5 mi/20 km)

After breakfast we catch a morning flight to Hồ Chí Minh City with a subsequent transfer to Ben Tre, where we check-in on board the boat. We sail along the Mekong Delta in the direction of Cái Bè. During the short trip we cruise along the Mekong Delta during which we enjoy the flourishing nature and observe the river life of the locals. North from Ben Tre, we will set off on our first bike tour in the region before returning to the boat for lunch. The boat cruises to the small island of Nau Hiep for a second bike tour. Along the way be sure to take the opportunity to try exotic fruits and be astonished by various local handcrafts. Afterwards, the junk takes us for a sunset sail towards Cai Be, where we spend the night on anchor. (Meals: B, L, D)

12th Day (Thu) Mekong Delta – Islands of Vinh Long and Tra On (aprx. 19 mi. / 30 km)

In the morning we cross over to Vĩnh Long Island, where we cycle under palm-shaded paths around the island. We continue by boat to Traon Island where we again have the opportunity to explore the surroundings by bike. Later on, we enjoy the excellent cuisine on board and the wonderful evening atmosphere in the water labyrinth of the Mekong Delta. We spend the night aboard. (Meals: B, L, D)

13th Day (Fri) - Cần Thơ - Hồ Chí Minh City

During breakfast, we cruise to Cần Thơ where we discover one of the last floating markets in Vietnam. We then visit the region’s largest farmer’s market, rounding out our cultural experience of Southern Vietnam. Make sure to have a camera at the ready, as the colourful fruit stands beg to be captured.

After lunch on board the junk, we check out and take a transfer back to Hồ Chí Minh City. Overnight stay at a hotel in Hồ Chí Minh City. (Meals: B, L)

14th Day (Sat) – Ho Chi Minh City

Hồ Chí Minh City, formerly Saigon, is a boomtown and the modern centre of Vietnam. On a guided city tour we learn about this growing megacity, and visit the town hall, the cathedral Notre Dame, the main post office, influenced by Renaissance architecture, and other important sights which characterize the city's history. In the afternoon, you are free to do as you please. Take the opportunity to buy some souvenirs and dive into the bustling crowds in the Bến Thành Market. A comfortable evening meal together allows us to reflect

on the events of the vacation and to say goodbye to fellow guests and tour guides. Overnight stay at the hotel in Hồ Chí Minh City. (Meals: B, L, D)

15th Day (Sun) Departure

Departure after breakfast or extended stay in Hồ Chí Minh City.
(Meals: B)

Itinerary Changes

We reserve the right to make changes to the planned itinerary due to changing wind and weather conditions as well as organizational requirements.





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Route



This tour is rated Level 1-2 in terms of physical difficulty. This is based mainly on the terrain we cycle on which is less demanding than our Mediterranean tours. The tours don't include any significant inclines. The difficulty of cycling in Vietnam is mainly due to the climatic conditions. However, by taking your time, using sufficient sun protection, and drinking enough water you can easily adjust to these conditions. After rainfall some routes, especially on the first cycle trip, are difficult to cycle. In this case, an alternative route may have to be taken.

Group riding pace:

On our regular cycling tours, the cyclists on regular bicycles determine the pace. We ask guests who have reserved an e-bike to be mindful of this and to acknowledge that the regular cyclists need time to rest and take longer to climb the hills. We thank you for your understanding.

Requirement to wear a helmet

Helmets are mandatory on our bike tours. It is advised to bring your own, well fitted, helmet with you as our rental helmet numbers are limited (reservation required).

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Bringing Children We believe that only children with a good physical condition and previous bicycle tour experience and a minimum age of 10 are able to master the cycle tours with their own strength. Please note that the minimum height for a rental bike is 1.50 m (5 ft.) for hybrid bikes.

Travel Season: Departures

March 10; March 24; October 10; November 3; November 17

Price per Person: *all prices subject to confirmation on booking*

Basic price double occupancy March 10 & 24	€3190
Basic price all other departures	€3390
Single room or single room charge*	€1290
Insurance against theft and damage for Bike Rental	€10
Individual Airport Transfers (outside of arrival or departure day)	On request

* Single rooms are only guaranteed for overnight stays at the hotels, not on the boats

Accommodation:

. In Hanoi, Tam Coc, on Cát Bà Island, in Hue and Hoi An (Central Vietnam) and in Hồ Chí Minh City you spend the night in very good 3 - 4 star hotels.

Additional optional services (on request)

- 2-day Extension Program Hanoi (only available pre Islandhopping Vietnam tour) incl. transfer between Airport Hanoi - Hotel Hanoi, 1 night/breakfast, guided city tour with lunch, entrance fees for included sites: 150 euro/person in a double room; single room 180 Euro. Autumn departures: : 170 euro/person in a double room; single room 215 Euro
- -4-day Extension Program Siem Reap & Angkor Vat (only available post Islandhopping Vietnam tour) incl. transfers between Airport Siem Reap - Hotel in Siem Reap, 3 nights/breakfast, rental bicycle, guided bike tours and visitations as in program, entrance fees for included sites: 840 euro/person in a double room; 1140 euro/person in a single room . Autumn departures: 890 euro/person in a double room; single room 1280 Euro
- -Extension night Hanoi incl. breakfast: 65 euro/Person in a double room, 110 euro in a single room
- Extension night Ho Chi Minh City incl. breakfast: 80 euro/Person in a double room, 150 euro in a single room
- -Domestic flight Ho chi Minh City – Seam Reap: 250€ per person
- Exclusive airport transfers, if not on arrival or departure day (price on request)
- -E-bike rental 40€ (only available on selected days in North Vietnam)

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Included:

- 15-day/14-night trip with 4 overnight stays on comfortable ships in air-conditioned twin cabins and 10 overnight stays in fantastic hotels (at least 3 star rating)
- · Catering as specified in the itinerary
- · Guided bicycle tours and walks according to program
- · All city tours and entrance charges to National Parks, museums, etc.
- · Rental bikes (the bikes vary from destination to destination)
- · Airport transfers on the official arrival and departure day
- · Domestic flights (see description)
- · English speaking guides

Not Included:

- Inbound flight to Hanoi and outbound flight from Ho Chi Minh City
- Beverages on board and in hotels
- Meals not described in itinerary
- Tips
- Valid Visa for Vietnam

Visa requirements

Nationals from Germany, France, Great Britain, Italy and Spain can currently enter Vietnam without a visa. This applies to stays of a maximum of 15 days.

A passport is a condition for this entry without complications, but it must be valid for at least another six months. It is also recommended that you carry a printout of your return flight ticket. If you show this copy on entry, this can simplify the process enormously. You should also note that your last departure from Vietnam is at least 30 days in the past.

Others than mentioned above: In order to enter Vietnam, foreigners need a passport valid for at least 6 months and a valid visa to be obtained from the Vietnamese embassy or online as an E-Visa (a stay of maximum 30 days and bound to a single border crossing). The following documents must be submitted either in person or by mail: passport (original document, not a copy!), completed application form, current passport photograph (1.5 x 2.3 inch/ 4 x 6 cm), visa fee as a non-negotiable check or in cash, and a sufficiently prepaid envelope for registered mail. Please take into account that the processing takes aprx. 2 weeks. Please contact the Vietnamese embassy or foreign office in your home country for exact information. For Cambodia the Visa can be issued during entry for 30 USD and 2 more passport pictures.

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Inoculation There are no required vaccinations for Vietnam. The institutes for tropical diseases, however, do recommend a vaccination against hepatitis A and under certain circumstances also against typhoid. As some of these vaccinations must be repeated, be sure to plan with plenty of time. A sufficient tetanus protection as well as a vaccination against polio and diphtheria (given in a single vaccination) should also be up to date. A prophylactic malaria treatment is not absolutely necessary. We recommend that you see your family doctor or a doctor for tropical diseases at least two months before the trip in order to get the necessary advice.

Ship Vietnamese Junk Garden Bay 2 (Ha Long Bay)



It is easy to feel at home on the charming junks. For each meal the tables are lovingly set and the folded cloth napkins are a piece of art. The boat provides 11 elegant furnished guest cabins. All cabins have individually regulated air conditioning. The cabins are located between decks. The large cabin windows guarantee a good view at all times. Each cabin has its own bathroom with shower and WC. On the large sundeck you can avail yourself of deckchairs with comfortable padded matting. Here you can relax while the boat cruises through the fascinating island world and Vietnam's red flag with the yellow star flutters above your head.



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Ship Funan Cruise (Mekong Delta)



In the Mekong Delta you sail on the "Cochinchine", one of the largest and most modern ships in the region. Its shape is reminiscent of the traveling barques of the famous river delta in southern Vietnam. The journey of the 27 m long and 6.5 m wide, comfortable wooden boat is protected by the watchful dark eyes on red ground painted on the prow. Three times a day the generously proportioned saloon turns into a dining room with beautifully set tables. The ship has 10 completely wood paneled double cabins with double or two single beds. Each cabin has a tiled bath with shower and WC. There is, of course, also a large sundeck with padded deckchairs - probably the best place to experience firsthand the lively activities in the many tributaries of the Mekong Delta.

Assisting people in realizing their touring dreams worldwide is our passion.

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THIS IS A PARTNER TOUR FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

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