

VIETNAM

Culture, Cuisine, Boating, & Biking



February 23 - March 5, 2019

VIETNAM

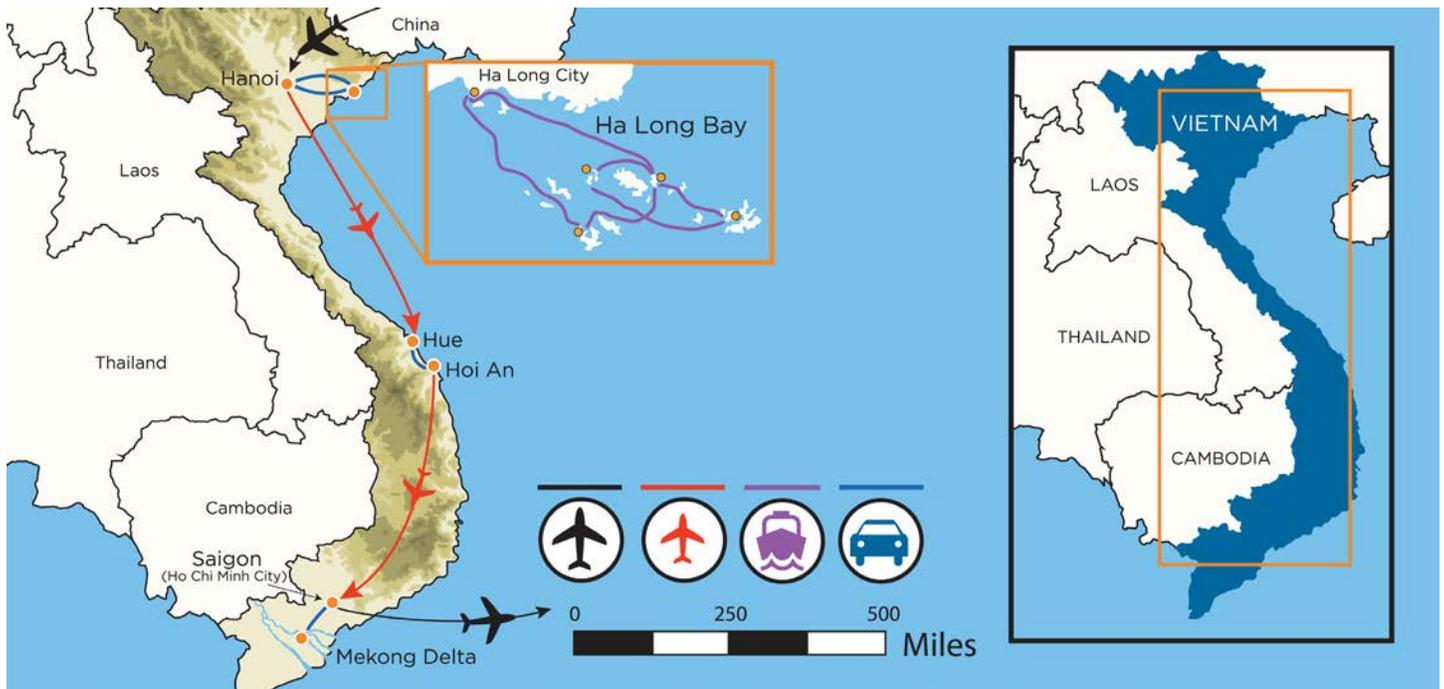
Culture, Cuisine, Boating, & Biking

February 23 - March 5, 2019

TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Pedal your bike along the narrow streets of Hanoi and enjoy lunch in a local home
- ▶ Visit the Cúc Handmade project, a local organization helping Thai women earn a living wage in Vietnam
- ▶ Cruise and kayak in Ha Long Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay
- ▶ Dive into the flavors of Vietnam during a morning cooking class
- ▶ Discover the biodiversity of the Mekong Delta in a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve

TRIP ROUTE



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QUICK VIEW ITINERARY

- Day 1: arrive Hanoi, visit the Cúc Handmade Project, welcome dinner
- Day 2: cycle the neighborhoods of Hanoi, lunch in a local home, free afternoon
- Day 3: cruise in Bai Tu Long Bay on a privately chartered boat, explore by kayak
- Day 4: kayak through hidden lagoons and learn about local geology
- Day 5: visit a floating village, cruise back to the harbor, fly to Hue
- Day 6: explore the citadel, learn from a local monk, free afternoon to enjoy the hotel
- Day 7: visit Khai Dinh's Tomb, drive to Hoi An, stop for lunch in Danang on the way
- Day 8: experience a Vietnamese cooking class, sunset boat cruise
- Day 9: fly to Ho Chi Minh City, explore the city, street food tour by chauffeured motorbike
- Day 10: explore the Mekong Delta, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, farewell dinner
- Day 11: depart Ho Chi Minh City

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$4,990

Optional Single Accommodations: \$850

Internal Air: \$300

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your adventure in depth

DAY 1

Saturday
2/23/19

Arrive in Hanoi

Welcome to Vietnam! Discover the enchanting landscapes, colorful traditions, enticing cuisine, and genuinely friendly people of a remarkable country at the crossroads of past and future.

Pick-up and Transfer

You will be met outside of baggage claim and transferred to your hotel. If you are arriving in Vietnam early, meet in the hotel lobby at 2:00pm.

Explore Hanoi

Stretch your legs on a walking tour of Hanoi, exploring the past and present of the city. Pass Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum and wander the French Quarter learning about the history of the city along the way.

Meet Ms. Cúc

Spend some time with Ms. Cúc this afternoon, founder of the Cúc Handmade project, which helps Thai women earn a living wage.

Welcome Dinner

Enjoy a welcome dinner in a lively, local restaurant.

Accommodations

Hotel de L'Opéra

Meals Included

dinner

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DAY 2

Sunday
2/24/19

Hanoi

Once known as “City of the Soaring Dragon,” Hanoi has a colorful, multi-layered history and culture. Many of the most famous dishes to come out of Vietnam are believed to have originated in Hanoi. The most famous dish, pho, is regularly heralded as one of the best street foods in the world. Other notable dishes said to have originated in Hanoi are banh cuon, rice noodle roll, com, green rice dessert, and bun cha, grilled pork and vermicelli noodles. Along with the delicious cuisine, discover the other charms of the city from the Old Quarter with its winding lanes, silk shops, and pastry cafés to the many museums celebrating the culture of the city.

Explore by Bike

Pedal the small paths through a neighborhood on the outskirts of Hanoi and along the Red River. This is not a difficult ride, but you'll take it slowly (14 miles over about three hours) - when you explore by bike you can see areas that you can't get to by car.

Lunch in a Local Home

Have lunch in your host's home. While at the house, you will get to taste a delicious selection of Vietnamese food.

Afternoon on Your Own

Explore on your own this afternoon. You could visit the water puppet theater, explore the local galleries near your hotel, or simply just enjoy a coffee while watching the whirlwind of life around you.

Dinner

Enjoy dinner in a local home. Your hostess will serve delicious Vietnamese cuisine. You'll meet her father, who will play the Dan Bau, a traditional single-stringed instrument.

Accommodations

Hotel de L'Opéra

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 3

Monday
2/25/19

Hanoi to Bai Tu Long Bay

Bai Tu Long Bay may not be as famous as Halong Bay, but it's the less-traveled, more pristine, protected section north of Halong Bay. You'll witness impressive scenery including sea and islands, and it is considered one of the most beautiful bays in the world. According to ancient legends, a giant dragon descended into the Bay millions of years ago, dropping numerous eggs. These eggs hatched, forming thousands of rocks and islands.

Drive to Bai Tu Long Bay

Leave Hanoi this morning and drive about three and a half hours to Bai Tu Long Bay. Enjoy seeing scenes of Vietnamese daily life along the way.

Board Your Private Charter

Arrive in the Bay and board your privately chartered boat - just for AdventureWomen - in time for lunch! Motor to the Cap La Islands.

Kayaking

Paddle around Cap La and Tra San in kayaks. Enjoy the sunset on the deck of your boat before enjoying dinner on board. Most of the kayaks are tandem.

Accommodations

Private Chartered Boat

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 4

Tuesday
2/26/19

Bai Tu Long Bay

The magnificent beauty of the mountains and sea in the Cong Dam area will take your breath away. This outdoor geological museum has been preserved for 340 million years and the most outstanding area is a regional park with mountains formed from limestone. The area boasts a high concentration of coral reefs, underground lakes, and underwater caves. It also has numerous large beaches with smooth white sand and clear blue water.

Cruise to Cong Dam

Cruise to Cong Dam this morning, a small old village. Explore the geology of Bai Tu Long Bay on your way.

Kayak Hidden Lagoons

Kayak through the hidden lagoons and geological park in Cong Dam. Come close to the steep limestone walls and marvel at the stunningly flat water.

Thien Canh Son Cave

The pathway into the cave is set below the forest canopy and a stone cliff. Once you get inside the cave, you'll feel like you've entered an ethereal wonderland. The ceiling of the cave is covered with a shiny "gem carpet" and numerous sparkling stalactites hang from the ceiling.

Kayaking

Enjoy more time in your kayak this afternoon, exploring the shores of islands and even kayaking into caves!

Accommodations

Private Chartered Boat

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 5

Wednesday
2/27/19

Bai Tu Long Bay to Hue

Hue is the capital city of Thura Thien-Hue Province, Vietnam. Between 1802 and 1945, it was the country's imperial capital under the Nguyen dynasty. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is well-known for its many historic monuments.

Vung Vieng Fishing Village

Take a rustic rowboat (four women per boat) to visit Vung Vieng fishing village, a small community 12 miles from the mainland. Some families have been here for generations. Learn how the local fishermen pull in their catch.

Lunch on Board

Have lunch on board as you finish your cruise back into the harbor.

Fly to Hue

Fly from Hanoi to Hue this afternoon.

Check-in at Your Hotel

Drive about 45 minutes to your hotel in Hue. Settle in and then enjoy dinner as a group.

Accommodations

Pilgrimage Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 6

Thursday
2/28/19

Hue

The Imperial City of Hue is a walled palace within the citadel, or city, of Hue. Built starting in 1804, the grounds of the Imperial City are protected by 2km long ramparts and ringed by a moat with water routed in from the Perfume River. Within the Imperial City is the Purple Forbidden City, which could only be visited by members of the imperial family.

Explore the Citadel

Focus on women's culture in imperial life as you explore the citadel today. As a walled Imperial estate, there were strictly enforced codes of conduct for women, including when and where they could be seen.

Visit the Tue Hieu Pagoda, built in a pine forest known for its feng shui and paths designed for meditation. You'll have an opportunity to sit down and have a conversation with one of the monks and learn from his experience.

Afternoon at Leisure

After enjoying lunch as a group, you'll have a chance to relax and enjoy the spa and the grounds of your beautiful hotel.

Dinner in a Local Home

You'll meet a local man who lived in Hue during the Vietnam War. He has rebuilt his home and garden in the style of Hue upper class families of the past. You'll have the chance to talk to him about how life is changing in Vietnam.

His wife is an outstanding cook. She will treat you to some of the traditional dishes developed in Hue originally to entice the Emperor. Make sure you peek into the kitchen - it's amazing what she can do in the space!

Accommodations

Pilgrimage Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 7

Friday
3/1/19

Hue to Hoi An

Traditions run deep in Vietnam, especially in rural areas where day-to-day village activities retain a slower pace and old-world craftsmanship remains a source of pride. The ancient heart of Hoi An still keeps beat with a bygone era, the surrounding countryside is a timeless collage of rice fields and a lattice of waterways fanned by leafy botanicals.

Visit Khai Dinh's Tomb

Visit Khai Dinh's Tomb, considered the last emperor to reign in Vietnam. He loved French and Vietnamese art. The tomb itself is a blend of Vietnamese traditions and the modern world.

Drive to Hoi An

Leave Hue and head for Hoi An. After about three hours, you'll stop and have lunch at a beach-side restaurant in Danang on the way. Dip your toes in the water before driving another 30 minutes to Hoi An.

Walk in Hoi An

Once you arrive in Hoi An, go for a walking tour to learn about this 500-year-old port town with blended architecture and traditions.

Accommodations

Hoi An Historic Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 8

Saturday
3/2/19

Hoi An

The main way of life for most of the Hoi An locals is farming or fishing. These two industries keep the city running and everyone's belly full. Farmers grow everything from star anise and bananas to water spinach, lemon grass, and dill. Fishermen bring their daily catch of shrimp, shell fish, and tilapia to the markets in the mornings and butchers offer fresh beef, pork, and chicken. You can taste the freshness in every bite and feel the spices linger on lips long after your meal is over!

Cooking Class

Learn about the local flavors in your Vietnamese cooking class. Together, you will visit the market and buy the ingredients for your lunch; the menu is based on the best and freshest produce available that day. While you're at the market, visit a few restaurants and street food kitchens to taste some local delicacies. Head to the kitchen where you'll make a three-course meal for lunch. Your group will have a great time preparing this feast!

Afternoon on Your Own

Explore the city of Hoi An, enjoy the pool, or book a massage. The choice is yours this afternoon!

Sunset Cruise

Hop on a local boat chartered just for your group to explore the palm delta area by sunset. Head back to town for dinner!

Accommodations

Hoi An Historic Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 9

Sunday
3/3/19

Hoi An to Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in the country by population, home to over ten million people. Ho Chi Minh City was formerly known as, and still unofficially referred to, as Saigon. Under the name Saigon it was the capital of Cochinchina, a French colony, until 1955 when it served as the capital of the Republic of South Vietnam. The name of the city officially changed to Ho Chi Minh City in 1976, after the Vietnam War. The city was named after revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh. Although it has undergone name changes, Ho Chi Minh has always been a great place to capture the essence of Vietnamese cuisine, culture, and local hospitality.

Fly to Ho Chi Minh City

Fly to Ho Chi Minh City this morning.

Explore Ho Chi Minh City

Explore Ho Chi Minh City this afternoon. Visit the Reunification Palace, the site of the end of the Vietnam War. See the other major sights of Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City, including the post office and the Notre Dame Cathedral.

Street Food Tour

Hop on the back of a motorbike and hang on to your driver as you take off on a street food tour of Ho Chi Minh City. Sample multiple different delicacies for your dinner, and watch your AdventureWomen friends on other motorbikes as you weave through the city! This is an experience you will never forget.

Accommodations

Pullman Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 10

Monday
3/4/19

Ho Chi Minh City

Spreading across 15,000 square miles of southern Vietnam, The Mekong Delta is a mind-boggling network of waterways and islands and a world away from urban culture. Every fertile acre is farmed here, from horizon-to-horizon rice paddies, to fields of sugar cane and orchards overflowing with mangoes, bananas, longan, dragon fruit, and citrus. Generations of farmers and fishermen keep time with the seasons, using traditional methods unique to the region. Delta hospitality is legend here—everyone stops to wave when you simply flash a smile.

Boat Ride to the Mekong Delta

Head out from the pier on a speedboat, getting a very different view of Ho Chi Minh City. At the entrance to the Mekong Delta, you'll stop at a lively local riverside market, where you can absorb all of the colors, sounds, and sights that this area is famous for.

Explore the Mekong Delta

As you enter the Delta, the emerald water palms give way to the tall mangrove forests of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Explore the Giant Bat Lagoon by row boat, visit a crocodile reserve, and trek through mangrove jungle, looking for indigenous monkeys and waterfowl. Return to the city this afternoon.

Farewell Dinner

Toast the end of an exceptional trip with your new AdventureWomen friends at the farewell dinner.

Accommodations

Pullman Hotel

Meals Included

breakfast, lunch, dinner

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DAY 11

Tuesday
3/5/19

Depart Ho Chi Minh City

Enjoy one last morning in Vietnam before departing for the airport for your flights home.

Transfer Transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Meals Included
breakfast

Please note: AdventureWomen will attempt to adhere to the itinerary as much as possible. However, certain conditions (political, climatic, environmental, and cultural) may necessitate changes in the itinerary. AdventureWomen reserves the right to alter any itinerary at any time, if necessary. We will attempt to notify participants of changes as far in advance as possible. Costs incurred by such changes will be the responsibility of the participants.

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Accommodation Details

Hotel de L'Opera

Located in the center of Hanoi, Hotel de L'Opera is in close proximity to Hanoi's Opera House and the Old Quarter. A balance of French and Vietnamese architecture and design, each of the 107 rooms is equipped with complimentary Wi-Fi, TV, air conditioning, and stylish furnishings.

Private Chartered Boat

The boat we have chartered exclusively for AdventureWomen features comfortable cabins and both indoor and outdoor dining areas. Each cabin is equipped with modern amenities to make your stay comfortable. Enjoy sunset with your group from the sun deck on the top of the boat.

Pilgrimage Hotel

Pilgrimage Village is ideally located in the quiet countryside in a rustic village setting. Surrounded by lush tranquil gardens, you will have the feeling of being out in the country while being close to the famous sites of Hue. Your room combines modern comfort with traditional architectural features with views over the garden or the lily lake.

Hoi An Historic Hotel

The Hoi An Hotel is known for its location, charm, and world-class facilities. The rooms are basic and comfortable, and you will have access to a large outdoor pool.

Pullman Hotel

Located centrally within Ho Chi Minh City, close to Ben Thanh market, Pham Ngu Lao area, the rooms at the Pullman Saigon Centre combine design and comfort. Enjoy panoramic views of the city, as well as free Wi-Fi, a swimming pool, and a spa.

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Included/Not Included

Included:

- ▶ Accommodations based on double occupancy
- ▶ Meals as noted in the itinerary
- ▶ All transportation throughout the trip
- ▶ All activities as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ English-speaking guide throughout the trip
- ▶ Bike, helmet, and one bike water bottle per person
- ▶ Drinking water
- ▶ Gratuities for drivers, day trip boats, and porters
- ▶ One AdventureWomen Ambassador

Not Included:

- ▶ Round-trip airfare
- ▶ Internal airfare
- ▶ Meals not specified in itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages, unless otherwise specified
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Visa fee
- ▶ Gratuities for your head guide and live-aboard boat staff

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Activity Level:

Moderate

Active

High Energy

Challenging

We rate this trip as Active. Our Active adventures get you on your feet. You should be in good physical condition and be prepared to hike for up to five hours, multiple days in a row, on uneven surfaces with some steep ascents and descents.

We recommend training before your trip (with your doctor's permission!) to make the most of your adventure. We have a partnership with FitForTrips, a company that will design an individualized fitness plan for you with this itinerary in mind. Best of all, AdventureWomen guests get a 25% discount with the code FITWOMEN. Learn more at: <https://fitfortrips.com/partners/adventure-women/>

You should come with a flexible, adventurous, and enthusiastic spirit, and a wonderful sense of humor that adventure travel requires.

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Once you book, you will need to fill out and return to AdventureWomen:

- Information Form
- Booking Conditions Form
- Copy of Issuing Page of Passport (photo page)
- Copy of Flight Information

Final payment is due to AdventureWomen in a cash form (check, money order, or wire transfer) on or before November 25, 2018.

Passports and Visas:

For US citizens traveling to or from Vietnam, all travelers must have a valid United States passport. The US Department of State recommends that your passport be valid for at least six months after your expected return.

A tourist visa is required for US citizens visiting Vietnam. You can find more information on how to apply here: <http://vietnamembassy-usa.org/consular/visa-application-process>

Please note that Vietnam is strict about your entry date. Be sure that the entry date on your application is the date your flight arrives in Hanoi, or you may be denied entry. **If you decide to add on a Cambodia extension and fly out of Vietnam, you must get a multiple entry visa to Vietnam.**

Money:

The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong. US Dollars and Euros are accepted in many hotels, restaurants and shops. To get local currency, we recommend using local ATMs, which are accessible at all stops except while you are on the chartered boat. Visa and Mastercard may be accepted at larger shops, but you will likely be charged a service fee.

Suggestions for Gratuities:

- ▶ Main guide: \$10 per person per day
- ▶ Boat crew in Bai Tu Long Bay: \$10 per person per day

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Arrive: Arrive at the Noi Bai Airport (HAN) in Hanoi, Vietnam on February 23, 2019 before noon.

Depart: Depart from the Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN) in Ho Chi Minh City on March 5, 2019. Note that you need to leave the hotel three hours prior to your flight time, so you may not want an early morning flight.

We are happy to help you make your flight and travel arrangements. Please contact us at:

(800) 804-8686 or (617) 544-9393
email: info@adventurewomen.com

If you'd like to do anything prior to or following the AdventureWomen trip, we'd be delighted to help you arrange any trip extensions you're interested in.

Note: The recent trend in travel is for travelers to finalize their plans much closer to departure time than was customary in the past. While we try to be as flexible as possible booking last-minute registrants, we must release hotel rooms two to three months prior to departure! Please keep this in mind when making your travel plans.

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As you get ready to pack for your adventure, have a look at The AdventureWomen Store at www.theadventurewomenstore.com - we have picked out our favorite travel clothes and outdoor gear to help make packing easy for you. You can also see our recommendations for this trip on the [AdventureWomen Pinterest](#) page.

The weather on this trip can range from a low in the high 50s and a high in the low 90s. The key to packing is to bring lightweight layers, and expect showers and humidity throughout your trip. The trick to staying cool (and warm!) in Asia is layering loose-fitting clothing made of breathable, lightweight fabrics. Anything you wash by hand will dry quickly in an air-conditioned room overnight. Be prepared for air-conditioning indoors.

Clothing and Gear:

- 1 small suitcase or duffel bag
- 1 small daypack to carry on excursions
- 3-4 short sleeve shirts
- 1-2 light-weight long-sleeved shirts
- 1 sweater or light jacket
- 1 fleece jacket or vest
- 2 pairs quick-dry shorts
- 1-2 pairs light-weight pants
- 1 rain jacket
- 1-2 bathing suits
- 1 pair comfortable sneakers
- 1 pair sport water sandals
- 4-5 pairs of socks (thin socks recommended for biking)
- 1 nicer outfit for dinners at upscale restaurants
- 1 sun hat
- Underwear/bras
- Pajamas

AdventureWomen Essentials:

- Travel documents (identification documents, airline tickets, money)
- Write down/print out travel insurance number
- Locks for your suitcase/duffel bag
- Travel alarm clock with spare batteries
- Headlamp or small flashlight with spare batteries
- Binoculars (8x40/42 models are excellent choices; center focus models are easiest)
- Digital camera, memory cards, battery charger
- Sunglasses, case, and strap
- Spare glasses, contact lenses, cleaner, saline, etc.
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Your AdventureWomen insulated bottle (good for hot or cold drinks!)
- Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF

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Essentials Continued:

- Hand wipes/hand sanitizer
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Soap, shampoo, and conditioner
- Small packet of tissues
- Tampons and panty liners (avoid plastic applicators)
- Earplugs: We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs. Available at most drugstores or at www.earplugstore.com
- Assortment of stuff sacks and Ziploc bags
- 1-2 bandanas/Buff
- Reading material/journal and pens

Personal First Aid Kit:

- Prescription medicine you usually take
- Personal epi pen (if you need one, don't forget to pack it!)
- Bandages, Gauze, Ace bandage, blister prevention
- Antiseptic wipes/spray
- Antibiotic ointment
- Cotton-tipped applicators
- Oral rehydration tablets/packets
- Antidiarrheal medication
- Mild laxative
- Antacid
- Cold remedies
- Ibuprofen/acetaminophen
- Eye drops
- Tweezers, scissors (travel size), safety pins

If you prefer to buy a complete kit, we recommend the Smart Travel first aid kit.

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Cancellations and Refunds

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 61-90 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-60 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations. Travel insurance information will be sent to you once you have registered for your trip.

Switching Trips

If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you.

No Smoking Policy

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on AdventureWomen vacations.

Health Insurance

You must have your own health insurance to participate in an AdventureWomen trip.

Adventure Travel Today

At AdventureWomen, we want everyone to understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one **actively participates**, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to **experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends**. Most of all, we want our trips to be **fun!**

good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. **Being on time** is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well-being of both individuals and the group!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a