

adventurewomen

THE DESTINATION IS JUST THE BEGINNING

VIETNAM

Vietnam: Culture, Cuisine, Boating, and Biking



December 7 - 17, 2023



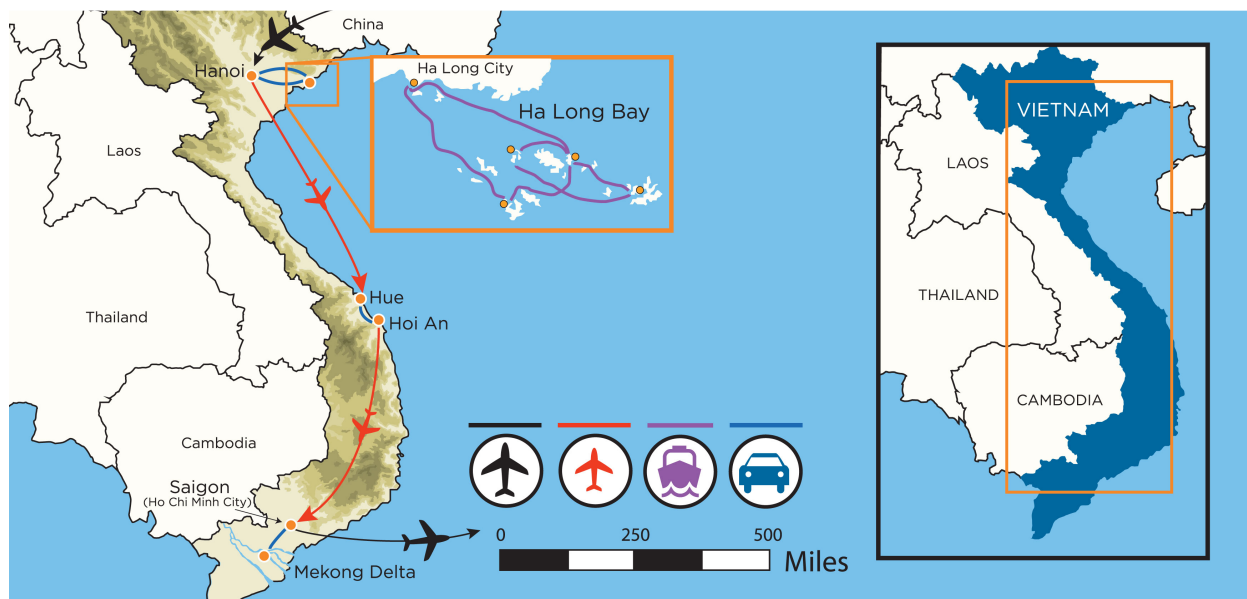
VIETNAM

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TRIP HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Pedal your bike along the narrow streets of Hanoi, enjoy lunch in a local home
- ▶ Visit the Cúc Handmade project, a local organization helping Thai women earn a living wage in Vietnam
- ▶ Two nights on a private boat in Ha Long Bay, exploring the islands and coves by kayak
- ▶ Dive into the flavors of Vietnam during a morning cooking class
- ▶ Discover the Mekong Delta, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve
- ▶ Optional extension to visit the Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia

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 Ha Long Bay on a privately chartered boat, explore by kayak
- Day 4 try sunrise tai chi, kayak in cong dam, relax on the boat
- Day 5 explore Thien Cohn Son Caves, cruise to the harbor, fly to Hue
- Day 6 explore the citadel, take an afternoon on your own, have dinner in a local home
- Day 7 drive to Hoi An, explore the city, evening on your own
- 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

ACTIVITY LEVEL

Active

TRIP PRICE

Main Trip: \$5,795
Optional Single Accommodations: \$900
Internal Air: \$425

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your adventure
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DAY 1
Thursday
12/7/23

Arrive 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.

During your adventure you'll get to know your expert Vietnamese guide, who offers in-depth and colorful information about the cities and towns you'll visit, teaching you a few words of Vietnamese and some local secrets along the way. You are also accompanied by an AdventureWomen Ambassador, committed to helping make your experience a fun and personally rewarding adventure, and cheering you on as you reach beyond your comfort zone to take on new challenges in your own unique way!

Arrival Information

Arrive at the Noi Bai Airport in Hanoi, Vietnam (HAN) today before 12:00pm.

Pick-up and Transfer

There is one group transfer from the airport for flights that arrive before 12:00pm. Private transfers are available at additional cost for those arriving early.

Meet Your Group

Meet your guide, Ambassador, and fellow Adventure Women in the lobby of your hotel 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

This evening, enjoy an official welcome dinner where you will get to know your group, your guide, and your Ambassador. Toast the adventures to come!

Accommodations
Hotel de L'Opera
Hanoi
Meals Included
dinner

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DAY 2
Friday
12/8/23

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). Biking allows you to 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 explore the local galleries near your hotel or simply just enjoy a coffee while watching the whirlwind of life around you.

Water Puppet Show Take in a late afternoon water puppet show at the Thang Long theater. This is a unique Vietnamese art form that depicts scenes from rural life.

Dinner Enjoy dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations
Hotel de L’Opera
Hanoi
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 3
Saturday
12/9/23

Hanoi to Ha Long Bay

Ha Long Bay is famous for its 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 Halong Bay

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

Board Your Private Boat

Arrive in the Bay and board your privately chartered boat - just for AdventureWomen - in time for lunch! Relax and explore the boat as you soak in the views of the Bay.

Afternoon Kayaking

Paddle around Vung Vieng fishing village in tandem kayaks. Vung Vieng is a small community 12 miles from the mainland, and some families have been here for generations.

Cooking Demo

Have a cooking demonstration on the boat, where you'll learn to prepare some of the mouth-watering dishes for which Vietnam is famous. Enjoy the sunset on the deck of your boat before enjoying dinner on board.

Accommodations
Private Chartered
Boat
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 4
Sunday
12/10/23

Halong 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.

Sunrise Tai Chi If you're up early enough, participate in early morning Tai Chi on the upper deck and watch the scenery as you float along.

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. Make your way through the small coves, tiny beaches, and estuaries by kayak, on foot, and swimming!

Lunch Enjoy lunch on board your boat.

Kayak in Cong Dam Take one last opportunity to kayak in this remarkable waterscape.

Evening on the Boat Relax on the boat with your new friends and enjoy dinner as a group.

Accommodations
Private Chartered
Boat
Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 5
Monday
12/11/23

Halong 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.

Thien Canh Son Caves

Enjoy a light breakfast before exploring the Thien Canh Son Caves. 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.

Brunch

Cruise back into the harbor and enjoy brunch as you return to the pier.

Fly to Hue

Drive about three hours to the Hanoi airport for your flight to Hue, which is just over one hour.

Arrive in Hue

You'll be picked up at the Hue airport and driven about 30 minutes to your hotel. Relax and have dinner as a group this evening.

Accommodations
Pilgrimage Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 6
Tuesday
12/12/23

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.

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.

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 woman whose father lived in Hue during the Vietnam War. He rebuilt his home and garden in the style of Hue upper class families of the past. You'll have the chance to talk to her about what it was like to grow up during the rebuilding period of Vietnam, after the war.

Her mother 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
Wednesday
12/13/23

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.

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.

Evening on Your Own Dinner is up to you tonight. This is a great night to visit a tailor if you'd like to have any clothing made, or head out to one of the many local, fusion, or western restaurant options.

Accommodations
Allegro Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch

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DAY 8
Thursday
12/14/23

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, shellfish, 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 the 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
Allegro Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 9
Friday
12/15/23

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

Drive to Danang and hop on your flight to Ho Chi Minh City. You'll land and have a late lunch today.

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 exterior of the Notre Dame Cathedral (the interior is closed for renovations and is scheduled to reopen in 2023).

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
Saturday
12/16/23

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.

Drive to the Delta

Leave the bustling city and drive two hours to the Mekong Delta.

Boat Cruise on the Delta

Cruise the mighty Mekong River by boat. Visit an island with lush tropical gardens and sample fruit picked fresh from the tree. Next, on Ben Tre Island, take an easy 30-minute bike ride, stopping at farms and a local home along the way to learn about the traditional ways of life. Enjoy lunch in a garden, and then explore the mangroves in the meandering canals of the Delta. Drive back to Ho Chi Minh City late this afternoon.

Farewell Dinner

Enjoy a farewell dinner with your group, toasting the end of a fantastic adventure in Vietnam!

Accommodations
Pullman Hotel

Meals Included
breakfast, lunch,
dinner

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DAY 11
Sunday
12/17/23

Depart Vietnam

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

Transfer to the Airport

Transfer to the airport for your flights home.

Departure Information

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

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.

Meals Included
breakfast

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Accommodation Details

Hotel de L'Opera Hanoi

Located in the center of Hanoi, Hotel de L'Opera is near 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.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Private Chartered Boat

The boat 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.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; limited Wifi

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.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

Allegro Hotel

Allegro is a boutique hotel conveniently located in the heart of Hoi An's ancient town. Enjoy the pool, book a massage, or walk into town and explore.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

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.

Amenities: Soap, shampoo, conditioner, hair dryer; electricity; Wifi

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Included:

- ▶ Accommodations as per itinerary based on double occupancy
- ▶ All meals as listed in the itinerary
- ▶ All ground transportation
- ▶ Domestic airfare (priced separately from the main trip)
- ▶ English-speaking guide throughout the trip
- ▶ One group transfer on arrival and departure
- ▶ Drinking water available in large jugs to refill personal bottles
- ▶ Entrance Fees
- ▶ Gratuities for drivers, hotel staff, boat staff, and waitstaff

Not Included:

- ▶ International airfare to and from Vietnam
- ▶ Optional activities
- ▶ Meals not specified in the itinerary
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages (unless otherwise specified)
- ▶ Fees for passport, visas, immunizations, or travel insurance
- ▶ Cost of hospitalization or evacuation
- ▶ Items of a personal nature
- ▶ Gratuities for the main guide

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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

Our deposits are nonrefundable and nontransferable. If for some reason you need to switch to a different trip, please call us and we will do our best to accommodate you, but switching is not guaranteed.

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