

# Cycle Saigon to Hanoi - Vietnam South to North

Trip Code: SHMB

Version:



CYCLE



GUIDED GROUP



MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Bustling Ho Chi Minh City (AKA Saigon) and historic Hanoi
- Free day to enjoy the beach or take a junk boat ride at Nha Trang
- Cycle across the Hai Van Pass and descend to the old capital of Hue

- Take a cruise on the Perfume River and at iconic Halong Bay
- Hoi An and the contrasting historical sites of My Son and My Lai

## AT A GLANCE

- 14 days biking
- 787 kilometres
- 80% surfaced road - 100% vehicle supported
- Max altitude - 2000 metres
- Join at Saigon, End in Hanoi

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

Between the contrasting cosmopolitan cities of Saigon and Hanoi, Vietnam boasts spectacular beaches, forest dappled mountains and a wealth of modern and ancient history. Our cycling adventure begins in the vibrant city of Saigon, better known as Ho Chi Minh City. Despite the vibrant bustle, Saigon's timeless temples sit peacefully amongst modern architecture and traditional street vendors. Heading out of the city we visit the famous 'Cu-Chi Tunnels', where the North Vietnam Army resided in a subterranean world, tormenting their enemies for many years.

The following day we take a short domestic flight to the charming hill town of Dalat. Over the next two days we seek out quiet country lanes and tackle the Hon Giao Pass (2062m) before enjoying a rest day on the soft sands of Nha Trang Bay, famous for its junk boat journeys. Combining a balance of private vehicle transfers and cycling, we continue northwards as we ride through friendly Viet villages and take in stunning coastal views. The ancient UNESCO trading port of Hoi-An, with its delicious cuisine and colourful market vendors, is worthy of a two night stopover and a visit to the nearby My-Son Cham ruins. With our cycling legs in good shape, we ride onwards to the historic Nguyen Dynasty town of Hue via the sensational Hai Van Pass and explore the banks of the Perfume River. An overnight train then transports us northwards to Ninh Binh and from here we use a mix of boat and bicycle to experience the best of northern Vietnam. Cycling across Cat-Ba Island is followed by an unforgettable day of cruising as we discover the limestone pinnacles of the UNESCO listed Halong Bay. Whilst our final night in sophisticated Hanoi provides a show-stopping ending to this Vietnamese cycling adventure.

## Is this holiday for you?

**ADVENTURE CYCLING.** Riding on a combination of quiet rural coastal roads, country lanes and well-defined village trails, this is superb cycling experience. The riding on this holiday is not technical and is suitable for fit weekend, leisure riders. Starting out with some easier rides, we have a couple of 100km days which experienced riders usually find sufficiently challenging. But the emphasis on this holiday is to soak up the experience of Vietnam with the support vehicle always on hand to help out if needed. You can cycle as much or as little as you like. A suitable hire bike is provided locally and included in the cost of the holiday.

# Itinerary

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Version:

## Holiday Information

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### What's Included

- An experienced local English-speaking cycling bike guide
- All land transport as described
- One or more support vehicles and drivers
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- Bike hire

### What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas (if applicable)
- Saigon and Hanoi airport transfers
- Tips for the local crew and drivers
- Meals as per the Meal Plan
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). Airport transfers on arrival and departure are not provided, because there are reliable taxi services both in Ho Chi Minh City and in Hanoi which provide the most cost-effective way of getting from the airport to the group hotel and vice versa.

Clients booking a Land Only Package MUST provide the KE office with full details of their flights.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

### Meal Plan

All breakfasts are included along with 14 lunches and 11 dinners

Please refer to the itinerary in the trip dossier for details of which days meals are not included. There is a wide choice of dining options in Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City. Food is not expensive in Vietnam but there are several high end restaurants specifically for tourists. You should budget £2 - £5 per meal or up to £15 for the more expensive restaurants.

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Start practising your chopstick technique now, as there are no knives and forks on this trip! Vietnamese cuisine is fresh and flavoursome. Typically a selection of many dishes of varying flavours are served together, and everyone takes a little of each. A typical meal will include Pho (noodle soup), spring rolls, spiced beef and pork dishes, fish in chilli, tomato served with tofu, stir-fried vegetables and rice, with fresh fruit for dessert. As per the custom for most of the region, food is rarely served in courses and is often served all at once for all to share. Vietnamese cuisine is wholesome and filling for our days in the saddle!

## Accommodation

During this trip the group will spend 15 nights in various hotels and resorts of a good standard, as well as having 1 night on the sleeper train from Hue to Ninh Binh. All accommodation is allocated on a twin-sharing basis, (except for the night on the train - where it is 4-share). If you are travelling by yourself you will be paired up with another single client of the same sex. Single room occupancy can be arranged for all nights on payment of the single supplement charge.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The trip will be led by an experienced local English-speaking cycling guide and there will also be one or more support vehicles and drivers. During our visits to some of the historical sites and Halong Bay we will be joined by extra guides and appropriate crew.

## Altitude

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

## Spending Money

Approximately \$250 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses, including tips to local staff (You can expect to pay \$100 to \$120 for tips). If you are intending to buy expensive souvenirs, you should budget accordingly (credit cards can be useful in this respect). It is not necessary to obtain local currency (Vietnamese Dong) prior to travelling. Money can be changed most easily at the airport or at banks in Saigon. The group hotel will be able to make small exchanges only. There are ATMs in Saigon, Nha Trang, Hoi An and Hanoi that accept foreign credit and debit cards. We recommend that you carry your travel money in US dollars cash rather than travellers cheques. US dollars are acceptable for exchange in Saigon and Hanoi and can be used to pay directly for goods and services in Vietnam.

## Guidance on Tipping

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and to your support crews and drivers. They do not form part of their wages. KE always pays local crews the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your support crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. It is best to tip as a group and it is useful to have a group pool for this. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of \$100 to \$120 for tipping. The local guide should also be tipped if he or she has provided good service. \$20 per person is not unreasonable for this.

## Bike Hire

Bike hire is included in the cost of the holiday. Our local agent has access to Trek 4500 bikes in a full range of sizes. They are good quality and well maintained bikes with Shimano components, suspension forks and disc brakes. Spare parts (tubes, tyre, chains etc.) are carried in the support vehicle along with a tool kit and track pump. The guide will also carry some spares and tools for fixing punctures etc. The bikes are equipped with flat pedals. If you prefer to use spd or clip-in pedals, you will need to bring these with you, along with your regular cycling shoes and cleats. Another item which you might choose to take with you on the holiday is your saddle. The hire bikes have standard saddles and anyone requiring more comfort, or a women-specific saddle, should consider taking their own. You should take your own EN1078 compliant cycling helmet, as the locally available helmets do not necessarily meet this standard - which we require. E-bikes are also available and can be reserved at a supplementary cost of \$395. Please let us know if you would like a regular bike or an e-bike and let us have your height - we will make sure that a suitable bike is reserved for you. The additional cost of an e-bike can be paid directly to our local agent via a link that we will provide.

## Vehicle Support

Throughout this trip we have the back up of one or more support vehicles. Each morning our main baggage will be loaded onto the support vehicle which will follow the group on the day's ride. The local biking leader and the support vehicle driver will watch over the group and will carry mobile phones, allowing you to contact them in the case of a breakdown or other incident. We want everyone to enjoy their cycling experience on this trip and we recognise the importance of group members being allowed to cycle at their own pace. At times there can be a fair distance between the front and rear cyclists in the group, with the support vehicle and cycling leader out of sight. The support vehicle will pick up any group members who wish to take a break from cycling at any time.

## Baggage Allowance

You should travel with one main item of luggage such as a robust holdall, as well as a small day pack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack. The day pack can be used to carry valuable items such as cameras and GPS devices whilst travelling and will also carry your day-ride essentials during the rides. Baggage allowance on the internal flight is likely to be 20kgs check-in and 5kgs cabin baggage. On your international flights, the baggage allowance will depend on the airline.

## Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in the 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa Vietnam

British Citizen passport holders do not need a visa for durations of stay up to and including 45 days for tourism and transit.

For information about multiple entry visas, longer stays or different nationalities please contact the relevant embassy. The Vietnamese Embassy in the UK is in London.

## Health & Vaccinations

If you have a severe allergy please inform the KE office before you travel. We will do all we can to help, but we cannot guarantee an allergy free environment on KE trips. You will need to carry your own treatment for the allergy with you, as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' are not carried as standard by KE leaders and staff. You should inform your leader on arrival of your allergy, and let them know where you keep your adrenaline pen.

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specific require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. Malarial prophylaxis are required. A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required if travelling from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission and for travellers having transited for more than 12 hrs through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong.

## Preparing for your Holiday

The better conditioned you are the more you will enjoy your trip. We suggest that you adopt a sensible weekly exercise regime and fit in a number of long cycle rides in hilly country to ensure you are physically capable of taking part in this trip - this will also provide you with an opportunity to make sure all your riding kit is tried and tested before you travel. Cycling is obviously the best activity to prepare for this trip, however, running, squash and swimming are also good for developing aerobic fitness and stamina.



## Climate

Vietnam has a tropical climate with two distinct monsoon seasons. From May to September the country is dominated by the south monsoon winds and from October to April, the north monsoon is dominant with northerly to northeasterly winds affecting the country. There is a transition period between each monsoon season when winds are light and variable. Vietnam's single rainy season occurs during the south monsoon with June, July and August the wettest months. At this time daytime temperatures are typically in the range of 25 - 30 degrees Celsius. During the north monsoon, northern Vietnam has cloudy days with occasional light rain, while southern Vietnam tends to be dry and sunny. Temperatures during this period are in the range of 25 - 30 degrees Celsius in the south and 15 - 20 degrees Celsius in the north with the occasional chilly night. Frost and some snow may occur on the highest mountains in the north for a few days a year. During September to January coastal areas can be affected by typhoons in the South China Sea bringing short-lived tropical storms.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that before travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates directly from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

- Lonely Planet. Vietnam
- Rough Guide. Vietnam
- Vietnam Pocket Guide. Insight Guides
- Vietnam Handbook. Footprint Handbooks
- Vietnamese Phrasebook. Rough Guides
- Hill Tribes Phrasebook. Lonely Planet
- Vietnam: A History. Stanley Karnow

## Maps

### Vietnam North and South. Reise Know-How

Reise Know-How Verlag produce a 1:600.000 scale map over two double-sided sheets, Vietnam North and Vietnam South. The maps show road networks and driving distances and symbols highlight places of interest, archaeological remains, temples and museums, viewpoints etc.

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

## Explore International

This holiday is part of our Explore International range. Participants on these trips can book through KE or through one of our international partners. This helps us to gather together sufficient numbers of like-minded adventurers to get your holiday up and running quickly. Led by an English-speaking guide, the cosmopolitan nature of these groups can be an important part of the experience!

# Equipment Information

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## Equipment List

For this holiday you will need your usual cycling clothing, including shoes, cycling gloves and helmet (which must be worn at all times when cycling).

### Bike Wear

- Cycling helmet (the EN1078 safety standard is a requirement)
- Cycling shoes
- Daypack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack (e.g. Camelbak)
- Water bladder - min. 2 litres water capacity
- Padded (baggy) cycling shorts
- Long leg cycling trousers or leg warmers
- Base-layer - short sleeve cycling tops
- Mid-layer - long sleeved cycling tops
- Fleece jacket or jumper
- Lightweight windproof gilet
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Regular biking gloves
- Buff
- Sunglasses
- Sun cream (inc. total bloc for lips/nose)

- Camera

## **Other Stuff**

- Travel and off-the-bike clothing and footwear
- Wash bag, towel, toiletries, including anti-bacterial handwash
- Headtorch and spare batteries
- Swimwear
- Basic First Aid kit and personal medication
- Insect repellent
- Chamois cream (e.g. Assos/Ozone)
- Water purification tablets
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

## **Spares**

You do not need to bring any tools or spares. The hire bikes are provided in good condition and a supply of spares is carried. You may be asked to pay directly for any spares used, especially in the case of crash damage or damage by mis-use.

## **Repairs**

Your bike guide and his local team will take care of all bike repairs and general maintenance.

## **Hydration and Energy Snacks**

You should take suitable water bottle(s) (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic) or a hydration pack and you should also consider taking a small supply of the gels, power bars or sports drink mix that you would normally use on a ride at home.

Please contact us if you have any questions about your equipment.

## Cotswold Outdoor

Many of the equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive a 12.5% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow+Rock and Runners Need. The discount code can be downloaded from your MyKE account and you can use this code at the checkout, either in store or online.

## Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary starting at the hotel in Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) and ending in Hanoi. Airport transfers both on arrival and departure are not provided. Taxis are readily available and low cost.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Ho Chi Minh City and returning from Hanoi. Outbound flights usually depart the UK in the afternoon and arrive in Ho Chi Minh City in the afternoon of the following day (Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights depart Hanoi in the afternoon of the final day of the Land Only itinerary, arriving in the UK in the morning of the following day.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

Created with our Vietnamese cycling partners, we include more cycling days, more meals and see more of Vietnam than other cycling operators. BIKE HIRE NOW INCLUDED AND E-BIKES AVAILABLE

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 21/11/2024 and the trip is subject to change