

# Vietnam from North to South

Trip Code: VNS

Version:



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP

MODERATE



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Cruise Ha Long Bay aboard a comfortable Junk
- Unique 4-day homestay trek through the villages and rice fields of the Pu Luong NP
- Wander the streets of Hanoi's Old Quarter and sample vietnamese streetfood
- Travel by rowing boat through the limestone outcrops of Tam Coc
- The imperial palaces of Hue, the lantern lit bridges of Hoi An

- Visit the Cu Chi Tunnels and experience life on the Mekong Delta

## AT A GLANCE

- 9 days touring and sightseeing
- 4 days walking,
- Join at Hanoi, End in Saigon

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

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

# Introduction

Wander the smoky streets of Hanoi, trek amongst North Vietnam's verdant rice terraces, explore the delta of the mighty Mekong River and experience the nightlife of Ho Chi Minh City on this voyage through Vietnam. We start out in the 1000 year old city of Hanoi, where we explore the maze like streets of the 'Old Quarter'. Travelling inland we spend 4 days trekking between villages in the Pu Luong National Park, sleeping in stilted houses, and experiencing rural life in an area where the fields are still ploughed by water buffalo and irrigated by wooden water wheels.

We'll explore the impressive limestone spires at Tam Coc, known as Halong Bay on land, before heading on to Halong Bay itself, for some great seafood and a night on a traditional junk. Our journey south begins with an overnight journey on the famous 'Reunification Express' sleeper train. Arriving in Hue, we cruise the Perfume River in search of imperial palaces and pagodas before visiting Hoi An, known for its lantern lit bridges and skilled tailors. Next we explore the canals, mangroves and floating markets of the Mekong Delta, the 'rice bowl of Vietnam'. We will take time to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels, a remnant of the Vietnam war, before on we end our holiday with a night in lively Ho Chi Minh City where we can experience the city's evocative mix of ancient pagodas and modern skyscrapers.

## Is this holiday for you?

This is an active journey, which includes a gentle, 4-day trek point to point trek. On our trek each day's walk will be between 4 and 6 hours and overnight stops will be in simple homestay accommodation. We've included as many highlights as we can within our 14 days, so the pace of the holiday is pretty full on. We'll use several means of transport are used during this holiday, including minibus, sleeper train, plane, sampan, junk and rowing boat. The combination of different means of travel, and the variety of accommodation used, will mean a degree of flexibility will be required - this diversity is part of the charm of this holiday.

# Itinerary

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Version:

# Extensions

When booking your holiday, you will be able to 'add an extension option'. Once we have received your booking we will contact you to discuss additional services required for the extension and to take any additional deposit.



## Highlights of Angkor Extension

Angkor, in northern Cambodia, is one of the most important archaeological sites in South-east Asia. Stretching over some 400 square km, the park contains the magnificent remains of several capitals of the Khmer Empire from the 9th to the 15th centuries, including the largest pre-industrial city in the world. The most famous are the Temple of Angkor Wat and, at Angkor Thom, the Bayon Temple with its countless sculptural decorations.

4 days from  
**US\$535** per person

# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Internal flights
- Single timed group airport transfers
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Ferries and cruise boats and all land transport

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Visas
- Some meals as detailed in the Meal Plan
- Tips for local staff
- Miscellaneous expenses - drinks and souvenirs etc

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the group hotel in Hanoi. A single timed transfer from the airport to the group hotel is provided on Day 1.

On Day 14 there will be a single timed transfer from the hotel in Ho Chi Minh City to the airport.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

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

## Meal Plan

All breakfasts, 11 lunches and 8 dinners are included. Where lunches and dinners are not included there will be a large range of dining options and budgets to choose from and so it makes sense to leave the choice to you. You should budget £2 - £5 per meal (or less if you want to try some delicious street food) 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.

This will be a gourmet experience. Start practising your chopstick technique now, as there are no knives and forks for parts of this trip. Vietnamese cuisine is fresh, fragrant and flavoursome. Typically a selection of dishes or varying flavours will be served together and each person takes a little of each dish - so there will usually be something to please everyone (vegetarians included!) at every meal. A typical meals will include Pho (Vietnamese 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. On board the junk in Halong Bay we will certainly be treated to a variety of fresh and delicious sea food. You can expect to feast on a A to Z of delicious Vietnamese cuisine during the course of your stay!

## Accommodation

In Hanoi, HCMC (Saigon), Hue and Hoi An we will stay in well located 3\* hotels. In Tam Coc and on the Mekong Delta we will stay in comfortable bungalows, in beautiful grounds/surroundings. .

During the 3 homestay nights, we will stay in traditional stilted wooden houses, footwear will be left outside! The group will share a large communal room, but each person will have their own foam mattress, with bedding and mosquito net provided. You will need to bring a sleeping bag liner or a light sleeping bag, but there will be plenty of colourful blankets to use should the temperature fall in the evenings. Hot water for washing is available and there will be basic bathroom and shower facilities.

During the train journey to Hue we use 'soft sleeper' class with four berths per compartment (bedding is provided).

On board our Junk on Halong bay we will have twin cabins with air conditioning, electricity, and en suite facilities. The Junk has a sun deck, dining room, bar and a friendly crew ready to look after you.

All accommodation is based on twin-share (except homestay). If you are travelling on your own, you will be paired with another single traveller of the same sex. Depending on availability, single accommodation for the hotel nights only is available for a supplement.

## Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader. During the 4-day trek in the Pu Luong Nature Reserve the group will also have the assistance of baggage porters.

## Spending Money

Approximately \$250-\$300 should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses. This amount should be enough to cover the non-included meals, tips to local staff. 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 easily at the airport or at banks in Hanoi. The group hotel will be able to make small exchanges only. Sterling, Euros and US dollars are acceptable for exchange in Hanoi Hue and Ho Chi Minh City but US dollars are the most convenient currency as they can often be exchanged at smaller places. We recommend that you carry your travel money in cash rather than travellers cheques since you will exchange most of it on the day of arrival and travellers cheques can be difficult and time consuming to change.

## Guidance on Tipping

It usual to tip staff including your local guide and driver if you are happy with the services provided. We suggest you coordinate these tips as a group and as a rough guide we recommend and as a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of \$80 - \$100 to a pool for tipping your crew. The exact amount should be determined by the group and the guide will give advice on the appropriate levels.

## **Baggage Allowance**

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage, which should be a soft duffle bag, and one day pack. During the trekking part of this holiday your baggage will be transported by motorbike, and should not weigh more than 15kg. For some sections of the trip you may be asked to 'decant' items not required, which will travel by alternative means to your next hotel. We recommend that you therefore bring a second fold away bag to store these items in. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your 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

Getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday makes a lot of sense. The fitter you are, after all, the more enjoyable you will find the experience.

## 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
- Hill Tribes Phrasebook: Lonely Planet

## 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.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

**You must bring the following items:**

- Hiking boots or comfortable/sturdy walking shoes
- Daypack 30 litres
- Training shoes or similar
- Trekking trousers
- Lightweight waterproof over trousers
- Underwear
- Socks
- Swimwear
- Thermal base layer shirts
- Casual shirt and/or T-shirts
- Fleece jacket or warm jumper/sweater
- Lightweight waterproof jacket
- Travel clothes
- Sunhat
- Warm hat (Nov to Feb departures only)\*\*
- Thermal gloves (Nov to Feb departures only)\*\*
- Scarf neck buff
- Sunglasses

- Ear Plugs (for use on overnight train journeys)
- Headtorch and batteries
- Sun protection (including total bloc for lips, nose etc.)
- Water bottles 1 Litre x 2 (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial handwash
- Small towel

Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium),

- painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent, antihistamine cream and tablets, and re-hydration salts (Dioralite). Glucose tablets and multi-vitamin tablets are a good idea.

### **The following items are optional:**

- Sheet sleeping bag
- Trekking poles
- Camera
- Shorts (should not be worn in temples etc)
- Pen-knife (remember to pack sharp objects in hold baggage)
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping (to avoid plastic bags)

### **NOTES**

\*Mosquito nets are provided throughout the tour, including at the homestay accommodation.

\*\*Please bring these items with you for departures from November through to February when temperatures are slightly cooler.

## 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 joining in Hanoi and ending in Ho Chi Minh City. Single timed transfers are included from/to the airports.

## Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London to Hanoi, and returning from Ho Chi Minh City.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

All the highlights and more... Not only does our tour visit all the highlights (north, south AND central!), you can also experience real village life on our gentle, unique, 4-day trek through the Pu Luong National Park, complete with overnight homestays in traditional wooden stilted houses.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 03/12/2024 and the trip is subject to change