

TOUR CODE

**VN+**

premier collection

## TREASURES OF INDOCHINA

### A 'Premier Collection' Tour

**15 days**

Updated 29/01/2010

#### **Day 1**      *Arrival in Hanoi*

Arrive in Hanoi. Transfer to our hotel.

Hanoi is an attractive city with lakes, fine boulevards, and flourishing parks, as well as a public centre that is an architectural museum piece. Hanoi is situated on the right bank of the Red River (Song Hong) which is spanned by two bridges, the old Long Bien Bridge and the new Chuong Duong bridge.

Overnight in Hanoi. Hanoi Sofitel Metropole. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

#### **Day 2**      *Hanoi: City Tour*

Today we have a full day of sightseeing, including the Mausoleum of Ho Chi Minh, a site of pilgrimage (the building has been closed to visitors of late; outside visit only). The building was constructed from materials gathered from all over Vietnam. Modelled closely on Lenin's Mausoleum, Ho Chi Minh lies at rest in this Vietnamese version. We will also admire the elegance of the One Pillar Pagoda, originally built in 1049. The temple is lotus-shaped and is situated in the middle of a water-lily pond.

We will visit the Ho Chi Minh Museum, with displays dedicated to the public and private side of Ho Chi Minh's life. We will also visit the Fine Arts Museum, housed within a large colonial building, where we will see contemporary Vietnamese art and handicrafts. From the Fine Arts Museum we will walk over to visit the Temple of Literature which was the site of the first national university dating back to 1076. This is one of Hanoi's best-preserved ancient sites.

After lunch we will visit the new Ethnology Museum, one of Vietnam's finest. Dedicated to the ethnic minorities of Vietnam, this museum provides educational displays and descriptions and provides a real insight to these people found primarily in the high country. Our tour today will also include a visit to the Lake of the Returned Sword and the nearby Old Quarter, also known as the Quarter of 36 Streets.

Overnight in Hanoi. Hanoi Sofitel Metropole. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

#### **Day 3**      *Hanoi - Halong Bay Cruise*

This morning we depart for Halong Bay.\* The route today, via Haiphong, will be our first opportunity to see rural Vietnam. We will arrive at Halong Bay in the early afternoon. Halong Bay, located in the Gulf of Tonkin, covers an area of 1500 square km. With more than a thousand limestone peaks soaring from its crystalline emerald water this area is one of the natural wonders of Vietnam and now a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The islands are dotted with innumerable white sandy beaches and grottoes created by wind and waves. The name Halong means "where the dragon descends into the sea". Legend has it that the islands of Halong Bay were created by a great dragon who lived in the

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mountains.

On arrival at Halong Bay we will board our Huong Hai Junk cruise and enjoy a welcome drink. The Huong Hai ('Ocean Flavours') junks are unique, 'antique' (replica) accommodations that are scrupulously clean, fully-crewed and comfortable. Our junk/s are large and luxurious seven-cabin boats with private bath, air conditioning and fan, and plenty of deck space. An onboard chef prepares delicious, local seafood dishes (non-seafood dishes available).

After lunch on board we will cruise Dinh Huong Island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Sail Island, and visit Sung Sot Cave, with a chance to swim at Titov Beach. We enjoy sunset and then dinner on board.

\* Please pack an overnight bag for the trip to Halong Bay. Large baggage will be securely stored in Hanoi. Halong Bay is protected waters and conditions are VERY rarely anything but mirror-like; that said, very motion-sensitive passengers might consider bringing their usual remedy.

Overnight Junk cruise. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 4      *Halong Bay - Hanoi***

Fishermen at Halong mount fan-shaped Chinese junk sails on their boats, the same sort of sails once deployed by pirates in these waters. Junks have been used for centuries by the Chinese, Japanese and Javanese for fishing and transportation, and often as living quarters; a junk commonly includes a deck, high masts, and several cotton sails.

Halong is one of the last places where junk sails are still handmade by families of sailmakers. Coarse cotton panels are sewn together with silk thread -- every seam sewn by hand. To discourage rot and mildew, the completed sail is dipped in a liquid that comes from a beetroot-like member of the yam family. The sail is dipped and dried three or four times; a process that gives its dark red-tan colour.

Early this morning, after breakfast on board, we cruise to visit Manal Head Island, Tortoise Island, and visit Luon Cave by small bamboo boat, and Bai Tu Long Bay. We check out at around 10 am, enjoy an early lunch on board before disembarking and departing for Hanoi at around noon.

Tonight we will enjoy a water puppet show. This is a fantastic art form unique to Vietnam and derives from the Red River Delta area.

Overnight in Hanoi. Hanoi Sofitel Metropole. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 5      *Hanoi - Da Nang - Hoi An***

Today we fly to Da Nang and continue by road to Hoi An.

Da Nang is situated on a peninsula at the point where the Han River flows into the South China Sea. We pass through the nearby Marble Mountains; five limestone peaks with marble outcrops known for their beauty and their caves. At the foot of Marble Mountain, an important religious site for the Chams, you can see many artisans crafting fine marble objects. Our destination is one of the most charming towns in Vietnam--Hoi An. The ancient town of Hoi An (formerly Faifo) lies 32 km (20 miles) south of Da Nang on the banks of the Thu Bon River.

This afternoon we will be able to soak in the atmosphere of this small town on a walking tour. The unique architecture, the temples, the market and the Japanese covered bridge will be some of the highlights of your trip. The Japanese covered bridge was built in the 16th century, perhaps even earlier. On its north side there is a pagoda, Japanese in style,

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which protects sailors. Its popular name, Japanese Covered Bridge, reflects a long-standing belief that it was built by the Japanese, although no documentary evidence exists to support this. At the Tran Family Temple we will see the fusion between both the Chinese and Japanese styles. This temple has survived for 15 generations.

Overnight in Hoi An. Golden Sand Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 6      *Hoi An - My Son - Hoi An***

Today we visit the World Heritage Site of My Son ("me-sohn"), a large complex of religious relics that comprises more than 70 architectural works from the obscure Cham Dynasty (2nd - 15th century). The Chams were "Indianised" during commercial trading relations and adopted Hinduism (which can clearly be seen in the Temple designs). My Son served as an intellectual and religious centre and is a must visit as one of Vietnam's most important Cham Sites. The forested, mountain setting and general peacefulness of this little visited site make this an excellent excursion.

Balance of the day at leisure in Hoi An.

Overnight in Hoi An. Golden Sand Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 7      *Hoi An - Da Nang - Saigon - Mekong Delta***

Today we return to Da Nang from where we fly to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), the business centre of Vietnam.

A four hour drive south takes us to the fertile delta of the meandering Mekong River, the southernmost region of Vietnam. Traditional transportation in the delta is by boat along a vast network of canals and channels. We take a boat trip to visit Cai Be floating market and fruit orchards on An Binh islet. We continue by boat to Vinh Long and drive to Can Tho.

\* Please pack an overnight for the trip to the Mekong Delta. Large baggage will be securely stored in Saigon.

Overnight in Can Tho region (Mekong Delta). Victoria Can Tho Resort. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 8      *Mekong Delta - Saigon***

We have an early morning boat trip to Cai Rang, Indochina's largest and most impressive floating market. Often referred to as the rice bowl of Vietnam producing three crops of rice per year, the fertile Mekong Delta is also famous for its tropical fruits and flowers. Sailing on quiet country canals through the lush countryside, we encounter tiny villages, enchanting fruit orchards and vegetable gardens where you can treat yourself to a tasting of delicious juicy fruits.

Afternoon drive to Saigon.

Overnight in Saigon. Caravelle Hotel, deluxe rooms (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 9      *Saigon - Cu Chi Tunnels - Saigon***

This morning we will visit the intriguing tunnels of Cu Chi, a complex underground system that housed 10,000 people during the height of the war and contained sleeping quarters, hospitals and schools.

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From here we will continue on to the War Remnants Museum (formerly the War Crimes Museum). The visit here is a sobering experience with its countless photographs and exhibits.

Overnight in Saigon. Caravelle Hotel (or similar). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 10      Saigon, Vietnam - Siem Reap, Cambodia**

Today we board our flight to Siem Reap, gateway for Angkor Wat/Angkor Thom. This morning we will be visiting the South Gate of Angkor Tom, Bayon Temple, Ba Poon, the Elephant Terrace and the Leper Temple.

You will have all afternoon to wander the magnificent grounds of the splendidly preserved 12th Century temple of Angkor Wat. Considered the best example of ancient Khmer architectural, it is the largest and most impressive of all Cambodian monuments and generally regarded as one of the finest religious structures in the world. The construction mirrors the concept of the ancient universe and its bas relief carvings and intricate murals tell a fascinating story of life over 800 years ago. The "Apsaras", or Heavenly Dancers, have lost none of their grace and beauty as they dance frozen in time on the walls.

PLEASE NOTE: Due to flight times and other scheduling considerations, the order in which Siem Reap area sightseeing is accomplished may change at the discretion of your Tour Leader.

This evening you will enjoy a presentation of classical Cambodian dance, the forerunner of the Thai art.

Overnight in Siem Reap. Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 11      Siem Reap: Angkor Thom**

Today is dedicated to seeing the remaining highlights of the Petit Circuit--Angkor Thom (Bayon with its haunting images of the God-like Avalokitesvara and its magnificent murals, the celestial palace Phimeanakas); plus Sras Srang (Pool of Ablutions), Ta Keo (the first Khmer temple built entirely of sandstone) and Ta Prohm, in its natural overgrown setting. You will also see much of the Grand Circuit including the great temple of Preah Khan and the brick sanctuaries of Pre Rup. It is not hard to imagine how this vast complex covering several square miles and including carefully engineered canals and reservoirs to control flood waters and survive droughts was once, by some estimates, the largest city in the world housing as many as one million inhabitants.

Overnight in Siem Reap. Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa. Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 12      Siem Reap: Banteay Srei**

Today we visit some temples a little farther afield, including the exquisitely carved Banteay Srei.

Banteay Srei is something of an anomaly. It wasn't built by a King but by a spiritual teacher, Yajnavaraha, the Brahman of King Jayavarman V, in AD 967. At that time it was called Tribhuvana Mahesvara and stood in a town called Isvarapura. The name Banteay Srei means the "Citadel of Women", primarily due to its size and was one of the first temples to be restored by the French earlier last century, using a process known as anastylosis, an archeological technique used in the reconstruction of temple ruins which involves the dismantling of and then rebuilding of a temple.

We will also have time to visit the Central Market during our stay at Siem Reap.

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Overnight in Siem Reap. Victoria Angkor Resort & Spa. Meal plan: Breakfast and lunch.

**Day 13      *Siem Reap, Cambodia - Bangkok, Thailand***

Today we fly from Siem Reap to Bangkok. Balance of the day at leisure.

Overnight in Bangkok. Sukhothai Hotel ('Superior' room). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 14      *Bangkok: City Tour***

This morning we will visit the Grand Palace situated on the Chao Phraya River. Started in 1782, the complex is a collection of buildings covering over 1.5 km<sup>2</sup> (0.9 sq mile). Within the grounds we visit Wat Phra Kaeo, known for the venerated Emerald Buddha. Sitting on a golden altar, it is carved from green jade and is only 75 cm (30 inches) high! Since its discovery in the 15th Century, the Emerald Buddha has known many homes, including Lampang, Chiang Rai and two locations in Laos, Luang Prabang and Vientiane.

We will start our afternoon with a visit to Wat Pho also known as the Temple of the Reclining Buddha. The temple is the largest in Bangkok and it is 200 years old. On its grounds, we will see the tremendous 46 m (150 foot) long, 15 m (49 foot) high gold-plated reclining Buddha. The sole of his feet have detailed work of mother-of-pearl. Wat Pho also has more than 1,000 bronze images from Ayutthaya and Sukhothai rescued by Rama I's brother.

We will continue our day by crossing the "khlong" (river) by boat in order to visit Wat Arun, or the Temple of the Dawn. It was built in the early 19th Century and its tower is the highest in Thailand measuring 81 m (265 feet). The tower, or "prang," is covered with pieces of Chinese porcelain and its beauty is appreciated from a distance. The temple gained its name from the Indian god of dawn, Aruna. Here there are superb statues of the Buddha at the most important stages of his life: at birth (north), in meditation (east), preaching his first sermon (south) and entering Nirvana (west).

Overnight in Bangkok. Sukhothai Hotel ('Superior' room). Meal plan: Breakfast, lunch and dinner.

**Day 15      *Departure***

Departure from Bangkok.

BON VOYAGE!! Meal plan: Breakfast.

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*Please refer to our complete Terms & Conditions outlined on [adventures-abroad.com/premier](http://adventures-abroad.com/premier)*

#### **LAND ONLY DATES**

Our itineraries are based on **Land Only** dates and do not include flying time. Please contact our office for arrival / departure information.

#### **EARLY BOOKINGS**

We restrict our group size to 12-16 participants and many of our tours fill early. A deposit will confirm your space on tour.

#### **DEPOSIT**

Please contact us to check availability before you book. A non-refundable \$500 deposit is required to hold your place on a tour. Optional trip cancellation and interruption insurance must be purchased at the time of booking and is non-refundable.

#### **FINAL PAYMENT**

Final payment is due 60 days prior to departure and should be made by cheque or via online banking. Final balance payments by credit card attract an additional \$150 convenience fee per transaction.

#### **What's included on *Premium* tours?**

- *Shared accommodation in deluxe hotel properties*
- *Most domestic / intra-tour air taxes & locally paid departure taxes*
- *Airport transfers*
- *Breakfast daily, most dinners, some lunches*
- *Transportation while on tour*
- *"Special Features" outlined on each itinerary*
- *Sightseeing and entrance fees as specified in each itinerary*
- *Gratuities for drivers, local guides, restaurant staff, porters*
- *Services of a Adventures Abroad Tour Leader*

#### **FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS**

We offer flights from all gateways. Please contact us for prices and details.

#### **FLIGHT PRICES**

We maintain contracts with several different air carriers. We do not hold blocked seats on our flights. Our published airfares are based upon availability and are subject to change without notice. Certain seasons are more likely to have limited space and may result in surcharges if you book late. We recommend that you book early for these departures.

#### **What's not included on our tours?**

- *Long-haul air taxes and fuel surcharges*
- *Visa and related fees & charges (if applicable)*
- *Trip cancellation / interruption / medical insurance*
- *Single supplement charges (if single room requested)*
- *Tour Leader gratuity*



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**code** destination  
**VN+** TREASURES OF INDOCHINA

**duration**  
**15 Days**

**Prices in US Dollars**

Effective Apr 09, 2010

| Land Portion |           | Land Only | From New York | From Los Angeles |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|---------------|------------------|
| Start        | End       |           |               |                  |
| 23 Nov 10    | 07 Dec 10 | \$6,167   | \$7,467       | \$7,267          |
| 11 Jan 11    | 25 Jan 11 | \$6,167   | \$7,467       | \$7,267          |
| 22 Nov 11    | 06 Dec 11 | \$6,167   | \$7,467       | \$7,267          |

| LAND ONLY PARTICIPANTS |           |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Tour Begins            | Tour Ends |
| Hanoi                  | Bangkok   |

**special features**

- Small groups.
- Experienced Tour Leaders.
- All meals, including special local cuisines and events.
- 5-star accommodation throughout.
- Exclusive air-conditioned coaches.
- Full staff support and portorage at airports and hotels.
- 'Behind the scenes' visits and local cultural experiences.
- All internal air tickets included in land price (including taxes).

**payment information**

Initial deposit can be made by check, Visa, or Mastercard. Final balance is payable by cheque at 60 days before departure.

**flight information**

Flight prices are subject to availability and may change. For prices from other cities, please contact us.

**contact us**

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Optional Single Supplement: \$738.00

Maximum group size 16