

2019 THE BEST OF VIETNAM

HANOI - HALONG BAY - HOI AN - HUE - HO CHI MINH CITY - MEKONG DELTA



12 DAYS FROM (NZD)

\$2,599

per person twin-share

LAND ONLY (NZD)

\$1,799

per person twin-share



This medium-paced tour covers some of the best historical and cultural sights Vietnam has to offer, while also providing plenty of free time for you to relax or explore further. From the peaceful capital city of Hanoi to the stunning natural beauty and emerald waters of Halong Bay; from the ancient streets of Hoi An to the rural charm of the Mekong Delta; from the vibrant city life of Ho Chi Minh City to the poignant Cu Chi Tunnels, there's so much to explore and discover!

Image: Halong Bay





Day 1: Arrive in Hanoi

Fly to Hanoi via connecting cities. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to the hotel.
Note: Some flights may depart the day before.

Day 2: Hanoi City Tour (B, L)

Visit the infamous **Ho Lo Prison** – known as ‘the Hanoi Hilton’ during the American War. Those incarcerated at Hoa Lo included Pete Peterson, who became the first US Ambassador to a unified Vietnam in 1995, and the late Senator John McCain, the Republican nominee for the US presidency in 2008. Visit the **Temple of Literature**, the first university in Vietnam, built for the sons of mandarins. Then it's on to **West Lake** and **Tran Quoc Temple**, the oldest Buddhist temple in Hanoi, which is located on a small island near the southeastern shore of the lake. After lunch, visit **Ba Dinh Square**, where Ho Chi Minh read Viet Nam's Declaration of Independence on 2 SEP 1945. Visit **Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum** (reminiscent of Lenin's Mausoleum in Moscow), and **Ho Chi Minh's House**, a modest residence from which he led the country until his death in 1969. Then, transfer by bus to the ancient '36 Meandering Streets' of Hanoi's **Old Quarter**. NOTE: Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum is only viewable from outside on a MON or FRI, and from 5 SEP. to 5 NOV due to annual maintenance. Rules regarding dress and behaviour are strictly enforced by staff and guards. Legs must be covered (no shorts or mini skirt).

Water Puppet Show and Hanoi Foodie tour (at your own expense): Walk through the bustling old quarter as your guide tells you about the various foods on offer – stop and try some if you like! Then we will stop at a 'Bia Hoi' store, sit down and share a relaxing moment with locals. At night, the sidewalks are full of pop-up restaurants which offer truly local food like Banh Cuon (rice rolls with pork and herbs inside), and many kinds of noodle dish. For dinner, you will enjoy Southern beef-noodles in Hang Dieu street. End the night with a drink at a local coffee shop, talking about life in Vietnam, before heading back to your hotel.

Day 3: Hanoi Halong Bay (B, L, D)

Travel to Halong Bay and **take a boat trip** to explore one of the world's great natural wonders, cruising the thousands of limestone islands filled with caves of all shapes and sizes. The sails of



HIGHLIGHTS

- Experience a full-day guided tour of **Hanoi City**, including **Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum** and the 'Hanoi Hilton'
- Take an overnight traditional junk cruise through **Halong Bay**
- Stroll through the peaceful ancient streets of **Hoi An**
- Tour **Hue City**, the former capital of Vietnam and location of the impressive **Imperial City**
- Immerse yourself in the vibrant city life of **Ho Chi Minh City**
- Savour the rural delights and local lifestyles of the **Mekong Delta**
- See the remnants of the Vietnam War at the **Cu Chi Tunnels**

junks and sampans gliding along the clear and emerald waters of the bay form a magnificent picturesque scene that blends with the sky. You also get a chance to visit some of the hidden grottoes beneath the towering cliffs. A **seafood lunch and dinner** will be served on board the charming junk. Stay overnight on board.

Day 4: Halong Bay Hanoi Da Nang Hoi An (B, L)

Enjoy the aquamarine waters of the bay at its best as the junk continues to cruise quietly through spectacular limestone formations. Disembark from the junk at noon and transfer to Hanoi airport for a short flight to **Da Nang**. On arrival, you will be picked up and transferred to **Hoi An**, an ancient town recognised as a World Cultural Heritage site by UNESCO. Check into your hotel in Hoi An.

Note: In the event that sufficient seats are not available for the Hanoi to Da Nang flight, the group will instead fly from Hai Phong.

Day 5: Hoi An (B)

Discover Hoi An by walking tour through the narrow streets of this charming town. Perhaps more than any other place in Vietnam, Hoi An retains the feel of centuries past. Once known as Faifo, Hoi An was an influential port along the Silk Road. For over 500 years merchants from China, Japan, France, and Portugal settled in the prosperous town, resulting in a distinctive blend of culture, cuisine, religions and architecture. In 1999, the town was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Then, visit the highly-regarded Bebe Tailor Shop to discover the story behind Vietnam's traditional outfits. The remainder of the afternoon is free at leisure. You may also join one of our optional tours (at your own expense):

A: Half-day Cycling Tour from Hoi An to Tra Que Village: Take a scenic bicycle ride through the rice paddies to Tra Que Village just outside Hoi An. This little village is well-known for supplying the many restaurants and hotels in the area with fresh herbs and vegetables. You will walk through the vegetable gardens, experience how the local farmers work the land and learn more about the history of the village and the importance of herbs in Vietnamese medicine and cuisine, before your relaxing pedal back to town. **OR**

B: Fishing Village & Waterway Eco-tour: Enjoy an authentic social and cultural insight into the local Vietnamese way of life. Drive to a local farming village travelling along picturesque country roads. Explore the now tranquil coconut-palm flanked waterways of a past war and hear of the extreme conditions endured by soldiers on both sides. Meet local fishermen and experience their daily life. You will take a wooden boat to a 'water coconut forest', and join local fishermen on the river to experience

round net and cast net fishing. Learn to paddle bamboo basket boats and join in a basket boat race. You'll also learn how to use reeds or palm leaves to make grasshoppers, birds, rings, sunglasses, etc. Return to the boat to enjoy lunch and a cold beer or soft drink and then return the hotel by car.

Day 6: Hoi An (B)

Visit the **Réhahn Museum**, to view the 'Precious Heritage Collection', by French Photographer Réhahn. This work focuses on the endangered cultural heritage of Vietnam's 54 ethnic minority groups, attempting to document their rapidly-changing ways of life. Afterwards, you have free time at leisure, or you may enjoy the following optional activities (at your own expense):

A: Half-day Da Nang Tour (Ba Na Hills & Golden Bridge): Explore Ba Na Hills, sightseeing the panoramic views of Quang Nam – Da Nang city; Discover the famous Golden Bridge; see famous places such as the French Village Campanile, Nine Floor Goddess Shrine, Tombstone Temple, Linh Phong Monastery, and Linh Chua Linh Tu Temple, and discover Fantasy Park with its adventurous games. Includes lunch.

B: Evening Cultural Stage Show: Lune Performing Center Hoi An. The Centre, with its graceful bamboo dome architecture, is known for such performances as My Village, Teh Dar, and The Mist. The shows portray the daily lives of farmers, minority tribes, and urban and rural dwellers, and carry Lune Productions' vision of upholding Vietnam's culture and heritage, creating a whole new destination where heritage and art converge.

Depending on the day of arrival in Hoi An, you may instead see the stunning **Hoi An Memories Show**. This colourful and musically dazzling show, with a cast of nearly 500 actors and actresses, recalls the memories of Hoi An as a prosperous trading port over 400 years. It took nearly two years to produce the one-hour show. The theatre uses the waters of the Hoai River as its 25,000 m2 stage along with state-of-the-art lighting technology and sophisticated sound effects.

Day 7: Hoi An Hue (B)

Drive to Hue City stopping along the way to take pictures at **Lang Co Beach**. Hue City, its historical monuments were recognised as a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO since 1993. On arrival, you will **take a boat trip to Thien Mu Pagoda** - an historic pagoda on the banks of the Perfume River. Apart from the scenic riverside and hilltop location, the Thien Mu Pagoda and its environs are rich in history, standing witness to almost four hundred years of tumultuous nation-building in Vietnam. Travel to the centre of Hue city, visit the massive **Kinh Thanh Citadel**, comprised of the Imperial City, several museums, lakes, and lovely gardens, all laid out in a series of concentric circles.



Royal Dinner (at your own expense): Dress in beautiful traditional clothes (provided by the restaurant) and be served a sumptuous meal of dishes which used to be made for the royal family, and enjoy live music during dinner.

Day 8: Hue ✈️ Ho Chi Minh City (B)

Catch a morning flight to Ho Chi Minh City. On arrival, transfer to visit the imposing **Dong Khoi Street** (formerly Catinat street) before going to the **Notre Dame Cathedral**. This is the most famous landmark, as the twin bell towers can be seen from a great distance. In the same square is the famous **Saigon Post Office**, the largest functioning post office in Vietnam. Continue on to visit **Reunification Palace**, the palace of the presidents of South Vietnam before 1975, and the **War Remains Museum**, where you can learn about the Vietnam War. Later, visit **Ben Thanh Market** before returning to your hotel.

Day 9: Ho Chi Minh City 🚢 Mekong Delta (B, L)

Drive through the Mekong Delta, home to the richest agricultural lands in Vietnam. On arrival at My Tho City, take a boat trip on the Mekong River to fishing villages and **Dragon, Unicorn, Turtle and Phoenix Islands**. Crossing the **Mekong River**, you'll cruise along a small canal to see the daily life of locals in Ben Tre province, visiting **Quoi An** bee farm and handicraft workshop to enjoy some honey-tea and see how people make things from coconut wood. Take a horsecart along country roads to visit orchards, enjoy tropical fruit and listen to traditional music. Then, take small sampans back to your cruise to **'Coconut Village'** for a coconut candy workshop and tasting. Visit **Phoenix Island** for a rice-paper workshop, then return by boat to My Tho and then by road back to Ho Chi Minh City. Enjoy the rest of the day free at leisure.

Day 10: Ho Chi Minh City 🚢 Cu Chi Tunnels Ho Chi Minh City (B)

Visit the amazing **Cu Chi Tunnels**, a well-known historical vestige of the Vietnamese revolution. This cobweb-like tunnel complex is a network of underground dug-outs over 200 km long, consisting of many layers and turnings with meeting, living, and fighting quarters where we learn firsthand how the Viet Cong survived their extraordinary underground existence during the Vietnam War. Visit a lacquerware factory on the way back to the city, and then enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure in Ho Chi Minh City.

Lunch at Hoi An Sense Restaurant (at your own expense): Hoi An Sense restaurant is a beautiful harmony between refined cuisine and unique architecture. Set on an opulent rooftop with intimate terrace, relaxing fish pond and vivid lanterns, Hoi An Sense draws influences from vibrant flavours of Vietnam's central region.

Dinner Cruise (at your own expense): Cruise on Saigon River. Enjoy a delicious selection of local dishes as you take in the ambience of this charming city.

Day 11: Depart Ho Chi Minh City (B)

After breakfast, you will be transferred to the airport for your return flight home.

Day 12: Arrive Home



Images: 1. Saigon Post Office, 2. Floating fishing village, 3. Thien Mu Pagoda, 4. Dong Khoi Street, 5. Lune Performing Show, 6. Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, 7. Sapa, 8. Sapa Town, 9. Mekong Delta.

PRE-TOUR EXTENSION SAPA TREKKING 3 NIGHTS

from NZD\$550; single suppl. NZD\$330; includes + 3 nights 3 star hotel (local rating) accomm. + 3 breakfast (B) & 1 lunch (L) + All transfers in air-conditioned vehicles + English speaking tour guide Excludes prepaid tipping: NZD\$33

Day 1: Arrive in Hanoi

Fly to Hanoi via connecting cities. Upon arrival, you will be met and transferred to the hotel. Note: Some flights may depart the day before.

Day 2: Hanoi 🚢 Sapa - Hike to Cat Cat Village (B)

Transfer by bus to Sapa. Upon arrival, you'll check in to your hotel. In the afternoon, visit **Cat Cat village** (light trekking required), where you may wish to try the local apple wine or purchase a hand-woven blanket, and **Sapa town**.

Day 3: Full Day Hike: Sapa - Ban Khoang - Ta Giang Phin - Sapa (B, L)

Drive southwards and up **Den Thang Mountain**. Take an easy walk to explore **Hang Da**, a Black Hmong village, which displays the age-old lifestyle of the Hmong. We then follow the village path downhill through **the stunning valley of Sa Seng**. Along the way, we pass several hamlets which are organised in the typical Hmong style. The walk ends after paying a visit to Sa Pa, another hamlet of the Hmong which is located near the former Sapa traditional market.

Day 4: Sapa 🚢 Hanoi (B)

This morning is free at leisure. Relax at the hotel or go shopping in Sapa town before transfer to Hanoi.



2019 DEPARTURES

09 Mar	01 Jun	24 Aug	16 Nov
23 Mar	15 Jun	07 Sep	30 Nov*
06 Apr*	29 Jun**	21 Sep*	07 Dec**
20 Apr*	13 Jul*	05 Oct*	
04 May	27 July	19 Oct	
18 May	10 Aug	02 Nov	

*Shoulder Season Surcharge NZD\$250
**Peak Season Surcharge NZD\$450
Single supplement: NZD\$550

✈️ DEPARTURE OPTIONS

- Auckland
- Wellington: fr NZD\$350

⊕ INCLUSIONS

- + Vietnam Airlines, China Southern Airlines or similar economy international airfares & taxes
- + Internal flights (operated by a local carrier)
- + 9 nights 3-4 star (local rating) hotel accomm.
- + 1 night on board Halong Bay Cruise
- + 10 breakfasts (B), 4 lunches (L) & 1 dinner (D)
- + Internal flights (operated by a local carrier)
- + Coach transportation & transfers
- + Entrance fees to scenic attractions (unless otherwise indicated)
- + English speaking tour guide(s)

⊗ EXCLUSIONS

- Prepaid tipping: NZD\$120
- Vietnam visa
- Travel insurance (strongly recommended)

✈️ AIR UPGRADES (long haul int'l sectors)

- Economy class: Singapore Airlines fr NZD\$550

🕒 EXTEND YOUR STAY

- Break fee: fr NZD\$275
- Hotel w/breakfast: fr NZD\$175/twin-room/night

🚗 HOTEL ACCOMMODATION (or similar)

Hanoi	Hotel Le Carnot
Halong Cruise	Bellezza Bai Tho Cruise
Hoi An	Hoi An CoCo River Resort
Hue	Park View Hotel Hue
Ho Chi Minh City	Silverland Centre

🎈 OPTIONAL PROGRAMS (NZD)

Water Puppet & Hanoi Foodie Tour	\$75
Hoi An Cycling Tour	\$50
Hoi An, Fishing Village & Waterway Tour	\$120
Ba Na Hills & Golden Bridge	\$175
Evening Cultural Stage Show	\$115
Royal Dinner in Hue	\$105
Hoi An Sense Lunch	\$45
Dinner Cruise on Saigon River	\$65



All prices are per person twin-share in NZD unless otherwise stated and subject to revision without notice. Itineraries, airlines, hotels & ships are subject to availability and change. Nexus Holidays reserves the right to provide substitutes of similar quality and adjust the itinerary as we see fit to ensure smooth operations. Passengers must remain with the group at all times. Fees may apply for deviations from the set itinerary. Total length of trip includes time spent in flight and is subject to flight schedule. Final itineraries and flight info may not be available until 2 weeks before departure. Several shopping stops are included as cultural learning experiences with no obligation to purchase local specialty products. Booking conditions apply, refer to website for latest information. ver29NOV2018

 **POST-TOUR EXTENSION**
ANGKOR ADVENTURE 3 NIGHTS

from NZD\$770; single suppl. NZD\$550; includes
+ Economy class airfare
+ 3 nights 3 star hotel (local rating) accomm.
+ Daily breakfast, and lunch on day 3
+ Coach transportation & transfers
+ Entrance fees to scenic attractions
+ English speaking tour guide
Excludes prepaid tipping: NZD\$33, Cambodia visa
& Phare Circus in Siem Reap: NZD\$85

Day 11: Ho Chi Minh City ✈️ Siem Reap (B)

Fly to Siem Reap. Transfer to your hotel. Enjoy the rest of the day free at leisure. This is your opportunity to experience (optional at your own expense) **the world-renowned Phare Circus**, where young local dancers and acrobats enact Khmer folk tales and modern stories. Developed by the charity Phare Ponleu Selpak, this performance expresses the history, challenges, and resilience of the people of Cambodia.

Day 12: Angkor Ancient City Tour (B)

Visit the largest, best preserved, and most religiously significant of the Angkor temples. **Angkor Thom** covers an area of 10 square km. Enter by the monumental South Gate over a causeway lined on either side by statues of demons and gods, each carrying a giant naga (a mythical serpent symbolising the transition from the mundane to the sacred world). Continue to the **Terrace of the Elephants** and the **Terrace of the Leper King**, former spaces for public ceremonies that are both adorned with dramatic bas-relief carvings. Visit the ruined **Baphuon, Royal Enclosure and Phimeanakas**, before continuing to the mysterious **Bayon Temple**. In this temple, one of the most popular and compelling in Angkor, explore the galleries of beautifully preserved bas-reliefs and ascend narrow stairs to reach the central sanctuary, where giant stone Buddha faces smile enigmatically down from every angle.

Visit **Ta Prohm temple**, one of the most popular attractions of Angkor as much of the jungle has not been cleared and it looks very much as most of the Angkor monuments would have appeared when European explorers first stumbled across them. Continue your visit to **Angkor Wat**, the Crown Jewel of Khmer architecture, the national symbol and the highlight of any visit to Cambodia.

Day 13: Siem Reap 🚐 Kompong Kleang 🚐
Siem Reap (B, L)

Travel to **Kompong Kleang floating village**. This is a settlement of over 20,000 people where houses tower up to ten meters above the water. Greeted by waves from the friendly locals, here you can glimpse Cambodia's rural culture and traditional family lifestyle through a nice boat trip. Enjoy a picnic lunch with the locals in Kompong Kleang, then transfer back to Siem Reap and enjoy free time at leisure or for shopping.

Day 14: Depart Siem Reap (B)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home via connecting cities.

Day 15: Arrive Home



 **POST-TOUR EXTENSION**
NHA TRANG BEACH 3 NIGHTS

from NZD\$770; single suppl. NZD\$550; includes
+ Economy class airfare
+ 3 nights 5 star hotel (local rating) accomm.
+ Daily breakfast
+ All transfers in air-conditioned vehicles
Excludes prepaid tipping: NZD\$33

Day 11: Ho Chi Minh City ✈️ Nha Trang (B)

Fly to Nha Trang. Transfer to your hotel. The rest of the day is free at leisure.

Day 12: Nha Trang (B)

Today you're free to explore the city, taking up an optional activity, or just relaxing on the beach.

A. Three Mineral Spring Spas (at your own expense, NZD\$105): Visit *Thap Ba Mud Spa Centre, I-Resort Mud Spa, and 100 Eggs Mud Spa. Relax and enjoy mud bathing in private tubs or egg-shaped tubs, and enjoy swimming in healing mineral springs. These three mud-bathing centres are located 4-6 km away from Nha Trang's center. Afterwards, visit Po Nagar Temple (pictured bottom right), a fascinating remnant of the Cham kingdom that once occupied southern Vietnam, near Thap Ba Mud Center. Return to your hotel through the streets of Nha Trang to observe local life. The option to cycle to the resorts may be available upon request, depending on local conditions. OR*

B. Islands and Snorkelling Tour (at your own expense, NZD\$165): *Depart from your hotel to Cau Da Port. Tri Nguyen Aquarium on Mieu Island is the first place to visit, and the many sea species of Nha Trang/Khanh Hoa province make a small ocean world there. Mun Island is the best island for snorkelling – you can see lots of colourful coral and fish. You will also be able to see caves in which the sea swallows make their nests. Then relax, swim, & do water sports or other activities at Mot Island, Tranh Beach Island or on a small island calling 'Mini Beach'. Enjoy a fresh lunch. On the way back you will visit a fishing village.*

NOTE: The activities offered cannot be combined.

Day 13: Nha Trang (B)

Enjoy the whole day at leisure, or embarking on an optional activity.

A. Discover Vinpearl Land Amusement Park (at your own expense, NZD\$55): *Experience exciting activities & games such as the Compact Coaster, Swing Carousel, Evolution, Merry-go-round, 4D Movies, Bumper Cars, Crazy Bull riding, 3D & Video games, and much more.*

B. Meals Package (at your own expense, NZD\$90): *Taste world-renowned Vietnamese classics at Vinpearl Land. Your lunch and dinner are freshly prepared by incredibly talented, specialist chefs with 5-star experience. Savour an appetising array of local, regional and international cuisine with a delicious serving of classic and contemporary dishes from Vietnam, as well as Japan, Thailand, China and South Korea and from as far as Russia, the US, France and Italy.*

Day 14: Depart Nha Trang (B)

Transfer to the airport for your flight home via connecting cities.

Day 15: Arrive Home

 **POST-TOUR EXTENSION**
PHU QUOC ISLAND PARADISE 3 NIGHTS

from NZD\$770 single suppl. NZD\$550; includes
+ Economy class airfare
+ 3 nights 5 star hotel (local rating) accomm.
+ Daily breakfast
+ All transfers in air-conditioned vehicles
Excludes prepaid tipping: NZD\$33

Day 11: Ho Chi Minh City ✈️ Phu Quoc Island (B)

Fly to the heart-shaped island of Phu Quoc. Located in the Gulf of Thailand just off the coast of Cambodia & Vietnam. On arrival, you'll be transferred to your hotel. The rest of the day is free at leisure. In the evening you may wish to join our optional **Sunset Barbecue & Squid Fishing Cruise** (at your own expense, NZD\$90): *Watch a beautiful sunset over Phu Quoc as you sail out on a fishing boat. A barbecue dinner is provided – if you can hook a squid, you get to eat it!*

Day 12: Phu Quoc Island (B)

Today you're free to explore the island's rugged jungle, striking white sand, and sparkling cobalt waters. You may join our optional: **Full Day Tour, East and South Phu Quoc Island** (at your own expense, NZD\$135): *Head south to visit a pearl farm, An Thoi Port, a dried sea food market, and Phu Quoc Prison Museum. Built in 1967-68 by the U. S. Army to detain captured Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers, many of the high ranking leaders of Vietnam were detained in Phu Quoc Prison. At Sao Beach – one of the most beautiful beaches of the Island, we enjoy a simple lunch (included in package). Continue on visit Cau Temple, a traditional fish sauce factory, a pepper garden, Su Muon Pagoda & Ham Ninh fishing village.*

Day 13: Phu Quoc Island (B)

Enjoy the whole day at leisure, or taking up an optional activity.

A. Discover Phu Quoc Vinpearl Land Amusement Park & Safari Park (at your own expense, NZD\$100): *This world-class recreational paradise is located by one of the most beautiful sea gulfs in the world. Exciting activities & games such as the Compact Coaster, Swing Carousel, Evolution, Merry-go-round, 4D Movies, Bumpers Cars, Crazy Bull riding, 3D & Video games are available, and much more. Vinpearl Land will definitely not disappoint! Vietnam's largest wildlife conservation park is nestled in Bai Dai, on the Northwest coast of Phu Quoc Island. Vinpearl Safari Park conserves abundant indigenous and exotic flora and fauna. This is a unique opportunity to see wildlife that can't be seen anywhere else!*

B. Meals Package (at your own expense, NZD\$90): *Taste world-renowned Vietnamese classics at Vinpearl Land. Your lunch and dinner are freshly prepared by incredibly talented, specialist chefs with 5-star experience. Savour an appetising array of local, regional and international cuisine with a delicious serving of classic and contemporary dishes.*

NOTE: The activities offered can be combined.

Day 14: Depart Phu Quoc (B)

Enjoy the morning at leisure before transferring to the airport for your onward flight to Saigon then connecting with your flight home.

Day 15: Arrive Home

NOTE: All optional programs need to be prebooked & prepaid in Australia at least two months prior to departure.