

by land



Vietnam

THE PEARL OF INDOCHINA

“When I dream of Vietnam, the image of a young woman floats into my mind. She was working in an emerald green rice field in an isolated village on the Mekong Delta, wearing a conical hat, with lustrous dark hair falling over her shoulders. She looked up and dazzled me with the brightest smile I have ever seen. Her natural grace, her otherworldly serenity and her joyous spirit encapsulated the complex character of Vietnam, a land of both immense beauty and immeasurable sadness.” **NORMAN HOWE**, Horizon Partner and Creative Director, possesses an extensive collection of conical hats and has an abiding passion for Vietnamese *pho*.

Vietnam is a country of contradictions, from the languor and beauty of colonial Hanoi to the rampant energy and chaos of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). From the French-inspired rituals of superb coffee and fresh morning baguettes to the exquisite decadence of the Imperial Courts (where one Emperor insisted on having his morning tea made only from the fresh dew drops found on the lotus flowers in his garden), Vietnam offers an astonishing breadth of natural beauty and cultural richness. Join us as we journey from the island-studded waters of Ha Long Bay to Imperial Hue, perfectly preserved Hoi An and the lush tributaries of the Mekong Delta. With exclusive activities ranging from a culinary tour of Ho Chi Minh City’s morning market with a famous chef, to making paper lanterns with artisans near Hoi An, this trip is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.



Horizon & Co.

IMMERSE
YOUR
SENSES...

SEE

the wild profusion of limestone islands scattered across Ha Long Bay.

SMELL

the rich aroma of traditional Vietnamese drip coffee and sweetened milk.

TASTE

the supernal flavour of lemongrass chicken with a dash of kaffir lime.

TOUCH

the air while practicing *tai chi* at sunrise with the locals on Swan Lake.

HEAR

the moving incantation of Buddhist monks at prayer at Ni Vien Hang pagoda

The Trip



Day 1 – Hanoi

We start the day with a rickshaw ride through the old French Colonial quarter, where shuttered villas are juxtaposed with age-old temples, then we stroll through the merchant district where the streets are named after guilds of artisans from the 13th century. We enjoy dinner at the elegant Seasons of Hanoi, and then retire to the old-world charm of the Sofitel Metropole. *Hotel – Sofitel Metropole. Meals – LD.*

Day 2 – Hanoi

This morning we explore the city highlights: the Temple of Literature, (where we enjoy a private cultural talk with Hanoi's well-known historian, Dr. Huu Ngoc), the One Pillar Pagoda and the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. Afternoon options include a private tour of local art galleries, a market tour and cooking class with a leading chef, or a chance to make pottery with the artisans of Bat Trang. This evening we are treated to a private water puppet show (with a chance to chat with the puppeteers) and then dinner at the renowned restaurant Indochine. *Hotel – Sofitel Metropole. Meals – BLD.*

Day 3 – Ha Long & Hanoi

This morning we transfer to Ha Long Bay, where we board our charming private junk and cruise through the spectacular limestone islands. After a delicious lunch of seafood fresh from the fishing boats, options include swimming in the South China Sea, trying your hand at sea kayaking, or simply curling up with a book. We return to Hanoi late in the day. *Hotel – Sofitel Metropole. Meals – BLD.*

Day 4 – Hue

We fly south to Hue where we are invited to the home of a well-known academic for lunch, followed by a quiet afternoon cruise along the banks of the Perfume River and visits to the elaborate tombs of past emperors. Other options include a guided visit to the Forbidden Purple City, a casual stroll through Dong Ba Market, or simply relaxing by the pool at the comfortable Morin Hotel. *Hotel – Morin Hotel. Meals – BLD.*

Day 5 – Hoi An

After a morning exploring the tombs of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh or joining local students at the Hue Fine Art School for a painting class, we transfer over the scenic Hai Van Pass to Danang. Here we visit the renowned Cham Museum with Prof Le Ba Dat, a Cham specialist and professor at Danang General University. After stopping for a dip at China Beach, we finish the day in charming Hoi An, where we settle in for two nights at the Hoi An Life Resort. *Hotel – Hoi An Life Resort. Meals – BLD.*

LOCAL
DIVERSIONS...

FUN FACT

The conical leaf hat, or *non la*, is hand-woven with palm leaves and bamboo, then coated with attar to keep it clean, smooth and waterproof – helping to protect against sun and rain in tropical Vietnam.

CULINARY MOMENTS

Vietnamese cuisine offers up a delectable array of exotic flora, fauna and fruit for consumption. The starfruit, for example, is green when young, turning yellow to almost orange and slightly translucent when ripe. When sliced cross-wise, the pieces look like five distinct-angled stars.

NATURAL WONDERS

Ha Long Bay boasts more than 3,000 towering limestone peaks and islands that rise spectacularly from the placid waters of the South China Sea. Long populated by some of the most feared pirates in the South Asian seas, it is now a playground for sailors, swimmers, sea kayakers, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

COLLECTABLES

Hoi An is justly renowned as one of the most perfectly preserved villages in Vietnam, and after a leisurely walking tour in the company of local scholar Mr. Tran Van Nham (a member of the Hoi An Restoration Committee), stop in at one of the local silk shops and treat yourself to a custom-made suit (or two).



The Trip

Day 6 – Hoi An

Today we explore this exquisite old fishing village with a member of the Hoi An Restoration Committee, strolling past ancient buildings and charming shops. After a light lunch, afternoon options include a leisurely bike ride to Cam Chau village to learn lantern making, a boat ride on the Thu Bon River, or a visit to a local tailor for some bespoke silk outfits. Dinner tonight is on your own. *Hotel – Hoi An Life Resort. Meals – BL.*

Day 7 – Mekong Delta

After an early flight to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), we board a private sampan for a cruise down the Mekong River to the fish market, Unicorn Island, and a fresh fruit garden for a succulent tasting of fruit and teas with bee honey. After a relaxed lunch in the verdant garden of the Ngoc Gia Trang Restaurant, we visit the stork sanctuary in Bang Lang, and then continue on to Can Tho, where we will stay in the colonial charm of the luxurious Victoria Can Tho. *Hotel – Victoria Can Tho Hotel. Meals – BLD.*

Day 8 – Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

This morning's options include a short bike ride along the small canals or a cruise to the floating market of Cai Rang and a visit to a Bun Tau noodle factory. After lunch we return to Saigon, where we enjoy a stroll through the old China Town before checking in at the aptly named Majestic Hotel, which overlooks the bustling waters of the Saigon River. *Hotel – Majestic Hotel. Meals – BLD.*

Day 9 – Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

Today's city tour includes everything from Notre Dame Cathedral to Ni Vien Van Hanh Pagoda, where we enjoy a healthy vegetarian lunch with the resident monks. Afternoon options include learning how to weave with the famous handicapped artist Ms. Dieu Trinh, visiting an orphanage on the outskirts of town to participate in local humanitarian work, or taking some time to relax and peruse the local shops. *Hotel – Majestic Hotel. Meals – BLD.*

Day 10 – Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) & Cu Chi

The day starts with a dawn visit to the Ben Thanh central market with one of Vietnam's most famous chefs, Ms Cam Van, a Vietnamese TV celebrity for the past 16 years. After shopping for fresh ingredients, we visit her beautiful home, where we are treated to a private cooking lesson in her kitchen. This afternoon we enter the incredible Cu Chi tunnels in the company of Viet Cong veterans, who lived there during the war, to explore the vast underground complex and learn about life in the tunnels. The day concludes with a farewell feast at the superb Mandarin restaurant. *Hotel – Majestic Hotel. Meals – BLD.*

WHERE WE SLEEP...

The Metropole, Hanoi

Combining old-world charm with modern convenience, it's easy to imagine the days when Graham Greene propped up the bar, and intrigue radiated from every room.

Morin Hotel, Hue

The Morin, located on the banks of the Perfume River, possesses unique colonial architecture, exquisite service and a lovely pool

Hoi An Life Resort, Hoi An

This new boutique resort is located in the French colonial quarter of Hoi An. The harmony of service, surroundings, culture, cuisine and body and mind treatments will bring all your senses to life.

The Victoria Hotel, Can Tho

The Victoria is a splendid colonial-style hotel set in magnificent gardens and situated on the banks of the Hau River.

Majestic Hotel, Saigon

The original French colonial architecture, tastefully decorated rooms and convenient location in the heart of the city make this the perfect oasis in Saigon.

The Trip



Day 11 – Home

After breakfast, we say our goodbyes and *tam biet* to Vietnam, as some return home while others stay on for a few days in Cambodia. *Meals – B.*

The Post Trip – Cambodia

Day 11 – Siem Reap

After breakfast, we fly to Siem Reap and transfer to our boutique luxury hotel, La Residence. After a chance to freshen up, we spend the afternoon exploring the extraordinary complex of ruins that make up the Royal City of Angkor. *Hotel – La Residence de Angkor. Meals – BLD.*

Day 12 – Banteay Srei & Angkor Wat

This morning we visit Banteay Srei, the birthplace of Khmer classical architecture style and the Enfants D'asie Aspeca Orphanage Center, where orphans from across the country are trained in Khmer music and dance to help preserve the traditional art forms. In the afternoon, we explore Angkor Wat, one of the great archaeological and architectural wonders of the world. *Hotel – La Residence de Angkor. Meals – BLD.*

Day 13 – Tonle Sap Lake & Ta Prohm

After breakfast, we transfer to Tonle Sap Lake, where we board a private vessel to visit communities of floating houses (including floating schools and police stations!). In the afternoon we visit Ta Prohm, an ancient and exotic temple complex slowly being reclaimed by the jungle, and then we return to our hotel to relax and enjoy a swim before our final night dinner. *Hotel – La Residence de Angkor. Meals – BLD.*

Day 14 – Siem Reap

After breakfast we say our goodbyes and transfer to the airport for connecting flights. *Meals – B.*

The Details

Level of Activity: *Moderate*: city strolling, sea kayaking, rickshaw riding, junk sailing, light biking and other amusing diversions. Suitable for most ages and abilities, with some opportunities for extended walks or other optional activities.

Start: Hanoi, Vietnam

Pick-up Hotel: Hotel Metropole, Hanoi at 9:00am on Day 1

Finish: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam at 9:00am on Day 11

Post-Trip: Starts in Saigon and finishes in Siem Reap, Cambodia

What's Included:

- all accommodations on a shared twin/double room basis
- most meals (as indicated)
- all entrance fees and tours
- all transfers and baggage handling
- all the local experts and specialists
- the leadership of Horizon guides
- all special events and on-trip surprises
- all gratuities to porters, drivers, restaurants and other service staff
- all pre-departure materials, including documents wallets and destination details

Pre-Trip Package:

For Canadian travellers seeking assistance with travel to and from Exploratory trips, we have designed pre-trip flight packages starting from Toronto. The pre-trip includes a limousine transfer to and from home, the return flights, airport transfers in the start and finish cities and any relevant meals. Unlike the Classic pre-trips, these pre-trips do not include a guide – our Horizon Guide will meet you at the pick-up hotel in the start city.

Dates & Prices

DURATION: 10 nights / 11 days

DATES	Mar 7-17 • Oct 3-13 • Oct 24-Nov 3
PRICES	\$5,950 CDN • \$4,470 US
SGL SUPPL	\$865 CDN • \$650 US
PRE-TRIP	Includes limousine pick-up, return flights and airport transfers. Call us for details.
POST-TRIP	\$1,950 CDN • \$1,470 US

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THE FINE PRINT...

The terms & conditions governing your booking are located in our brochures or on our website, as well as more information on insurance, cancellations and waivers and other policies.

MAKE IT YOURS...

Follow the lead of Mr. Bratt and surprise the love of your life with a 25th wedding anniversary journey for two, custom-designed to indulge her appetite for culinary adventures. Stroll morning markets with renowned local chefs, sample seafood straight from the fishing boats of Ha Long Bay, and finish with a private cooking class in the home of Mrs. Cam Van, one of the most famous chefs in Vietnam.