

VIETNAM HIGHLIGHTS SOUTH TO NORTH 18 DAYS



Code: VN18S2N

Routes: HCM City – Cu Chi – Mekong – Nha Trang – Hoian – Hue – Halong – Sapa – Hanoi

Duration: 18 Days / 17 Nights

Features: A compact program to see the highlights of Vietnam in 18 days from the South to the North. It is a short tour for the amount of time we spend but you can customise it more relaxing or challenging if you wish.

Day 1: Good morning HCM City Vietnam



Chao Ban! Welcome to HCM City, we meet you at the airport and take you to your hotel for check-in. Today is free at your leisure to rest or explore, discovering your own first impressions of Vietnam (depending on what time you arrive). Overnight in HCM City.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, hotel

Day 2: Tay Ninh and Cu Chi tunnels



Departing HCM City at 8:00 AM from your hotel for a morning excursion to Tay Ninh and the Great Cao Dai Temple (a place to worship a mixture of Buddhism, Confucius, Taoism, Hinduism and Christianity). Take part in the noon mass at the temple (1 hour). Lunch in Tay Ninh.

In the afternoon we visit the Cu Chi outdoor museum to learn about the infamous tunnel systems of the Viet Cong.

Take this opportunity to get a unique understanding of the guerillas underground fighting strategies during the war. Crawl through 50 to 100 meters of the 200 km tunnel system if you dare. On the way back to HCM City visit a local rice paper workshops and take in views of the Vietnam countryside. We'll drop you off at your hotel around 5:30 PM. Overnight at your hotel.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, breakfast, hotel.

Day 3: HCM City – Can Tho, visit the fertile Mekong Delta



Depart HCM City at 8:00 AM from your hotel. Head south to Cai Be. Upon arrival at around 10:30 AM, board a boat for a journey through the Mekong's floating markets. See how river life goes on here, watch the trading between merchant ships and local farmers. Alive and exciting! Cruise through the secluded canals and cross the Mighty Mekong to an island where we stop to enjoy fresh seasonal fruit before boating to Vinh Long. Back on the bus

for our trip to Can Tho to overnight.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, breakfast, lunch, hotel.

Day 4: Can Tho – HCM City



At 6:30 AM, we start for a boat trip to Cai Rang floating market, then we have some distance to cover. First a cruise, then a walk on a quiet country road taking in the magnificent scenery and getting a little bit closer to the locals as they go about their daily routine. In the afternoon, we head back to HCM City. We drop you at the same hotel by 6:00 PM.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fee, local boat, breakfast, hotel

Day 5: HCM City, half-day city tour – fly to Nha Trang



Breakfast at the hotel then 8:00 AM we leave hotel for our half of day tour to visit the bustling HCM City city. Visit War Remnants Museum, the Notre Dame Cathedral, the historic Central Post Office and Ben Thanh market if time permits. Back to hotel for check out at noon then drive to the airport for noon - flight to Nha Trang. Upon arrival, airport pick up then transfer to your hotel. Free to chill out on the beautiful white sand beach.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, domestic flight ticket, breakfast, hotel.

Day 6: Nha Trang, island boat trip



Morning pick up at around 8:00 AM from hotel and transfer to the boat station (about 15'). Hop on the private boat and begin a day on the water. The first stop is Tri Nguyen Aquarium. Then we cruise to Mot Island. This is one of the best places for snorkeling in Nha Trang. Hold your breath for as long as you can and dive deep into this colorful world of fish and coral. Next stop, Coral Island for sun bathing and relaxing on the off shore beach.

Lunch is served with a selection of fresh seafood.

After lunch, cruise to Tranh Island for more swimming and relaxing then boat back to Nha Trang city for around 5:00 PM. Free time in the evening and overnight at your hotel.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, breakfast, lunch, local boat, hotel.

Day 7: Nha Trang – fly to Da Nang then Hoian



Breakfast at the hotel and free at your own leisure to relax until we pick you up for flight to Da Nang. Airport pick up upon arrival then transfer to Hoian (about 30'). Check in hotel and spend the night here.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, domestic flight ticket, breakfast, hotel.

Day 8: Countryside tour & visit ancient town of Hoian



At 8.00 AM, we meet at your hotel for a very short transfer to the boat docks, we boat to a fishing village where you see & experience the life of a fisherman here, activities from preparing the fishing tools to go fishing. Followed by a short basket boat row along the village of water coconut before our lunch.

We then cycle along the country road through the paddy fields of rice, coconut or corn heading to the

main town of Hoian.

Our afternoon is continued with sightseeing to the famous cultural sites around Hoian, we end our trip at around 5:00 PM at your hotel.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, local bike, local boat & basket, breakfast, lunch, water & snack, hotel.

Day 9: Hoian – Hue, city tour & handicraft villages



After breakfast at your hotel around 8:30 AM we leave Hoian to Hue city (about 4 hour drive). There is fabulous sightseeing en route and we may make stops at: Lang Co Beach, Hai Van Pass, Cham Museum, and the Marble Mountains depending on time. Lunch at your own account but our guide suggests the proper restaurant.

We arrive in Hue in the afternoon. Check in hotel if it is subject to available then we begin our half day tour in Hue by exploring the Royal Tombs. Choosing only to visit the best ones, as we have lots to do. Visit the Minh Mang Royal Tomb then Khai Dinh Tomb – the 12th King to experience of modern Western architecture.

Later, we drive to see some handicraft villages where making conical hat, incense and bronze-casting and transfer back to your hotel in Hue at around 5:30 PM.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, breakfast, hotel.

Day 10: Hue, boat trip, Vietnam cyclo - afternoon train to Hanoi



Breakfast at your hotel then 8:30 AM, we start for a relaxing 1 hour Vietnam cyclo ride around the Imperial city for more enjoyment then going to Dong Ba market to experience the local life of the local here. Next, we departure to the boat dock for our morning cruise on the Perfume River to Thien Mu pagoda and learn more about Buddhism in Vietnam. Lunch is served at a local restaurant in the centre of Hue city before getting to visit the

former Imperial Citadel.

At 3:30 PM, be already for our afternoon train to Hanoi. Boarding at around 4:47 PM. You are in a shared AC soft sleeper cabin (basic condition).



Inclusion: Transfer, guide, breakfast, lunch, entrance fees, Vietnam cyclo, local boat, train ticket.

Day 11: Hanoi – Free



Early arrival, our guide with your name welcome sign picks you up at the gate of station at around 6:30 AM then transfer to your hotel for early check in. Free time then to relax and explore Hanoi by your own taste. Stay the night here.

Inclusion: Transfer, station pick up – guide, breakfast, hotel.

Day 12: Hanoi village with bike - night train to Lao Cai



We pick you up at 8:30 AM for a short transfer outside of Hanoi to learn about Hanoi villages' life, its traditions, customs.

We walk and cycle along the villages, visiting local markets, some old houses, their worshipping temples, communal houses... then we have a small food demonstration before our lunch at one of the local family here.

In the afternoon, we set out from Dong Ngac, cycling on mostly rural lanes through surrounding villages to Lien Mac, a beautiful area of immaculately tended vegetables and flowers. Here you get a close-up look at the colorful fields and have the chance to chat with some of the local people out caring for their crops. After taking another route from Lien Mac back to Dong Ngac, you have a short break for a drink at your host family's home, bid your farewells, and catch the van back to your hotel in Hanoi at around 5:00 PM.

Free to have dinner until 8:30 PM, our guide picks you up for night train to Lao Cai. Boarding is at around 9:40 PM. You are in a shared AC soft sleeper cabin.



(Our tour guide shows you prearranged hotel near the train station which you have a shower and breakfast before going on Halong on Day 16).

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fees, breakfast, lunch, local bike, community development fund, train ticket.

Day 13: Lao Cai - Sapa, trek to Ta Phin



The train arrives at about 6:30 AM. Look for the “Footprint Travel” sign when you exit the train station, as our guide is there to pick you up (about 1.5 hours to Sapa).

When you arrive in Sapa we make sure that you have a time for a short rest, hot shower and some breakfast before your inspiring trek. A short transfer and we're off. Chances to meet and talk with locals working in the fields are plentiful. Picnic lunch en route then continue trekking to Ta Phin village – home of the Red Dao people. Your Dao host family warmly welcomes you to their traditional home where we share in an ethnic style dinner and stay the night.

Trekking Distance: 14 km

Trail Difficulty: 3/5

Inclusion: Transfers, guide, train ticket, morning shower, entrance fee, all meals, permit, homestay

Day 14: More in Ta Phin and back to Sapa



At the first gleam of daylight, you see and hear the sounds of morning village life. You can join your host family in some of their morning activities like feeding the animals, cleaning the houses, gardening or preparing breakfast. After breakfast, we take a short wander around the village or spend more time enjoying the view and company at the homestay. Then, you are supported by our car / van back to Sapa (30 minutes).

Back in Sapa, check in to your hotel, shower, rest and lunch on your own. At 2:30 PM, we take an easy walk to Cat Cat village, home of Black H'mong. Take part in a traditional musical performance. Back in Sapa for dinner and the evening on your own. Overnight here.

Trekking Distance: about 5 km

Trail Difficulty: 2/5

Note: The music show in Cat Cat village is closed on Tuesday afternoon, an alternative is arranged.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fee, breakfast, music show ticket, hotel.

Day 15: Sapa – night train to Hanoi



Wake up in Sapa town, breakfast at the hotel then enjoy the morning activities in the town markets. Today your guide is available to you for the whole day, although you do have the option to enjoy the day on your own. Suggestions for today: visit the orchid gardens at Dragon Mountain or complete another day trek to a hill tribe village.

At 5:30 PM, transfer to the Lao Cai train station.

Departure is at 8:15 PM on an AC soft sleeper class cabin to Hanoi.

Trekking Distance: around 6 km (optional trek)

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, train ticket, breakfast, entrance fee.

Day 16: Hanoi – Halong, welcome on boat



Safely back in Hanoi at 5:00 AM please find your way on foot back to a prearranged hotel near the train station. Shower, short rest and basic breakfast.

Departure for Ha Long Bay is around 8:00 AM in a shared van (about 4 hours) from your hotel. Arrive at the port around noon. Welcomed on



board, you are taken to your cabin before the trip briefing. You enjoy a fresh and local seafood lunch while cruising to explore the magic Bai Tu Long Bay. Enjoy our padding around Cap La fishing village by kayak then we keep cruising to Cong Do. Later you return back to the boat just in time to watch the beautiful sunset from the top deck before enjoying the bay's freshest seafood dinner.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide on boat, morning shower, entrance fee, kayak, boat / junk, all meals, permits.

Day 17: Explore Bai Tu Long bay, back to Hanoi



Early risers can enjoy the sunrise and the quiet breath-taking beauty of Bay's landscape with towering limestone. You have breakfast at around 8:00 AM before our short rowboat by the locals of the bay.

Lunch on the boat as we slowly cruise back to boat pier. Hit the road, stopping for a water puppet show at a traditional Vietnamese village

before arriving back to Hanoi around 5:30 PM. Stay overnight at your hotel.

Inclusion: Transfer, guide, entrance fee, boat/junk, breakfast, lunch, hotel.

Day 18: Departure Hanoi. Goodbye Vietnam

Breakfast at hotel. Depending on your flight you may have some time for shopping. Then we transfer you to the airport for your flight home.

Inclusion: Transfer, breakfast.

Exclusion: Visa, Insurance, drinks, personal expenses, others not mentioned in details, tips are welcome!

LEGAL ASPECTS

Booking Terms & Conditions: Tour itinerary and tour prices are subject to change without prior notice. Please [click here](#) for more information.



ORGANISATION

Transportation schedule: Please be aware that flight times, trains, hotels and other services are subject to availability. When flights/trains are cancelled or delayed, Footprint will endeavour to secure alternative arrangements of similar value. Hotel, flight and train details will be updated once the booking is confirmed (your confirmation e-mail).

Tour guide: English speaking guides (on sites)

Closed sites: Some sites might be closed during the time you visit Vietnam (e.g. the HCM mausoleum in Hanoi is closed on Mondays and Fridays). Please consult with your travel agent if you want to have further information concerning this issue.

ACCOMMODATION

Hotel: We use 3 star standard hotel (s) except beach hotel/resort 4 star standard in Hoi An, twin shared room (s). Upgrade is available on request. Check – in: 14:00; out: 12:00 noon. Early check in if it is subject to availability.

Homestay condition: Very basic & simple with local style , please visit our website for FAQs on www.Footprint.vn

TRANSPORT

Ha Long Bay: Shared minivan and deluxe junk. Twin shared cabin aboard the boat. Upgrade is available at your request.

Car/Van Quality: Using new AC car or van depending on your group size.

Train: Sleeper Train to Sapa/Hue: Please [click here](#) for more information.

FOOD

Meals: Vietnam foods and seafoods. If you have any allergies, special requests or if you are on a special diet please let us know. We will arrange it for you in advance.



SUSTAINABILITY

Please Travel Responsibly: The small things you do will make a [big difference!](#)

PREPARATION OF THE CUSTOMER

What to Bring: Passport, change of clothes, sunglasses and hat, toiletries, sunblock, insect repellent, flashlights, good sport shoes, personal first aid kit and medicines, small VND notes for buying drinks. If you feel the need then sleeping bags and a cable lock for your bags is recommended.

TREKKING AND CYCLING INFORMATION

Trekking & Cycling times are just estimates and may change depending on your personal fitness and weather.

Experience: The trek demands some experience in co-ordination, fitness and stamina. The great effort will be rewarded with fantastic views. Clients should have previous trekking experience. Nevertheless, our guide will be flexible to suggest you the most proper trekking route adapted to your physical fitness.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled in good faith and was accurate at the time of writing.