



Vietnam Impressions

Private Tour | 10 Days | Comfortable

Hanoi - Halong Bay – Hoi An – Saigon – Mekong Delta

Delve into Vietnam's energetic cities, fascinating heritage and compelling landscapes on the perfect snapshot of this captivating country.

- Discover vibrant Hanoi
- Relax on an overnight cruise in Halong Bay
- Wander the traditional town of Hoi An
- Experience the bustling city of Saigon
- Meander along the Mekong Delta



Vietnam Impressions tour inclusions:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless a land only option is selected)
- All accommodation
- All meals
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking Local Guides
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides
- Safe and secure with ABTA, ATOL and IATA

The only thing you may have to pay for are personal expenditure e.g. drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

Private Tours:

These tours are designed for those who wish to see the iconic sites and magnificent treasures of South East Asia on a private tour. You will be accompanied by our dedicated local guides, whose unparalleled knowledge will turn your holiday into an unforgettable experience.

Comfortable Tours:

'Vietnam impressions' is a **comfortable** tour. Although this is the easiest grading of tour Wendy Wu Tours offers it still requires a reasonable level of fitness.

- There will be sightseeing on foot for both short and extended periods of time
- Throughout the tour you will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats without assistance

Of course, our local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Itinerary – Vietnam Impressions

Days 1-2: Hanoi

Fly to Hanoi where you will be met at the airport in the arrival hall by your Local Guide. Transfer 45 minutes to your hotel and check into your room or store any luggage if your room is not ready yet. There is no sightseeing today.



Destination Information

Hanoi - With a population of approximately four million, Hanoi is a charming and richly historic city of lakes, shaded boulevards and leafy open parks. The centre is an architectural museum piece housing groups of ochre coloured buildings holding the air of provincial French towns of the 1930s, a “Paris of the Orient” as people have called it.

Day 3: Hanoi – Halong Bay

Drive 4 hours today from Hanoi to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far-most corners of the bay on a traditional Vietnamese boat. There is usually a crowd of boats at the docks; however, the cruise itself will be scenic and relaxing. Boarding your boat could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff.



The boats usually hold about 40 passengers; have an enclosed dining area and an open area on the upper deck. Enjoy lunch onboard as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities (which are subject to change due to cruise selection and weather conditions). Sightseeing includes visiting underground caves on the islands, which require climbing up and down steps inside and outside of the caves. End the day on deck with a drink in hand to watch the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night.

You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Halong Bay. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up your return.

Please note: Weather conditions such as mist, fog, wind, rain and storms may delay the departure time of your cruise, or in some cases your cruise may be cancelled. Notifications of any delays or cancellations may not be known until your group's arrival in Halong Bay. If your cruise is cancelled after your arrival in Halong Bay, you will have lunch in Halong City and return to Hanoi. If notification of the cruise cancellation is given prior to your departure for Halong Bay an alternative day trip will be arranged to Hoa Lu and Tam Coc or 'Halong Bay on Land',

an area located approximately 2 hours from Hanoi. Our guides will make every effort to inform the group at the earliest possible moment should there be any itinerary changes

Destination Information

Halong Bay - Compared to the landscape of the limestone islets of Guilin in China and Krabi in southern Thailand, Halong Bay shares a common border with China in the north and harbours some of the most stunning scenery in Vietnam. Unique rock sculptures jut out dramatically from the clear emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin and numerous grottoes have created an enchanting, timeless world, looking out onto the horizon with the sails of the junks and sampans completing the picture.

Day 4: Halong Bay - Hanoi

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. After an early lunch (or brunch meal) disembark your cruise and return to Hanoi. Tonight enjoy a traditional Water Puppet show.



Destination Information

Water Puppets - Vietnamese Water Puppets were invented thousands of years ago by farmers in the Red River Delta region near Hanoi, as a means to entertain themselves when the rains flooded their paddy fields. Today puppeteers stand in waist deep water and control the puppets via pole and strings. Most plays focus on folklores and tales of rural life.

Day 5: Hanoi – Hoi An

Discover the sights of Hanoi today. First stop will be the Ho Chi Minh Quarter and visit Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, followed by the Humble House on Stilts and the One Pillar Pagoda. Next drive to the serene Temple of Literature, Hanoi's first university. Later take a walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter. This evening fly 1 hour and 15 minutes to Danang and transfer to the charming town of Hoi An.

Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum is closed for entry on Mondays and Fridays every week and from September to December each year. During these times we are unable to enter the Mausoleum; however, we can view it from the outside.



Destination Information

Ho Chi Minh Quarter - Dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam and where Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum stands in Ba Dinh Square. Ho Chi Minh first declared independence from French rule in 1945.

One Pillar Pagoda - Rebuilt in 1955 after damage during the French evacuation, the pagoda is made of wood and sits on a single pillar. Designed to reflect the shape of a lotus flower emerging from the water, it has become a popular spot for locals to enjoy the tranquil surroundings.

Humble House on Stilts - In the grounds of the Presidential Palace sits the 2 storey wooden home of Ho Chi Minh who ruled Vietnam from here until his death in 1969.

Temple of Literature - Hanoi's first university dating back to 1070 and a historical centre of learning, now dedicated to Confucian worship.

Hanoi Old Quarter - A maze of streets weaving through Hanoi and dating back to the 13th century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

Hoi An - 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, religion and architecture.

Day 6: Hoi An

This morning enjoy a walking tour of the narrow and ancient streets of this charming town. We will visit one of Hoi An's oldest homes, built over 200 years ago and still occupied by the descendants of the merchant family that originally built it. We will also visit the traditional Hoi An Market, the Quan Cong Chinese Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. This afternoon you will be given a cooking demonstration of how to make some of the regions specialties, have a go at cooking yourself before enjoying the dishes you have prepared for dinner.



Destination Information

Japanese Covered Bridge - First constructed in the 1590s to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters of the town. This iconic pink hued bridge has been restored to its former splendour.

Day 7: Hoi An - Saigon

This morning fly to Saigon to explore the city. This afternoon explore modern day Saigon with its heady mix of local culture and colonial influences. Visit Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office, the Reunification Palace and the chilling War Remnants Museum. Finish the day at the atmospheric Ben Thanh market.



Destination Information

Notre Dame Cathedral - Influenced by French design and built between 1863 and 1880, the red brick exterior and 60-meter bell towers overlook downtown Saigon.

Central Post Office - Located next to the Notre-Dame Cathedral. The Central Post Office building was constructed in the late 19th century. It counts Gothic, Renaissance and French influences and was designed by Auguste Henri Vildieu and Alfred Foulhoux, but is often erroneously credited as being the work of Gustave Eiffel.

Reunification Palace - Built on the site of the former Norodom Palace, is a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It was designed by architect Ngô Viết Thụ and was the home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on 30th April 1975, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its gates.

War Remnants Museum - Comprised of numerous buildings displaying military equipment, photographs and artefacts relating to the Vietnam War from 1961-1975. This museum illustrates a harrowing period in this nation's history.

Day 8: Mekong Delta

Drive 2 and a half hours down to the picturesque province of Ben Tre situated along the mighty Mekong. This area is known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam', because its rich and fertile lands produce huge amounts of rice, coconuts, vegetables and tropical fruit. Spend the day cruising and exploring, travelling by motorised, wooden boats between the islands and changing to smaller, paddleboats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Return to Saigon this afternoon.



Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses around its fertile banks. The Mekong Delta is the 13th longest, and the 10th largest, by volume alone and people live, trade, travel and even go to school on the riverbanks. The rice which is cultivated in the many farming lands is said to be enough to supply the entire country with a little extra.

Day 9: Depart Saigon

This morning confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels. The cramped tunnels were central to a few of the war's strategic operations, including the famous 1968 Tet Offensive, and they did not escape damage. American B52 bombers dropped hundreds of missiles leaving huge tell-tale craters behind. The Cu Chi experience can be emotional for some visitors, but it offers a fascinating window into the hardship and traumas of war.

Return to Saigon, a late check out will be arranged for your group today, so you will have a chance to freshen up. Later transfer 1 hour to the airport to fly home.

Destination Information

Cu Chi - the tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968. The tunnels were used by Viet Cong soldiers as hiding spots during combat, as well as serving as communication and supply routes, hospitals, food and weapon caches and living quarters for numerous North Vietnamese fighters. The tunnel systems were of great importance to the Viet Cong in their resistance to American forces, and helped to counter the growing American military effort.

Day 10: Arrive in the UK

Arrive back to the UK after your overnight flight.

Vietnam Impressions Travel Information

Visas

Vietnam: For UK citizens entry visas for Vietnam are required for stays longer than 15 days or for multiple entries into Vietnam within a 30 day period; therefore UK citizens will not need a visa to enter Vietnam for a single entry stay of up to 15 days. Currently this visa exemption rule applies until 30th June 2017. Should the visa requirements for UK citizens travelling to Vietnam change after 30th June 2017 you will be contacted by Wendy Wu Tours regarding your visa requirements. To allow for unforeseen circumstances if your tour includes a stay of 15 days or more in Vietnam the standard visa processing service is included in your tour cost.

If you do require a visa Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining one. We will supply you with all paperwork and submit the visa application on your behalf. Visas for Vietnam are issued with specific start and expiry dates which are based on the dates stated on the visa application form. Travel must be completed within those dates. Please be advised that your passport must have at least 6-months validity left on it when you arrive back into UK. Visa application forms and all relevant documentation are due in our office 60 days prior to departure; if received after this, urgent visa processing fees will apply. Please note we do not accept passports and visa applications within 30 days prior to departure. Passports will be returned with your Final Documentation 2-3 weeks prior to your group tour's scheduled departure.

Insurance

It is a condition of booking with us that you take out suitable travel insurance. You must provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number when you book with us or as soon as possible thereafter. These details will be available to your national escort should they be required. Wendy Wu Tours will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Eating in South East Asia

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in most local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. In Thailand and some other countries

in Southeast Asia, fork and spoon are used for most dishes and chopsticks are typically provided to eat noodles. Usually chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Meals are included from dinner on the day of arrival to lunch on the day of departure on this tour.

Please refer to your travel guide for more information on Southeast Asian cuisine, including information for travellers with restricted diets.

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and South East Asia. All our private tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Transport

Cars: Private cars with air conditioning are used on our private tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. Roads in South East Asia have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

Development in South East Asia

Although South East Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in the UK. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in the UK; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your Local Guides.

Vietnam public holidays

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese Public Holidays please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open, but may be crowded. In Vietnam Tet Holiday is between 27th – 31st January 2017 and 17th – 20th January 2018, International Labour Day is on 1st May every year, Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

Climate

Please refer to our website or brochure for detailed temperature charts.

After your booking

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice followed by deposit documentation, which includes a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2 weeks prior to departure.

Itinerary changes

It is our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours or as local conditions dictate; in these circumstances we will make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

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