

Glimpse of Vietnam

Visiting: Vietnam
Code: PAGV

Tour price from **GBP 1045.00** for **12 days** - Land Only
Flights from GBP 574 per person

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Glimpse of Vietnam Trip Notes

At Imaginative Traveller we always aim to provide accurate information for our travellers. Unfortunately information such as the price of optional activities is occasionally subject to change, and this means that we are constantly revising our trip notes. In order to ensure that you have the most up to date information for your trip we suggest that you check the trip notes for your tour around one month before departure.

Trip code: PAGV

Trip valid from: 01/01/2008

Trip valid until: 30/06/2013

Trip length: 12 days

Trip starts in: Hanoi

Trip ends in: Saigon, Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Maximum group size: 15



Highlights

Vietnam's Northern Capital Hanoi

The Tailors And Market Traders Of UNESCO World Heritage-listed Hoi An

The Bustling Streets And Cyclos Of Saigon

Nha Trang Cruise - The Islands Of The South China Sea

An ideal introduction to an enchanting country of beauty and breadth

Explore the historic capitals of Vietnam, from the colonial charm of Hanoi to its bustling southern counterpart, Saigon. Discover Hue, the former seat of power of the Nguyen Dynasty, and Hoi An, which still exudes the aura of bygone days. Also relax in the tropical beach spots of Nha Trang and Mui Ne, on the South China Sea.

You can also end your Vietnam experience two days later and visit the bustling and colourful Mekong Delta. See 'Itinerary Variation' in the Detailed Itinerary for further information.

Itinerary

**Day
1**

Hanoi

On arrival in Hanoi you are met and transferred to your hotel. You meet your tour leader here who will organise a pre-trip briefing, where you meet the other members of your group, before heading out for an optional group dinner. Until your meeting we encourage you to get out and discover the delights that Vietnam has to offer. Make sure that you take a hotel business card so that you will be able to find your way back to the hotel. Please note that your tour leader will collect your travel insurance details at the meeting, so please bring them with you. The meeting is generally followed by an optional group meal out at one of Hanoi's fantastic eating spots.

**Day
2**

Hanoi

Hanoi is one of Asia's most enchanting cities. This northern capital is a quiet, contradiction of its southern counterpart. Its relaxed ambience is a joy, with exploration best on foot or bicycle. The shopping is fun and the many lakes and parks provide enjoyable escapes. We take a guided half-day tour of Hanoi, visiting the major sights, including the Temple of Literature, One Pillar Pagoda, and paying a homage to Vietnam's most famous revolutionary, Ho Chi Minh. We also include lunch at the KOTO caf an amazing project aimed at providing vocational training and experience in the hospitality industry for underprivileged young people. All the staff you meet at this caf have come from poor backgrounds. In the evening we travel on an overnight sleeper-class train journey to Hue. The train is very basic; we travel in 'soft sleeper' class which is a compartment for up to four people; a communal environment. The beds on board come with a pillow and sheets, although some people may wish to bring their own sleeping sheet (purely optional and not a necessity). Also, breakfast tomorrow is not the best food you will find in Vietnam, so it is recommended that you purchase some snacks before boarding in Hanoi. This journey is in keeping with the adventurous nature of our trips and allows you to experience a taste of the 'real Vietnam'.

(B, L)

**Day
3** Hue

Our destination is Hue, the last imperial capital of Vietnam (1802-1945) and also one of its cultural centres. Upon arrival, we freshen up before enjoying a tour of the city and its surroundings. The royal mausoleum of Emperor Tu Duc and the beautiful Thien Mu Pagoda are not to be missed. We include these in a guided cruise on the Perfume River, which also gives us a taste of the tranquil countryside. Returning to town, we then visit the Citadel and the Purple Forbidden City. This royal residence was all but destroyed during the 1968 Tet Offensive; however it is still fascinating to walk among the ruins. In the evening we have a chance to sample the local delicacy known as 'banh khoai'.

**Day
4** Hoi An

This morning we embark on one of Vietnam's most spectacular road trips by crossing over the Hai Van Pass, towards Danang. We continue south to China Beach, enjoyed as an 'R & R' spot during the Vietnam War, which lies against a backdrop of the sensational Marble Mountains. We also visit these mountains, which consist of five peaks that are actually limestone with marble outcrops and are seen to epitomise the five elements: fire, water, earth, wood and metal. The history of the mountains is a rich one. They were once used by the Chams for religious purposes, but in more recent times became a haven for the Viet Cong, with their clear view of the Danang air base - at one time the busiest airport in the world. Good footwear is essential, as the paths between the rocks are sometime slippery. Our destination at the end of the day is Hoi An. There are many street-side cafes and restaurants in Hoi An - ideal places to finish off the day by sampling the culinary delights of this town.

(B)

**Day
5** Hoi An

Hoi An was originally a Cham port town, but has been influenced down the centuries by a myriad of traders from various cultures. There is a distinctly Chinese appearance with pagodas and assembly halls scattered along the small streets. Hoi An was once a bustling port in centuries gone by, before the river silted up. Today it is a delightful backwater town with an air of liveliness about it. The tranquillity and charm of Hoi An, coupled with its low tiled houses, makes it one of the most delightful places to visit in Vietnam. It is a constant favourite of our travellers and staff. A walking tour takes us to see a historic house (formerly home to a prominent trader), the Japanese Covered Bridge, a Chinese assembly hall and a museum. During a free afternoon you can enjoy a bicycle ride in the countryside or relax at the nearby Cua Dai Beach.

(B)

Day

6

Quy Nhon

We depart Hoi An early and embark a long day's drive south (approximately 7-8 hours). En route, we pass endless rice fields and see many examples of what could be considered Vietnam's iconic symbol - the ubiquitous conical hat. We also make a stop at the site of the My Lai Massacre, where we pay a sombre visit to the memorial museum. Please be warned that some of the photographic images on display may be somewhat gruesome. The area and the people are now at peace, and along the old road to the memorial and museum site we can stop to take a walk through the colourful country roadside markets. We continue to the town of Quy Nhon, where we spend the night. Please note that this is just an overnight stop to break up our long road journey. Quy Nhon is not a town that sees many tourists and it does not have many attractions, but our overnight stay is in a pleasant hotel with good facilities, including a swimming pool.

(B)

Day
7-8

Nha Trang

We drive for four hours from Quy Nhon to Nha Trang. Along the way we stop at Dai Lanh Beach, located on one of the quietest and most beautiful bays on the central coast. On arrival in Nha Trang we check into our hotel, which is close to the local beach. A highlight of our visit here is a day trip out on a boat exploring the islands of the South China Sea. We spend a day on the water enjoying swimming, snorkelling, lazing on a beach and feasting on a seafood lunch.

(2B, L)

Day
9

Mui Ne

We continue down the coast to Mui Ne, which is a quieter beach stop that offers a relaxing change of pace from Nha Trang. Nearby are some very large sand dunes, which are one of the country's more renowned natural wonders. There are also interesting fishing villages nearby.

(B)

Day
10

Saigon

Our southbound journey continues as we head towards the tropical south. Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) is the largest city in Vietnam and the nation's economic capital. In the afternoon a short city tour takes us to the Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum and Notre Dame Cathedral, and allows us to admire the many beautiful French colonial buildings such as the main post office and the former Hotel de Ville (city hall). The city also renowned for its nightlife, ranging from international class cafes to surprising bars and nightclubs.

(B)

**Day
11**

Saigon

In the morning, we head out of town to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels. Cu Chi is actually the name of the district that covers an extensive underground network (approximately 200 kilometres) of tunnels dug initially by the Viet Minh and later expanded by the Viet Cong. The tunnels contained hospitals, plus accommodation and schools, and were used extensively for refuge and storage and also utilised as a military base for the Viet Cong close to Saigon. The 1968 Tet Offensive was launched from Cu Chi with surprising effect. A section of the tunnels has been widened to allow tourists to get a feel for what the life underground must have been like (please note that this will be hot and sweaty and also a bit claustrophobic!). The afternoon is free for further exploration and shopping. Our final night together is an ideal opportunity to go out for a final group dinner (optional).

(B)

**Day
12**

Saigon

The tour ends after breakfast. A transfer to the airport is not included; however, the hotel staff will be on hand to advise you as to the options available.

(B)

Itinerary Variation

While the information presented here details our planned itinerary, including routes taken, activities included, accommodation and meeting times, please accept that unforeseen changes may occur. We are constantly on the lookout to improve our program and further enhance your experience. Naturally, we will keep you up to date with any last minute amendments to your tour.

About The Imaginative Traveller

Our aim has always been to provide exceptional travel experiences. We believe that adventure travel should be stimulating, and that it should give you an authentic experience of a place. We want our travellers to relish the amazing diversity of countries and cultures the world has to offer. Our focus is on innovation, not imitation.

Obsessed with quality

One of our strengths has been our obsession with quality. We've always believed that our commitment to you doesn't end as soon as you've paid for your holiday. On the contrary, it is just beginning. Whilst most

operators simply get a local company to handle the day to day operation of their tours, we do it all ourselves. We have managers for each of our **key destinations** around the world and all our small groups are escorted by our own leaders. Our local teams include guides, drivers, administration staff and contacts in the local community who help us ensure that our adventures are active and involving.

For comparability, all prices in this dossier are quoted in one currency. We use the US Dollar since that is familiar to most. However, once on tour you will need to pay for all goods and services in the local currency. See your Country Dossier for details of exchange rates.

Trip Grade

Culture

The greatest cities in the world and the richest historic sights; the finest regional food and the must-see spectacles. Museums and markets, medinas and mosques – from Hobart to Hong Kong, Cairo to Caracas, get under the skin of local life and explore what your destination means to its own people. Dive headlong into exotic metropolitan buzz – the souks of Marrakech, La Paz's markets – or adventure to remote African hills to explore ancient and mysterious rock art. Take in cutting edge art at Bilbao's dazzling Guggenheim, or soak up timeless rhythms sitting under a balanzan tree in Mali listening to Tuareg musicians. Whatever it is, wherever you are, there's no greater adventure than learning how another culture ticks.

Included

- The services of Peregrine's expert English-speaking local tour leader throughout the tour, and local guides at some sites.
- Sightseeing (including entrance fees where relevant): Hanoi's One Pillar Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh's House and Temple of Literature; Hue's Citadel and Purple Forbidden City, Thien Mu Pagoda and Emperor Tu Duc's Mausoleum; Hai Van Pass; China Beach; Marble Mountain; Hoi An historical sites; site of the My Lai Massacre; Dai Lanh Beach; Saigon's Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum and Notre Dame Cathedral; and Cu Chi Tunnels.
- Lunch at KOTO café in Hanoi – a project providing vocational hospitality training and experience to underprivileged young people.
- Full day boat cruise on the South China Sea off Nha Trang.
- Visit to the sand dunes and beach at Mui Ne.
- Overnight train to Hue with accommodation in 'soft sleeper' class – a compartment for up to four people with beds (a pillow and sheets provided).
- Arrival transfer.

Not included

International flights, airport departure taxes, visas, insurance, other meals, any optional tours and activities during free time, tips and items of a personal nature.

Meals

10 breakfasts, 2 lunches

Accommodation

10 nights Comfortable hotel, 1 night Overnight train

Single room supplement

Most of our travellers like the thought of travelling with a few like-minded souls. There are NO compulsory single supplements on most tours as we simply arrange twin shared accommodation for you and another tour member of the same sex. But don't worry if that doesn't appeal. We do understand there are times when you just want a bit of privacy and 'me' time so we are more than happy to arrange a private room upon request when you book.

Transport

Boat, Private vehicle, Train

Passport

Well before travelling, please ensure that you have a current passport, with an accurate photo, that is valid for at least six months after your scheduled return home. Also check that your airline tickets are in exactly the same name as your passport. Some countries may require that you have a return air ticket, or have sufficient funds to purchase such a ticket.

Insurance

Every Peregrine traveller is required to have comprehensive travel insurance. This covers you for medical costs associated with hospitalisation, emergency travel and repatriation back to your home country. You can arrange your own insurance or we can recommend a policy for you. Remember to bring a copy of your insurance policy with you so your tour leader can record the details at the pre-tour briefing. If you arrive at your destination without travel insurance, you'll need to organise this before you can continue on your Peregrine journey.

Visas

Vietnam - Please note that visa requirements can and do change. It is essential that you confirm requirements with the nearest relevant embassy or check with your travel agent before you travel. At the time of writing, a visa for is required by most travellers visiting and/or transiting Vietnam including Australians, New Zealanders, Americans, British and Canadians. All other nationalities should check with the Vietnamese Embassy or Consulate in their country for up-to-date visa information. Your visa must be obtained prior to the commencement of your tour, as visas are not normally issued to travellers on arrival in Vietnam. In fact you will are likely to be denied boarding your aircraft bound for Vietnam without a visa.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have all required visas for your trip. Rules and regulations governing the issuance of visas are constantly changing, and vary for different nationalities and you should check visa requirements with your travel agent or relevant consular authority well before travel.

Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to ensure you have all required visas for your trip. Rules and regulations governing the issuance of visas are constantly changing, and vary for different nationalities and you should check visa requirements with your travel agent or relevant consular authority well before travel.

Other information

On Day 2 there is the option to fly from Hanoi to Hue.

The itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled with care and provided in good faith. However it may be subject to change, and does not form part of a contract between the client and The Imaginative Traveller.

Responsible Travel - Travellers' Guidelines

At Imaginative Traveller we love helping our clients experience the beauty and cultures of the destinations we visit. However, hand in hand with this we have always been aware that we have a responsibility to minimise any negative impacts that tourism can bring.

Responsible Travel is twofold. It's about taking people to the places they want to go in a safe and responsible manner but also about respecting and maintaining the natural and often delicate balance of the destination. Economic gain from tourism is often fundamental to a country, but should never be at the expense of its culture or the environment.

Our Aims

It is our aim to provide journeys that have minimal negative and maximum positive impact on the places we visit.

We do not believe that, as visitors, we should impose our own cultures on others; rather that we should experience foreign cultures and appreciate them for what they are.

Whilst it is our aim to show destinations and cultures in a positive light, we do not believe in papering over the cracks or shielding visitors from the realities of life. This does not mean, however, that we condone or endorse certain situations or regimes that may be in place.

Our guidelines are meant not as rigid instructions but rather as suggestions to make our holidays more enjoyable – for everybody. As cultural and environmental sensitivities vary from country to country more specific guidelines can be found in our individual country and trip dossiers.

Travellers' Guidelines

- ✓ Before you depart try to spend some time familiarising yourself with the destination you will be travelling to – their culture and customs. The country dossiers on our website offer detailed information about all the regions we visit. They also include some useful phrases in the local language for you to use on your trip! A few words of the local language can open up many more opportunities for you to interact with the people you will meet.
- ✓ Although it is tempting to give out pens, sweets and money to people begging, and particularly tempting to give to children, we feel that this encourages a begging mentality and has a long-term negative impact on communities. If someone begging earns more than someone in the same community who works this can discourage local employment. If children regularly bring home money it may discourage their parents from sending them to school. It is of course your own personal choice but you could consider giving to registered charities or contributing to our Responsible Travel fund instead. Money donated through our fund to our worldwide projects is matched pound for pound by Imaginative Traveller and used to help local grassroots projects.

- ✓ Always ask permission to photograph local people and respect their decision if they would prefer not to have their picture taken.
- ✓ Respect local dress codes, especially at religious sites. Our tour leaders are always on hand to give you advice about this.
- ✓ In many of the countries we visit you might see examples of animal cruelty (for example dancing bears, performing monkeys and snake charmers). Please do not take photographs of this or offer money as it encourages the activity.
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in. It sounds obvious but do not throw litter, take it with you or use rubbish bins! You may see locals throwing rubbish on the street but do not follow their example!
- ✓ When shopping in countries where haggling is the norm – enjoy it and only pay what you feel is a fair price for the goods you are purchasing. However, remember that the shopkeeper does have to make a living so do stop once you have reached a price you are happy with. Bargaining should be fun but always remember that a small amount can mean much more to the vendor than to you.
- ✓ Endeavor to take home souvenirs made locally; the money you spend can be very important to the local communities. However, do use your common sense and don't buy anything that you think might be made out of endangered animals or plants.
- ✓ To help keep as much money as possible in the host country - try to eat in locally owned restaurants and order local drinks and produce rather than international brands.
- ✓ In hotels do be conscious of how much water you are using. Many of the areas we visit regularly have shortages; try not to have hour long showers! Don't leave lights, air conditioners or fans on when you leave the room – you wouldn't at home!
- ✓ Respect the environment you are in, especially when in national parks or reserves. Pay attention to rules about keeping on paths, keeping a distance from animals and not removing any of the natural habitat.
- ✓ Relax and immerse yourself in the differences of the culture you are in – you'll be back home in the familiar soon enough (and wishing you were still on holiday!). These cultural differences are part of what makes your experience special.

If you would like to offset the carbon dioxide that will be produced on your flights you can do this on our website ([on our Responsible travel page](#)). We work with [climatecare](#), who will reduce the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide that you produce in another part of the World through their emission reduction projects. These projects are low carbon efficient technologies in developing countries and not only serve to reduce emissions but also help to spread the adoption of low carbon technologies and improve the quality of life for local communities. Details of [climatecare's projects](#) can be [found on their website](#).



If you would like to contribute to our Worldwide projects, helping communities all over the World, you can also do this on our website or with a sales consultant. Please refer to our [responsible travel page](#) on the website for details of our current projects. Any donation you make will be matched £ for £ by Imaginative Traveller (up to a maximum of £1000).

Have a great trip!

Please do let us know if you have any comments about responsible travel at rto@imtrav.net

The Imaginative Traveller & Peregrine Adventures This trip is operated by our partner company, Peregrine Adventures. Peregrine is an Australia based company with more than 30 years experience in adventure travel and they share our ethos for offering unique holiday adventures. As this is a codeshared departure you can expect there to be both Imaginative Traveller and Peregrine travellers on your trip.
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