Vietnam, Land of the Blue Dragon
FROM $1,137PP

Journey Overview
Ho Chi Minh City / Hue / Hoi An / Danang / Hanoi / Halong Bay

Highlights:
- Tours Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi
- Boat trip on the Mekong River
- Visit Hue’s Old Imperial City – a UNESCO World Heritage site
- Learn to prepare Vietnamese cuisine in a cooking class
- Overnight cruise through Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site

Hotels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CITY</th>
<th>NIGHTS</th>
<th>HOTELS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ramana Saigon Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hue</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mondial Hue Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoi An</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Thanh Binh Riverside Hoi An</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanoi</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boss Legend Hotel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruise Ship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Oriental Sails Villa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1
**Arrival in Ho Chi Minh City**
Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City! After arriving at your hotel, the rest of the day is yours to relax and unwind.

*Note:* Transfer from airport is not included. The rate is offered separately.

DAY 2
**Ho Chi Minh City**
Half-day sightseeing tour of Ho Chi Minh City, beginning with the Reunification Palace, formerly the Independence Palace of the South Vietnamese president that was famously stormed by tanks in 1975 signifying the fall of South Vietnam. Afterwards, drive to the historic center to visit the Emperor of Jade Pagoda, one of the city’s most interesting pagodas and to many classic European-style landmarks. End your tour at the central Ben Thanh Market, where vendors display a vast array of goods and handicrafts. The afternoon is yours at leisure. (B)
DAY 3

Ho Chi Minh City
Excursion to Ben Tre then take a boat trip on the Mekong River to Vam Xep canal where local handicrafts and coconut sweets are produced. Then take a short ride on a motor cart to a typical local house to taste some homemade honey-tea. Proceed by sampan through the small canals to observe the daily life of local people along the riverbanks with some stops for a leisurely stroll. (B)

DAY 4

Ho Chi Minh City | Hue
Morning flight to Hue, a 17th-century city that served as the capital of Vietnam for more than 140 years. Visit many of the city’s famous ancient temples, imperial buildings and French-style edifices. Start at the Imperial Tombs of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh and soak in the tranquil atmosphere, wandering among pavilions, courtyards and lotus ponds. Then head to the Old Imperial City and UNESCO World Heritage site. Modeled after China’s Forbidden City, this massive complex provides a fascinating glimpse into the court life of the Nguyen Dynasty. Enter its Imperial Enclosure, an area of spacious courtyards and serene lotus ponds. (B)

DAY 5

Hue | Hoi An
Scenic drive along mountain roads with spectacular views over the coastline to the large coastal city of Danang. Visit the Cham Museum, an elegant colonial building that houses the finest collection of Cham sculpture in the world. Then continue south to Hoi An, with a stop to visit the Marble Mountains. The five stone hillocks that rise sharply from the surrounding rice fields are riddled with caves and shrines. (B,L)

DAY 6

Hoi An
After a free morning in this UNESCO World Heritage site, your afternoon starts with refreshments at a local cafe and visit to the colorful Hoi An market. Here take the opportunity to interact with the local vendors and purchase some of the ingredients to be used in the cooking lesson later. Then board a boat for a leisurely cruise along the Hoi An River to a cooking school. You can explore the cooking school’s herb and vegetable garden, before learning about some of Hoi An and Vietnam’s well-known dishes. Your cooking lesson will be with one of the school’s chefs. Included in the class is a brief introduction to Vietnamese food carving (plate decoration). After the lesson, sit down and savor the Vietnamese dishes from your class. (B,D)

DAY 7

Hoi An | Danang | Hanoi
Transfer to the airport in Danang for your flight to Hanoi, the modern-day capital of Vietnam that still retains the mystery and charm of past centuries.
Your tour of the city begins at the vast Ho Chi Minh Memorial Complex, including the mausoleum, Presidential Palace, Stilt House and Museum. Continue to the 11th-century Temple of Literature, a peaceful series of walled courtyards and graceful gateways which is one of the best-preserved examples of traditional Vietnamese architecture. At Hoan Kiem Lake, in the historical center of the city, see the Ngoc Son Temple and the Rising Sun bridge. The 18th-century structure is Hanoi’s most visited temple. End with a tour through the city’s Old Quarter. Explore the maze of back streets which give a glimpse to the thousand years of history of this most lively and unusual place. (B)

Note: The Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed Mondays, Fridays and during September and October. Museum of Ethnology is closed Mondays. Some sites might be closed during Lunar New Year.

DAY 8
Hanoi | Halong Bay Cruise
At noon, embark on your overnight cruise through Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage site. After lunch, anchor at Titop beach area, where you can visit Amazing Cave for an hour and then return to the main boat to prepare for kayaking along the hidden parts of the bay, including Luon Cave, a tunnel to a little bay surrounded by a mountain range. Return to the boat to enjoy Happy Hour at the bar and on the sun deck, dinner and relaxing. (B,L,D)

DAY 9
Halong Bay Cruise | Hanoi
After morning tai chi on the sundeck, have a sunrise breakfast. Visit Titop Island and climb up to the mountain’s peak to enjoy the panoramic views of Halong Bay and swimming at the beach. Disembark at noon and transfer back to Hanoi. The afternoon is yours at leisure. (B,L,D)

DAY 10
Depart Hanoi
Transfer to the airport for your return flight. (B)

Note: Transfer to Airport is not included. The rate can be added separately.