

Vietnam Panorama

16 day tour to HCMC (Saigon), Da Nang, Hoi An, Hue, Ha Long Bay Cruise, Hanoi, Lao Cai & Sapa

Delve further into Vietnam on this overland journey, which reveals treasures many tourists miss. Learn about the country's moving history in Ho Chi Minh City, leisure at Hoi An ancient town and beach, explore the history of the Royal Empire in Hue, cruising on Halong Bay's emerald water. A trip to Sapa is a journey into the fascinating lives of the ethnic minority villagers that thrive in the unique conditions that life high in the mountains brings.

Day 1 **Australia ✈ HCMC (Saigon)**

Fly from Australia to Ho Chi Minh City, formally called Saigon, the economic and commercial center of Vietnam. Overnight in HCMC.

Day 2 **Ho Chi Minh City**

Meal: B/L/D

This morning, we head to Cu Chi, 70km north of Saigon, which is famous for its 200-kilometre-long tunnels and it was the base for the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. After lunch, return to Ho Chi Minh City, the war theme continues with photo stop at the Independence Palace and visit to the War Remnant Museum and wandering around Cho Ben Thanh Markets.

Day 3 **Mekong Delta**

Meal: B/L/D

Enjoy a full-day excursion to My Tho, 75km south of Saigon, a peaceful town on the bank of the Mekong River. The tour comprises a cruise on the Mekong River, a visit to orchards and local homes, a sampan ride on palm-shaded creeks, a taste of seasonal fruit & honey tea and a performance of traditional southern singing. Lunch of Mekong specialties is arranged.

Day 4 **Ho Chi Minh City ✈ Hoi An**

Meal: B/L/D

Transfer to the airport for our flight to Da Nang. Upon arrival, we visit World famous floating Golden Bridge that is seemingly held up by a pair of giant stone hands. Take in panoramic views of Da Nang from this impressive Bridge then followed by riding cable car – one of the longest in the world – over the lush Ba Na forest. Continue our drive to Hoi An, the most charming town in Vietnam. Here we stay 3 nights.

Day 5 **Hoi An**

Meal: B/L/D

Today your guide will show you the ancient town. Hoi An, is so called a 'living Museum City' because of its well-kept original historical buildings and ancient backstreets. Visit one of the three city's oldest homes, each built over 200 years ago and still occupied by descendants of the families that originally built them. We then tour to the Chinese Assembly Hall, followed by a one hour cruise along the river. Later on we visit to the unique Japanese Bridge; afterwards we take one hour cruise along Thu the Bon River. Lunch is served at a local restaurant by the river.

Day 6 **Hoi An – Hue**

Meal: B/L/D

After breakfast, transfer to Hue (03 hours driving). Admire beautiful landscape along the road through the Hai Van Pass. Panoramic views of the clouds, the sea and the mountains around are unfolded at the scenic Lang Co lagoon. Upon arrival, discover the UNESCO World Heritage-listed wonder of the Citadel including the Forbidden Purple City then make your way to the Hue Royal Antiques Museum to see a collection of ornaments, where preserves royal treasures has a history with many changes. Your guide will take you through the hallways, temples and tombs that were modelled after Beijing's Forbidden City. Afterwards transfer to Toa

Kham boat station to embark boat for cruise along the poetic Perfume River (1 hours), admire the landscape and enjoy the sunset over the river.

Day 7 Hue ✈ Hanoi

Meal: B/L/D

After breakfast, visit “Khai Dinh King’s Tomb” – a blend of Western and Eastern architecture and “Minh Mang King’s Tomb” – among the finest royal tombs in Hue with 40 constructions of palaces, temples, pavilions, lake and others. After lunch, transfer to Hue airport for your flight to Hanoi, Vietnam’s capital city which boasts tree-lined streets and centuries-old temples. Transfer to your hotel.

Day 8 Hanoi

Meal: B/L/D

We visit Tran Quoc pagoda, a Buddhist temple set on a West Lake peninsula; then continue to the Ho Chi Minh complex and the One Pillar pagoda. Explore Confucian heritage at the 11th-century Temple of Literature, where you’ll find a prime example of traditional Vietnamese architecture, and the site of Vietnam’s first university. Afternoon, pay a visit to the Hoa Lo Prison, nicknamed Hanoi Hilton by American pilots during the Vietnam War. This notorious prison was used by French Colonists for political prisoners until the mid-1950s. Your expert guide will share stories and history as you tour the grounds. After that, visit Vietnam Museum of Ethnology to learn about the 54 cultural groups living in Vietnam. Then take the 1 hour cyclo tour around the Old quarter before get back to your hotel.

Day 9 Ha Long Bay Cruise

Meal: B/L/D

This morning we depart from Ha Noi and travel by road with cruise shuttle bus through the Red River Delta to the beautiful Ha Long Bay. The scenic drive will pass through rural landscapes before arriving at this World Heritage site, recognised by UNESCO in 1994. Upon arrival board the deluxe Junk Boat where you will enjoy a welcome drink and freshly caught seafood lunch whilst sailing out of the bay passing amazing shaped mountains. You will also visit some magical grottoes and relax in the best scenic beauty Vietnam has to offer. You could also do Kayaking or local boat rowing, attend a morning Tai chi class or Cooking demonstration, Squid Fishing, or a movie show. Overnight on the cruise.

Day 10 Ha Long Bay ⇄ Hanoi

Meal: B/L/D

This morning start with optional early morning Tai Chi class then continue our visit to some of the caves or a pearl farm in Ha Long Bay. After early lunch served on board, you are transferred back to Hanoi with cruise shuttle bus. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 11 Hanoi - Lao Cai

Meal: B

Today is at leisure. Late checkout till 6pm before transferred to Hanoi Train Station for your overnight train (sleeper cabin) departs at 21:35 to Lao Cai, located in the mountains of Vietnam near the Chinese border.
Overnight on train

Day 12 (Saturday): Lao Cai – Sapa

Meal: B/L/D

We arrive around (05:35) in Lao Cai. Meet and transfer to Sapa Town for breakfast at local restaurant.

We begin the day with a 3km trek through breath-taking landscape to the village of Suoi Ho, home to H’mong minority. From here you can enjoy views over endless rice terraces; follow the buffalo trails to visit the hospitable villages of the Black Hmong minority people in Ma Tra village. On the way, you will come across the impressive ruins of a church dating back to the French occupation in the early 1900s. Picnic lunch will be served on the way before arriving at Ta Phin

village to visit Red Dao people. The Red Dao is known for their expertise in herbal medicine, and use plants from the land to treat many illnesses. The tour highlights the unmixed cultural life of Black H'mong and Red Dao minorities, which are the 2 largest ethnic groups in the area and enjoy walking among the local people. Check in at your hotel and overnight in Sapa.

Day 13 Sapa – Sunday Bac Ha Fair – Sapa

Meal: B/L

After breakfast we drive to the ethnic markets - the Sunday Bac Ha Fair, where you will enjoy watching 6 different minority peoples (Flower H'mong, Black Dzao, Tay, Dzay, Ha Nhi and Nung) in their traditional colourful costumes, gathering to buy and sell their homemade products including vegetable, bamboo shoot, mushroom, medicinal herbs and souvenirs etc in the festive market. This is the weekly chance for the minorities to meet and share joy and sorrows after the crops. Complete your action-packed itinerary by hopping on a traditional Vietnamese boat for a ride down the snaking path of the Chay River before your return to Sapa.

Day 14 Sapa – Lao Chai – Hanoi

Meal: B/L

Drive to Lao Chai, a village of Black H'mong ethnic people, where we will discover their daily life and how they make their traditional clothes, handicraft, indigo... We will visit the biggest valley which offers the best views of the golden rice terrace field in Vietnam. Afterwards we walk to Ta Van, a village of Giay people. It is a small group of ethnic people, which still preserve a rich and traditional culture. After lunch, you will take sleeper bus depart at 2pm back to Hanoi. You will arrive Hanoi at 20:00; met and transferred to your hotel.
Overnight in Hanoi

Day 15 Hanoi ✈ Australia

Meal: B

This morning is at leisure followed by a transfer to the airport for your overnight flight to Australia.

Day 16 Australia

Arrive into Australia this morning.