

# IMPRESSIONS OF VIETNAM

## Saigon, Can Tho, Hanoi & Halong Bay



*From the ancient waterways of the Mekong Delta to the bustling cities of Hanoi & Saigon, this captivating 9 day tour is a great introduction to this unique and vibrant country. Steeped in its own rich traditions and history, yet irrevocably shaped by the major ideas and events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, all taking place against the backdrop of stunning landscapes and architecture, Vietnam really is a traveller's dream.*

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Vietnam. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

#### Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

#### DAY 1: UK to Saigon

Depart London on your scheduled, overnight flight to Saigon International Airport.

#### DAY 2: Saigon (D)

On arrival in Saigon, also known as Ho Chi Minh, you will be met by your local guide and transferred to your hotel. Relax in the afternoon before enjoying a welcome dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant.

#### DAY 3: Saigon (B/L/D)

After breakfast travel to the Cu Chi Tunnels, an impressive network of underground tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. En route your tour will pass through a traditional rice paper making village before your lunch at a local restaurant. After lunch, start your city tour with a visit to the Reunification Palace, the former home and workplace of the president of South Vietnam during the war. Continue to the nearby Notre Dame Cathedral which was built between 1877-1883 and is the major seat of the Catholic religion in Vietnam. You will then travel to the French-style Saigon Post Office followed by the Thien Hau Pagoda and a local lacquer ware workshop.

#### DAY 4: Saigon to Can Tho (B/L/D)

In the morning you will drive to My Tho where you will board a boat for a cruise down the Mekong River, passing floating markets, local villages and the four islands known as Dragon, Unicorn, Phoenix and Turtle. Your boat will

dock at Unicorn Island, giving you the chance to visit farms selling exotic fruits and a coconut sweet workshop where you can sample these local delights. A horse drawn cart ride will follow, arriving at a bee farm to enjoy their traditional honey tea, then a tour down the Vam Chua Canal on a rowing boat. Continue to Can Tho where you will spend the night.

#### DAY 5: Can Tho to Hanoi (B/L/D)

Your morning in Can Tho will begin with a gentle trip through the picturesque canals and waterways in a small boat, taking in the sultry scenery and daily activities of the small boat vendors of the floating markets who live along these Mekong canals, as well as stopping at the spectacular Cai Rang floating market – the largest in the entire Mekong Delta. Before cruising back to land enjoy tasting tropical fruits at the Ba Cong Garden House. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant you will be transferred to the airport in Can Tho for your flight to Hanoi where you will then have the night to settle in.

#### DAY 6: Hanoi (B/L/D)

Your full day tour of Hanoi begins with the ancient Temple of Literature, then the Presidential Palace and the famous One Pillar Pagoda. A short drive out of the city centre follows where you can take part in a local Vietnamese cooking demonstration and enjoy your delicious creation for lunch. The afternoon continues with a visit to the Vietnam History museum, and a photo opportunity at the Hanoi Opera House, a beautiful colonial building, then a walking tour of the Old Quarter. In the evening sit back and enjoy a thousand year old Water Puppet Show.

#### DAY 7: Hanoi to Halong Bay (B/L/D)

This memorable day takes you to the awe-inspiring Halong Bay where you will explore these tranquil islands on a luxury cruise boat, passing local towns and intricate limestone formations on the way. Take a tour of Vung Vieng fishing

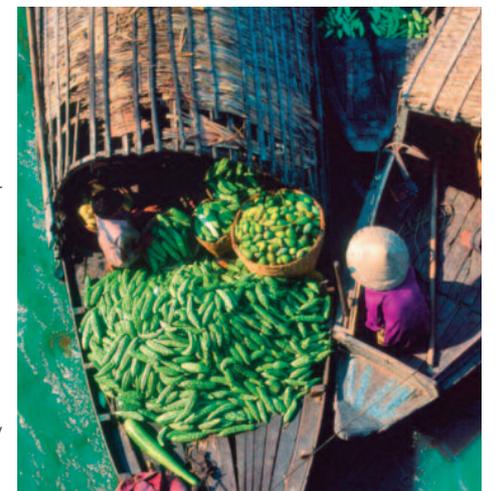
village by rowing boat, a settlement completely floating on water and dating back hundreds of years. Anchoring at Ho Dong Tien, a Vietnamese cooking demonstration will take place on the sundeck, followed by a sumptuous seafood dinner on board before you retire to your cabin for the evening.

#### DAY 8: Halong Bay to Hanoi (Brunch/D)

Start your day with some calming Tai Chi before your boat then takes you to discover the prehistoric Sung Sot 'Surprise Cave' before cruising through the labyrinth of islands on your way back to the mainland. In the afternoon you will travel back to Hanoi for a local dinner and your overnight stay.

#### DAY 9: Hanoi to the UK London or Extension (B)

Following breakfast the day is left at leisure before transferring to the airport for your evening flight back to London., or continue on to your chosen extension.



### Hotel Information

**Saigon (2 nights):** 4★ Golden Central Hotel - 140 Ly Tu Trong, Ben Thanh Ward, District 1, Saigon. Contact number: 0084 838 270 666

**Can Tho:** 4★ Ninh Kieu 2 - 2 Hai Ba Trung, FTan An, Ninh Kieu District, Can Tho City. Contact number: 0084 710 3821 171

**Hanoi (3 nights):** 4★ Sunway Hotel - 19 Pham Dinh Ho Street, Hai Ba Trung District, Hanoi, Vietnam. Contact number: 0084 439 713 888

**Halong Bay:** 1 night cruise on board the Victory cruise boat, Halong Bay

All accommodation is at least 4★ and features an en suite bathroom, air-conditioning/heating, satellite TV, safety deposit box and tea and coffee making facilities. Mercury Holidays has visited and inspected all of the hotels to ensure that they meet the high standards of service which we require for our clients. If the hotels detailed are not available alternatives will be used of a similar standard. Final confirmation of your hotels will be sent in a document approximately two weeks before you travel.

### Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Lunch and dinner will be taken in local Vietnamese restaurants. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.



### On your arrival

On your arrival in Saigon you will be met by a representative from our local agent, Lac Viet (LV) Travel, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Vietnam Travel Service representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact LV Travel during your stay the details are:

Lac Viet Travel (LV) Head Office, Hanoi  
Floor 18,  
VTC Online Building,  
No 18,  
Tam Trinh Str,  
Hai Ba Trung District,  
Hanoi,  
Vietnam  
Telephone : 0084 439 413 748

### Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for LV Travel head office, Hanoi

Contact	Telephone number
Anna Hanh	Office: 0084(0) 983 096 032
Ms Ly	Office: 0084 439 413 750 Mobile: 0084 989 200 119

### Visas

Until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2016 a visa is not required for stays up to 15 days. From the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2016 and for longer stays a visa is required for entry into Vietnam. We work closely with The Travel Visa Company who will be able to arrange your visa for you on your behalf. Please call them on 01270 250 590 and quote "Mercury Holidays". The cost of the visa is £98.50. The visas take around 10 working days to issue and are only valid for 3 months from the date of entry. We therefore recommend that you apply for your visa 8 weeks before travel, however please be aware that your passport will be required for the application so make sure that you will not need it during this time. Alternatively you can visit the Embassy of Vietnam in London: 12-14 Victoria Road, London, W8 5RD. If you have booked the Temples of Cambodia extension following your tour, you will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia costing USD \$30 on arrival at the airport in Siem Reap. Please note that you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well as USD \$30 cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival in Cambodia.

### Insurance

You must obtain suitable travel insurance prior to departure. Mercury Holidays is partnered with Holiday Extras which offer insurance at the following prices:

Age in years	Up to 64	65-74	75-85
Up to 17 days cover	£42	£79	£135
Up to 24 days cover	£48	£94	£146

### Worldwide (excluding USA)

For all persons 86 years and over, please contact us for insurance prices. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays 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.

### Health and Vaccinations

We recommend that you consult your local GP for advice on vaccinations & travel health before departure. It is not advisable to drink the tap water.

### Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with an average level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves full days of sightseeing, often on foot, and includes some climbing of stairs and getting on and off coaches and boats. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties.

### Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 10, and the maximum will be 40. If in the unlikely event there are less than 10 people booked on your tour date then you may be asked to change to a different date. A full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

### Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

### Tipping

It is customary to tip both your driver and guide approximately £2.00 (\$3.00) per person per day in total. This will be collected at the end of each destination visited for your convenience. Tipping for the porters at your hotels and the crew during the Halong Bay Cruise will be at your discretion. Tips are accepted in the local currency, US dollars and British pounds.

### Currency Exchange

The currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong, known as VND. You can exchange your currency in Vietnam, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Vietnam should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

### Personal Expenses

You will need to take some extra money with you to cover any personal purchases, such as souvenirs, laundry and extra drinks and snacks. Approximately £200 - £300 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour.

### Credit card information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

### Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. The schedules of the domestic airlines in country are subject to frequent changes. For this reason, we have indicated approximate times only. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however order of events & sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

### What to Pack

- Sunscreen and hat in summer
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Camera and charger
- An electric plug converter - the electricity in Vietnam/Cambodia is 220-240 V. You will need a 2 round pin plug or 2 flat pin plug adapter
- Loo paper for public WCs • Binoculars
- A small overnight bag to take on your cruise of Halong Bay

### Flight and Airport Information

Your flight is to **Saigon International Airport** with **Vietnam Airlines (VN)**, departing from **London Heathrow Terminal 4**.

Route	Depart	Arrive	Flight Duration	Flight Number
London Heathrow - Saigon	11:00	06:00	11 hours 40 mins	VN50
Can Tho - Hanoi	16:30	18:40	2 hours 10 mins	VN1202
Hanoi-Siem Reap	15:30	17:10	1 hour 40 mins	VN837
Siem Reap-Hanoi	19:50	21:30	1 hour 40 mins	VN838
Hanoi-London Heathrow	00:30	06:40	12 hours 10 mins	VN55

**IMPORTANT: Please note that all flight times are subject to change. Final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.**

### Baggage Allowance

Baggage allowance (per person): Each passenger is entitled to **30kg** of hold luggage. Hand luggage: One piece not exceeding 7Kg and with maximum total dimensions not exceeding 115 cm (56 cm x 36cm x 23 cm). Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in.

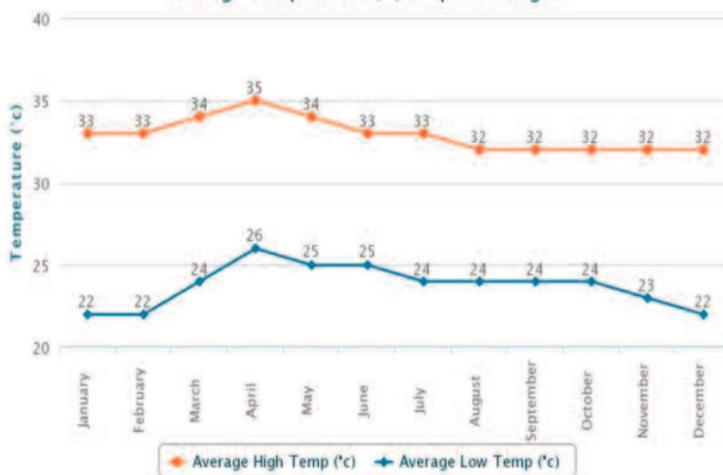
### Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange Airport car parking or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras - Tel. 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

### Weather and Climate

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.

Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Saigon



Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Can Tho

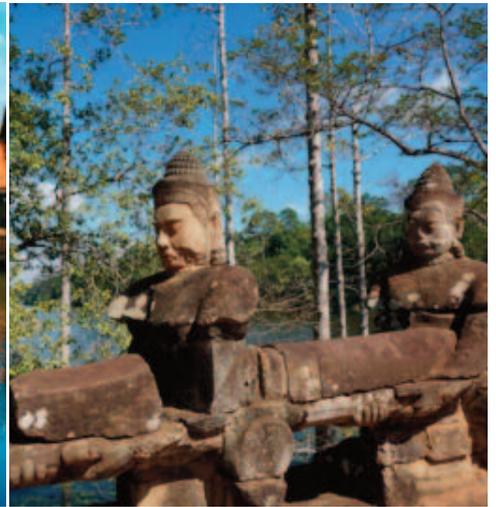


Average Temperature (°C) Graph for Hanoi



Halong Bay

# TEMPLES OF CAMBODIA



Your add-on of 5 days, 4 nights in Cambodia will explore the country's incredible and varied temples. A boat trip through the villages floating on the Tonlé Sap reveals stunning forest lakes, distinct communities and traditional river houses.

This document aims to give you all the information that you require during your add-on to Cambodia.

**Your included meal guide:**

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

**Day 9 Hanoi to Siem Reap (B/D)**

Following breakfast at your hotel in Hanoi your morning will be spent at leisure before your transfer journey to the airport for your afternoon flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia. You will be met on arrival and transferred to your hotel, followed by an evening meal at a local restaurant.

**Day 10 Siem Reap (B)**

Breakfast will be taken at your hotel, followed by a day at your leisure to enjoy the city in your own time, or simply relax by the hotel's stunning swimming pool.

**Day 11 Siem Reap (B/L/D)**

After an early breakfast you will proceed to watch the sunrise over Angkor Wat – the 12th century temple which took over 30 years to build. It once served as the King Khmer's state temple and later as his mausoleum. It is one of Cambodia's best preserved temples and possibly Asia's most impressive archaeological site. The intricate towers and walls are set in green forest land, surrounded by a vast moat. You will then explore the fortified city of Angkor Thom, whose entrance is flanked by a row of 54 dramatic stone figures on each side. You will also get the chance to see some of the King's lesser known temples, including Bayon, the Terrace of the Elephants and Baphoun. After lunch you will take in the jungle covered Ta Prohm, undoubtedly the most atmospheric of all the ruins in Angkor. The temple sits among fig and bayan trees, with many passage ways and hidden chambers to discover. Finish the day by unwinding and watching the sun set over this incredible World Heritage Site before returning to Siem Reap for the night.

**Day 12 Siem Reap (B/L/D)**

Today visit the stunning Banteay Srei, a 10th century Hindu temple dedicated to their god Shiva. Considered by many to be the "Jewel in the Crown" of Angkorian Art, this temple is carved from a pinkish stone and includes some of the finest stone carvings in the world. In the afternoon continue to the biggest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia, Tonlé Sap, where you will take a local boat and visit the charming village of Kampong Phluck. The boat will pass by traditional floating villages and houses built on stilts over the river, as well as meandering through forest lakes. The rest of the day is to spend at your leisure before your evening meal and the night in Siem Reap.

**Day 13 Siem Reap to London (B)**

After breakfast, savour your last moments in Cambodia with some time at your leisure before being transferred to the airport in the afternoon for your return flight to London.

**Hotel Information**

**Siem Reap (4 nights) 4★ Tara Angkor Hotel - Vithei Charles de Gaulle, Siem Reap. Contact number 0085 563 966 661**

**Visas**

You will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia costing USD \$30 on arrival at the airport in Siem Reap. Please note that you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well as USD \$30 cash in order to apply for your visa on arrival in Cambodia.

**Tour Guides**

This extension tour to Cambodia is **semi-escorted**. Your guide will meet you at your Hanoi hotel and take to the airport. Day 10 will be at your leisure, whilst day 11 and 12 will be fully accompanied. You will be met by your guide on day 13 to take you to the airport for your return flight to London Gatwick.

**Tipping**

Tipping is common practice and seen as a way of life in Cambodia. It is customary to tip both your driver and guide \$5 (approximately £3.50) per person per day. For your convenience your guide will collect the full amount from you on your first day in Cambodia.

**Currency Exchange**

The currency in Cambodia is the Cambodian Riel, known as AHR. You can exchange your currency in Cambodia, however US Dollars are widely accepted in Cambodia should you wish to keep an alternative currency on you.

**Weather and Climate**

