

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 20th 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 begin your city tour with a visit to the Reunification Palace, the former home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the war then travel to the famous Cu Chi Tunnels, an impressive network of underground tunnels used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. Continue on to the nearby Notre Dame Cathedral which was built between 1877—1883 and is the major seat of the Catholic religion in Vietnam. After lunch you will then visit 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 who live along these Mekong canals. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant you will then 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 creations for lunch. The afternoon continues with a photo opportunity at the Hanoi Opera House, a beautiful French 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

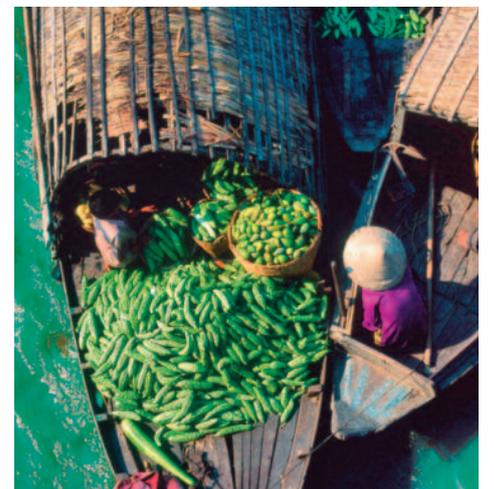
water and dating back hundreds of years. Anchoring at Ho Dong Tien, a Vietnamese cooking demonstration will take place on the sundeck, followed by a sumptuous seafood dinner on board before you retire to your cabin for the evening.

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 30th June 2016 a visa is not required for stays up to 15 days. From the 1st 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-Da Nang	15:20	16:35	1 hour 15 mins	VN173
Da Nang-Hanoi	20:15	21:30	1 hour 15 mins	VN174
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.

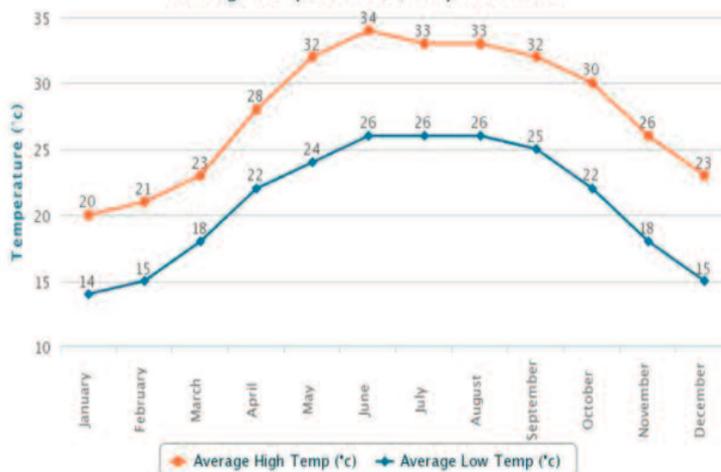
Average Temperature (°c) Graph for Saigon



Average Temperature (°c) Graph for Can Tho



Average Temperature (°c) Graph for Hanoi



Halong Bay

HOI AN BEACH STAY



Five days, 4 nights in Hoi An is the perfect way to complete your tour. Relax and unwind by the turquoise ocean waters, sample local cuisine and explore the historic Old Town.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

A former port town, Hoi An is a historic town with narrow streets, riverside cafes and a stunning nearby beach. The traditional Old Town is now a UNESCO World Heritage site with numerous pedestrianised streets. The Hoi An beach sits close to the town, enjoying palm fringed shores and powder white sands.

Tour Guides

Your stay in Hoi An is not escorted by a tour guide.

Hotels

Hoi An (4 nights)

Depending on your preference your Hoi An stay will take place at the 4★ **Le Belhamy Hotel** on Bed & Breakfast or the 5★ **The Sunrise Hotel** on Half Board. This will have been confirmed at booking.

Hotel Information

4★ **Le Belhamy Hotel** - Hamlet 1, Dien Duong Village, Dien Ban District, Hoi An. Tel: 0084 510 3941 888

5★ **The Sunrise Hotel** - Cua Dai Beach, Hoi An Tel: 0084 510 3937 777

Day 9 Hanoi to Dan Nang (B)

Depart Hanoi on your scheduled flight to Da Nang for your transfer to Hoi An and your first night.

Days 10 to 12 in Hoi An (B)

At leisure at your choice of hotel.

Day 13 Hoi An to London (B)

After your transfer to Da Nang depart on your scheduled flight to London.



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