

IMPRESSIONS OF VIETNAM



TRIP OVERVIEW

From the ancient waterways of the Mekong Delta to the bustling cities of Hanoi & Saigon, this captivating nine-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.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

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 hand-dug network of underground passageways, spanning 75 miles in length; this labyrinth formerly housed hospitals, weapon factories and living quarters when it was used by the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. En route, your tour will pass through a traditional rice paper making village before lunch at a local restaurant. Start your afternoon city tour at the historically symbolic Reunification Palace, the former home and workplace of the wartime president of South Vietnam and the place where the Vietnam war ultimately concluded in spectacular fashion, when an army tank crashed through its gates. Continue to the enchanting neo-Romanesque Notre Dame Cathedral, an architectural wonder due to its distinctive red-brick exterior; built between 1877-1883 this iconic Basilica is the major seat of the Catholic religion in Vietnam and continues to entice a steady influx of intrigued visitors. Later, travel past the grand, French-style Saigon Post Office.

DAY 4: Saigon to Can Tho B/L/D

In the morning drive to My Tho and board your boat to cruise along the picturesque waterways of the Mekong River, passing rustic landscapes, floating markets, local villages and the four islands known as Dragon, Unicorn, Phoenix and Turtle, docking in Unicorn Island. A visual feast awaits as you wander around a vibrant showcase of exotic fruits being sold in copious farms, and also relish in the chance to sample local delights at the coconut sweet workshop for an authentic taste of Vietnamese indulgences. Later, arriving at a bee farm, taste the traditional honey tea, a locally produced refreshment, and meander along the Vam Chua Canal - a narrow channel, shaded by enveloping palm trees, listening to the serene sound of rippling water touching the sides of your 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 scenic canals and waterways in a small boat, taking in the sultry scenery and daily activities of

the vendors of the floating markets who live along these Mekong canals. Stop to witness the Mekong Delta's largest floating market of Cai Rang, a sight to behold where a bustling cluster of merchants compete with each other to sell fresh produce to local traders and tourists. After enjoying lunch at a local restaurant, transfer to the airport in Can Tho for your flight to Hanoi, where you will have an evening at leisure to settle in.

DAY 6: Hanoi B/L/D

A full day tour of Hanoi begins by weaving through the charming courtyards and gardens of the ancient Temple of Literature, followed by a visit to the ornate Presidential Palace, a distinctive edifice, strikingly recognisable by its mustard façade. Next, observe the iconic One Pillar Pagoda, designed to resemble a lotus flower which is a Buddhist symbol of enlightenment, before taking a short drive out of the city centre to take part in a local authentic cooking demonstration; sampling traditional flavours and spices often associated with Vietnamese cuisine, enjoy your tantalising creation for lunch. The afternoon continues with an enlightening visit to the National History Museum to discover an assortment of ancient artefacts from imperial Vietnam, before briefly stopping at the Hanoi Opera House to capture the grandeur which exudes this imposing colonial structure. Conclude today's walking tour as you navigate the swarming market stalls of Hanoi's Old Quarter, before enjoying an evening at a charming Water Puppet Show, a tradition which originated from local rice paddy farmers over 1000 years ago.

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 along the way. Embark on a small rowing boat on a tour of Vung Vieng, a scenic floating village in the heart Halong Bay's spellbinding emerald waters, before anchoring at Ho Dong Tien, literally translated as 'Fairy Lake Cave'. Mesmerising grottoes and calming waters form an unforgettable backdrop for today's Vietnamese cooking demonstration which takes place atop the sun deck, where a seafood dinner follows this evening. Retire to your cabin for tonight's stay upon beautiful Halong Bay.

DAY 8: Halong Bay to Hanoi* Brunch/D

Awake to the rising sun's glistening reflection from the centre of Halong Bay and begin your day with some calming Tai Chi. Later, snake through the bay's labyrinth of towering limestone islands peppered across this magnificent landscape on your way back to the mainland and travel back to the capital of Hanoi for a local dinner and 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.

*Please note: the Halong Bay cruise itinerary may change depending on the boat used

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP



Accommodation

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. **Please note: the hotels listed are provided for guidance only and final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days 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

E-mail: operation@lvtravel.vn

Emergency contact information

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

Contact	Telephone number
Anna Hanh	Office: 0084 983 096 032
Mr Len	Office: 0084 989 200 116

WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

Vietnam: Until 30th June 2021, a visa is not required for stays up to 15 days. From the 1st July 2021 and for stays longer than 15 days, a visa is required for entry into Vietnam. You can apply for an e-visa online at <https://evisa.xuathapcanh.gov.vn>. The cost of the visa is approximately USD\$25 and will take roughly 3 working days. Alternatively, 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 £105. 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. You can also visit the Embassy of Vietnam in London: 12-14 Victoria Road, London, W8 5RD. This visa information is a guide line only and is subject to change; up-to-date information regarding the process and fees will be advised at the time of calling the Travel Visa Company. **Cambodia:** If you have booked the Temples of Cambodia extension following your tour, you will need to purchase a visa for Cambodia which can be purchased on arrival. The cost of this is approximately USD \$30 per person and you will be required to bring a passport photo with you as well. Please note that you will need to have at least one completely blank page in your passport for the Cambodian visa to be issued.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call 0800 781 4237 and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. 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

It is your responsibility to check any health & vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in good time before your departure. Sources of information include; www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

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, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date then you may be asked to change to a different date and 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 your guide and driver; please allow approximately £2-£4 (US \$3-6) per person per day for the guide and £3.50 (US \$5) per person per day for the driver.

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
- Personal first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc

FLIGHT INFORMATION

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

IMPORTANT: 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 23kg of hold luggage. Hand luggage: One piece of hand baggage and one accessory not exceeding 12kg total weight for both. The total dimension of one hand baggage item must not exceed 115cm (56cm x 36cm x 23cm). The total dimension of

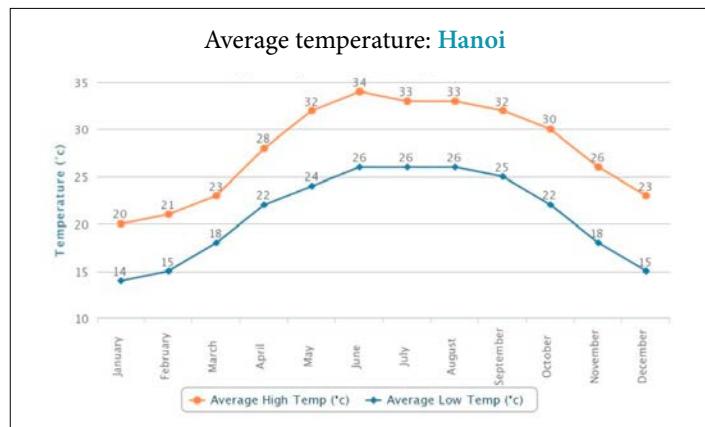
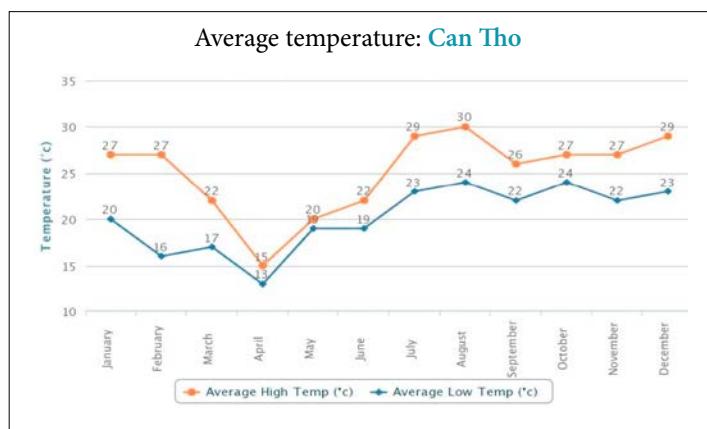
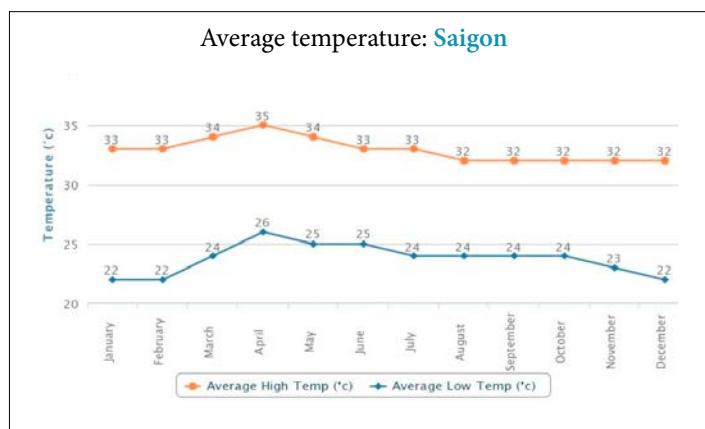
one accessory must not exceed 40cm x 30cm x 15cm. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in.

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 on 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.



HOI AN BEACH STAY

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



Le Belhamy Resort

TRIP OVERVIEW

Five days, four 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.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your beach extension to Hoi An.

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.

DAY 9: Hanoi to Da 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: 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.

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★ Sunrise Premium Resort Hoi An on Half Board. This will have been confirmed at booking.

Hotel Information

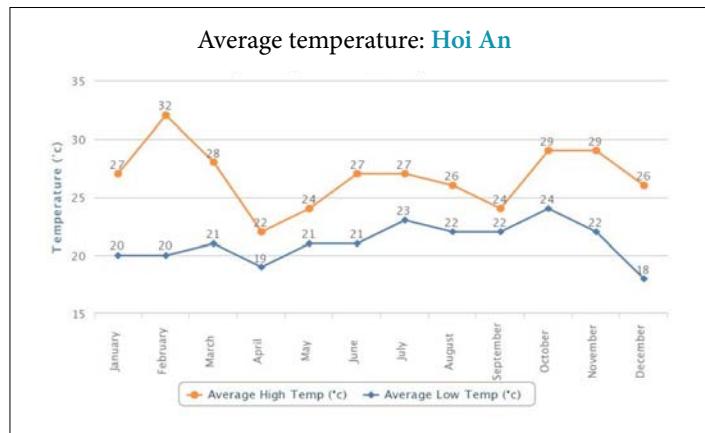
4★ Le Belhamy Resort

Address: Ha My Beach – Hoi An – Quang Nam
Tel: 0084 235 3941 888

5★ Sunrise Premium Resort Hoi An

Address: Cua Dai Beach, Hoi An
Tel: 0084 235 3937 777

WEATHER AND CLIMATE



Sunrise Premium Resort

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**

TEMPLES OF CAMBODIA

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



Tara Angkor Hotel

TRIP OVERVIEW

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.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

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 Phluk. 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.

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Hotel Information

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

Visas

If you have booked the Temples of Cambodia extension before the Hoi An beach stay extension you should request a multi entry visa for Vietnam. You will also 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. Please note that you will need to have at least one completely blank page in your passport for the Cambodian visa to be issued.

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 Heathrow.

Tipping

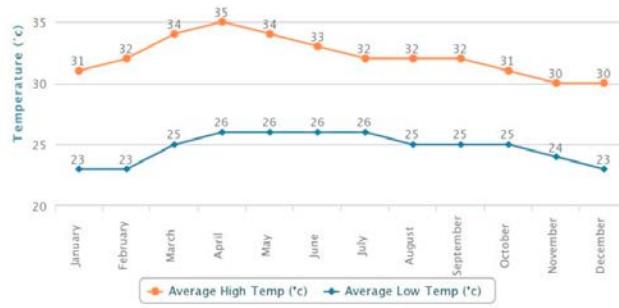
Tipping is common practice and seen as a way of life in Cambodia. It is customary to tip both your driver and guide \$5 (approximately £3.50) per person per day. For your convenience your guide will collect the full amount from you on your first day in Cambodia.

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

Average temperature: Siem Reap



For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**