



# ADVENTURE ASSOCIATES OF WA, INC.

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## **VIETNAM: CULTURAL AND CYCLING ADVENTURE**

An immersive 15-day tour through Vietnam, combining cycling, kayaking, homestay, ocean cruising, travel by riverboat and air, rejuvenation, and the camaraderie of adventurous women! From north to south, we cover many of the major attractions along the way, starting in the bustling city of Hanoi and ending along the Mekong River in Saigon. Enjoy meeting local villagers along the way in the picturesque fishing town and World Heritage site of Hoi An, the former Imperial capital of Hue and the historic capital of Ho Chi Minh City. Our expert guides will cycle with us past lush undulating hills to little known provincial villas and French-style cafes. The cycling is flat and suitable for all fitness levels, with a support vehicle the whole way! Enjoy an overnight cruise in warm and refreshing Ha Long Bay, eating fresh seafood, kayaking to secret caves, or relaxing on a private beach! By bicycle, you'll see breathtaking scenery at a natural pace and participate in the traditional and modern lifestyles of the Vietnamese people in the countryside and in the cities. (Tour 19 days inclusive of international travel).

**Trip Dates: November 13 – December 1, 2016**

**Land Costs: \$3495**

**TRAVEL DAYS: NOV 13-14** *Fly to Hanoi*

It may take you two days to get to Hanoi, depending on your flight connections. Some choose to stopover in Bangkok. Meals, transportation and Bangkok accommodation is on your own.

## **Day 1: Arrive Hanoi [D] (Wednesday November 15, 2016)**

Pass through immigration and customs at Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi, you will be met by your friendly tour guide for private transfer to your hotel down town. After check in, free at leisure on your own. If time permits and you have energy, you will be escorted on an interesting walk to discover the bustling yet amazing thousand-year-old “Old Quarter” in the heart of Hanoi. Welcome dinner and trip orientation at a great local restaurant located in a beautiful French villa where you will have an overview of Vietnamese authentic cuisine by witness upscale street vendors preparing your food. Overnight at hotel in Hanoi.

## **Day 2: Hanoi City Tour [B, L] (approximately 7 – 10km (4.5 – 6.2 miles))**

Our early morning exploration gives us a chance to see a different Hanoi...quiet streets and local Vietnamese practicing Tai Chi at Hoan Kiem Lake. You may want to see a flower market. After breakfast, steep yourself in history, tradition, and legend in a capital that has been inhabited continuously for a millennium.



Hanoi’s stately French- built section of town os largely intact will charm you. Cycling from tree-lined boulevards, passing the ancient Thang Long citadel, Soaring Dragon citadel dating back from 1010 toward the Tay lake, hop on and hop off your bike to visit Quan Thanh temple, one of 4 most sacred temples protecting Thang Long citadel from the North, continue to enjoying a city tour of Hanoi, place of visit include Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, his old Stilt-house, the One Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature, “Vietnam’s First University”. Dinner on your own, with a recommended restaurants and tips prepared by our culinary expert Ms. Diep To or escort by your guide

\* Lunch with Hanoi specialty, Bun Cha



### Day 3: Hanoi to Ha Long [B, L, D]



The Gulf of Tonkin was once the haunt of Vietnamese and Chinese pirates, but it is in Ha Long Bay the romance of old Vietnam still lingers, with majestic karst islets randomly scattered and the odd red sailed junk clipping across the waters. With over 1,600 limestone and dolomite islets sprinkled over an area of 1,500 square kilometers, UNESCO World Heritage Site Ha Long Bay offers a wonderland of "drowned" karst topography. The geomorphology of Ha Long Bay is known as a drowned karst landscape due to the exceptional combination of its limestone karst features which have been subject to repeated regression and transgression of the sea over geological time. Upon arrival in Ha Long Bay, embark on your private junk. Enjoy your welcome drink offer by friendly and helpful crew members, lunch with catch of the day will be served while we cruise the spectacular bay. After a short nap, you will be taken a small tender boat to visit a floating market to learn more in details how the community living on floating market live happily and peacefully at the sea. You will be pleased with the dinner banquet prepared and designed only for you by culinary expert, Ms Diep To. Overnight on the junk.

### Day 4: Ha Long [B, L, D]

Enjoy a Tai Chi lesson with crew member for those who can get up as early as 7 am. After breakfast, enjoy a lazy day on the mother boat or get on a transfer boat to explore beaches and other part that is known by a few tourists and enjoy kayaking to get a close up to this extraordinary geography. Return to your mother junk for a cooking lesson or enjoy



massage in your private cabin. Another special dinner is await for you tonight. After dinner, enjoy a movie or game. The wonderful crew members will show you to fish if you are interested. Another peaceful night on your private junk.

### **Day 5: Halong - Hanoi [B, L]**

After breakfast, we relax on the boat. Enjoy another wonderful meal before disembark to return to Hanoi. Dinner will be free on your own, you may want to discover Hanoi by night with a visit to a secret Café overlooking the charming Hoan Kiem Lake and Ngoc Son temple. Or enjoy a walk the Old Quarter by night.

Overnight in Ha Noi.

### **Day 6: Hanoi - Pu Bin/ Pu Luong Nature reserve [B, L, D]**

Today, you will depart the hotel at 8:30 am. Along the charming little roads to Mai Chau, you can view a large number of verdant farms, lush rice fields and small North – west ethnic villages. You will arrive in Pu Bin around noon and stay with Black Thai Ethnic Minority in their organic farm with authentic architecture of large traditional stilt-house. Welcome with a shoulder massage followed by a delicious lunch featuring Black Thai specialty. After a nap, you will be ready to walk the village and learn about the traditions and custom. After dinner, you will enjoy a traditional dance by young Thai girls who simply works on their farm, this is a great opportunities for you to learn about them and feel close to wonderful people who will make you feel home and truly welcome. They would love to teach you their dance. The bond you will have with them is unforgettable.





Note: The homestay is equipped with clean bathroom, hot shower and clean bed linen. Homestay accommodation is basic but genuinely is a superb authentic experience. You will have a chance to join in quotidian activities of local ethnic people, at the same time learn about their culture of which is fortunately still intact as well as try the spices of the mountain.

### **Day 7: Pu Bin [B, L, D] Cooking class with Black Thai Ethnic Minority**



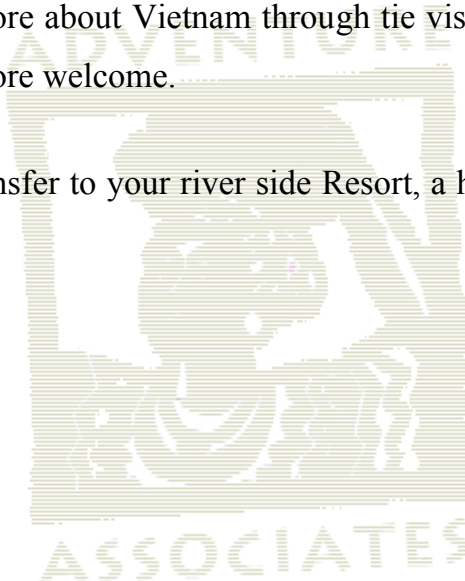
It is worthwhile to start your day with a cup of organic tea freshly harvested on the organic farm, followed by Yoga and meditation lesson. Enjoy breakfast cooked on fire wood. Today, you have a chance to meet with local people for learning to make artisan tea and spices or teaching English at Na Lut school. You can also participating on farming activities with local people.

### **Day 8: Pu Bin – Hanoi - Danang [B, L] 1h20m ✈**

After breakfast, saying good bye to the host family and the village. Drive back to Hanoi to enjoy **Hanoi Pho**, the famous Vietnamese noodle and the real Vietnamese coffee. If time permits, visit to have a chat with **Mr. Lan** who **escorted Henry Kissinger** and rebuilt more than half of Hanoi during and after the war to learn more about Vietnam through tie vision of intellectual people who lived the history to feel even more welcome.

Transfer to Noi Bai airport for your flight to Da Nang

Upon arrival in Da Nang, meet with your guide for transfer to your river side Resort, a hidden charm of Hoi An.



**Day 9: Hoi An biking tour [B, L] 🚲 approximately 20 – 30km (12.5 – 18.5 miles)**



Enjoy breakfast by the river with beautiful view before exploring this ancient port of trade. **Hoi An** is typically everyone's favorite stop in Vietnam. This quaint town features well- preserved traditional wooden architecture, a flourish cohort of establish cafes and restaurant, and a picture square setting on the Thu Bon River. Hoi An is a wonderful place for custome tailoring and our unique, leisurely cycling tour that travels by boat and bicycle to neighbouring villages, via green fields and Cua Dai beach if time permits. You will be escorted to an off the beaten track restaurant, a gem of Hoi An gastronomy discovered and recommended by our culinary expert.

**Day 10: Hoi An - Hue. Biking via villages. [B, L] 🚲 approximately 60 – 70km (37.5 – 43.5 miles)**

After breakfast, you will depart Hoi An for **Cham museum**. Your cycling today includes lots of beautiful off the normal tourist road via peaceful villages to meet with farmer, fisherman and lots of interesting local encounters. Arrive in **Hue** in the late afternoon after a lunch in a local seafood restaurant on the immense lake as far as you can see. Dinner will be free on your own or escorted by your tour guide. Overnight in Hue.

**Day 11: Hue [B, L] 🚲 approximately 15 – 20km (9.5 – 12.5 miles)**



While the other big cities changed dramatically, today the sleepy ancient capital city of Hue remains a quiet town of much smaller population. Hue main's attraction, aside from the

tranquil environment, are the imperial tombs scattered in the country side waiting for you to discover on your bikes. Sightseeing along the **Perfume River** also offer the historic citadel and Purple, or **Forbidden city**. The **Thien Mu Pagoda** is located overlooking the river is Vietnam's most important Buddhist site.

**Day 12: Hue to Ho Chi Minh city [B, L]**



*1h30m*



A great chance for you to truly enjoy the tranquil environment with a walk to the nearby Dong Ba Market, once the main resource of food for the Imperial City. Check out at noon then transfer to Phu Bai airport for your flight to Ho Chi Minh City, former Sai Gon, once the biggest and the most developed city in Asia. Today, it is again a boom town and one of Asia most- rapidly changing cities. Meet your guide and transfer to your hotel. Enjoy a city tour of Saigon, including Notre Dame Cathedral, the Old Central Post Office and the Great Municipal Theater where movie scenes have been filmed. These are the best among few historic sites left from either the colonial and American period.

**Day 13: Ho Chi Minh City – My Tho – Vinh Long [B, L, D]**  *approximately 35 – 45km (22 – 28 miles)*

Leaving Saigon, our shuttle will take you for about 1.5hrs drive to **My Tho**, the gateway to the mighty Mekong. We then board our boat, drifting down bustling arteries of the Mekong from where we veer off to travel down the tranquil canals. Our sightseeing on the island includes a visit to a traditional **Mekong Delta** home and its kitchen, where we sample seasonal fruit along with tea and honey and even local wine. We then walk to the village's boat landing where we board small sampans and paddle along narrow arroyos (waterways).

We will break for lunch at a local restaurant.

Following lunch, we travel to **Cai Lav** where we collect our bicycles and enjoy a leisurely



two-hour afternoon bicycle ride on peaceful country lanes and quiet roads that pass through local villages and along canals. This offers you several stops on the route seeing seasonal fruits at the tropical plantations such as rambutans, durian, longan, jackfruit, etc (and they do taste nicer minutes off the tree!), perhaps watching farmers harvesting peanuts, visiting a coconut candy factory, a puffed rice factory, stopping at a market to buy fruit, etc. Arriving in **Cai Be**, we board a boat to the floating market and then cruise over 1.5km-wide Mekong river to your accommodation. You can expect spectacular sunsets along the Mekong. Spend the night on Binh Hoa Phuoc island.

## Overnight in Vinh Long

**Day 14: Vinh Long – Can Tho [B, L, D]**  *approximately 35 – 45km (22 – 28 miles)*



Following breakfast, under the cool shelter of the green canopy, we take a bike ride for half an hour on small paths, mostly shared with just pedestrians and other local cyclists and scooters, to the ferry crossing for **Vinh Long**. We then have an extended ride to **Can Tho**. While our exact route will vary (depending on our group's cycling abilities), you can expect to pass through villages (with brick kiln and terracotta roofs), past rice fields, and by innumerable rural riverside villages. We will break for lunch at a local restaurant. Afterward, optional transfer to Can Tho or continued biking through the tranquil paths and lush canals of the area, along the scenic, back country roads to **Dong Thanh**. Late afternoon promenad along the city quay, or more cycling along riverside Can Tho. **Overnight in Can Tho**

**Day 15: Can Tho – Ho Chi Minh [B, L, D]** 🚲 *approximately 35 – 45km (22 – 28 miles)*



After breakfast, we embark on a morning boat trip to explore the vibrant, bustling **Cai Rang floating market**, one of the last authentic floating markets in Asia swirling with hundreds of boats zig-zagging on the river, and also to experience more cruises along small quiet winding waterways around Can Tho. We have chance to visit a local rice husking mill, or a factory producing vermicelli, etc. Afterward, we mount our bikes for another two hours pleasant riding under the lush green, jungle canopy in one of the most scenic areas of the Delta, passing through numerous rural villages alongside small canals, greeting locals (many of whom will also be on bicycle). Also pausing at other local markets along the way to watch how the local merchandisers do business.

We also visit the **ancient Binh Thuy house** amidst the scenery of the tranquil village. Built in 1870 and has long been renowned for its ancient beauty along with its unique architecture - French style but still remained traditional Southern Vietnamese style, this ancient house is one of the most appealing sites in Can Tho.

Following lunch, return to Saigon by our private van. You might want mount your bikes again and savor a final ride from **Ben Luc** on a route lined with expansive rice fields on your way back to Saigon.

Enjoy farewell dinner at restaurant in Ho Chi Minh.

**Overnight in Saigon**

## Day 18: Ho Chi Minh Departure [B]

After you have your breakfast at the hotel, it will be your free time for shopping. After that, your driver and guide will help you transfer to the airport for your flight back to your home.

### [End of tour ...]

## Day 19: Arrive USA or other extension destination.

**NOTE:** While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of the trip route and activities, rather than an inflexible schedule. Hotels and flights are subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control.

### TOUR PRICE:

Tour class	Tour price in USD per person for group of			
	6 – 8	8 - 10	10 – 12	Deposit
First class	\$3,495	\$3,275	\$3,215	\$500 (\$200 non-refundable)

Difficulty: Moderate (Cycling, Kayaking, Cultural Immersion, Hiking)

Single supplement: **\$500 USD/person**

### Remarks:

- *Price per person is based on twin-shared accommodation*
- *Itinerary is subjected to change due to weather/traffic condition*
- *Airfare & flight time is subjected to change without prior notice*
- *Depending on the weather and the road condition updated by our associates, the itinerary can be adjusted to match the condition.*

### **Inclusive:**

- Private guided tour with best driver and experienced English speaking guide
- Dedicated, local tour manager on call 24 hours/day
- All sightseeing tour and transfer services as detailed in our itinerary.
- Hotel accommodation with daily breakfast
- Cruise in Halong Bay:
  - + Group 6 - 8pax: Marguerite 7 cabins - Charter boat
  - + Group 8 – 10 pax: Maguerite 7 cabins - Charter boat
  - + Group 10 – 12 pax: Garden Bay 10 cabins - Charter boat
  - + Group 12 – 14 pax: Garden Bav 10 cabins - Charter boat



- Flights: Hanoi – Da Nang & Da Nang – Ho Chi Minh City (economy class).
- All entrance fees.
- Meals: Daily breakfast, and as specified on itinerary (L=lunch, D=dinner)-
- Private, new-model air conditioned car
- Bicycle in Hanoi, Hue, Hoian, Mekong Delta as detailed in our itinerary.
- 02 bottles of mineral water per person per day on bus on days of transfer and sightseeing only. (Snack and 04 bottles of mineral water per person per day on days of cycling).

**Exclusive:**

- Services not mentioned in our itinerary
- International Airfare
- Visa fees in Vietnam,
- Passport and fees ( Must be good 6 months post travel return date)
- Travel insurance (cover against all cancellation costs, medical expenses, including repatriation, in the event of accident of illness)
- Personal expenses and service not mentioned above
- alcoholic beverages; tips & gratuities to guides and drivers; and items of a personal nature (admission fees during free time, shopping, phone calls, laundry, etc.); Single supplement fee (\$500) if desired

**How Strenuous is the cycling:** You don't need to be an Olympic athlete; the cycling is as challenging as you make it. We do have two passes to cross, but the intent is to see the country lifestyle and interact with the people. It is recommended that you have beginner level (not novice) bicycling experience. There is a support van for cycling trips, which will carry your personal gear, water, refreshments and you, if you'd like a break.

**About our guides:** It is our goal at Adventure Associates to staff our women's travel programs with highly qualified female guides. Guide availability and/or local cultural traditions sometimes limit the ability to find and hire local women who are educated, trained and skilled for the job requirements. We are committed to the training and education process for women to escort our travel adventures. Please understand, however, we cannot guarantee an all-women staff.

**Do I need a Visa for travel to Vietnam:** Yes, a tourist visa is required for traveling in Vietnam. The approximate cost is \$45 (Visa fee \$20 /Stamp fee \$25. Visa information will be in the Pre-Trip Travel Planner.

**Travel & Trip Insurance:** We strongly recommend that travel insurance be purchased immediately following your registration. The insurance protects you and your money from late cancellations, accidents or illness in remote areas, emergency evacuation, loss of baggage, airline flight changes and other unexpected delays. Consult Adventure Associates for advise.

**Transportation/Flight Arrangements:** Upon your registration, Adventure Associates will work closely with you on your individual flight plans. Certain programmed activities are dependent on flight schedule - you should verify your flight itinerary with Adventure Associates **before** purchase.

**How to Register:** Please contact our office for a complete registration packet. Complete the application form and return it to our office along with the appropriate deposit. Upon receipt of your application, we will send you a confirmation and details about your pre-trip preparation. For immediate confirmation, you may charge your deposit to credit card by phone or fax.

**Payment Schedule:** We accept Visa and Master Card.

\*Note: Due to the fluctuating state of the American dollar, the trip price is based upon the dollar value at the time of printing, and is subject to change.

\$500 deposit due at time of registration

Final payment due three months prior to departure

**Cancellation & Refund Policy**

If you must cancel prior to departure, the following fee will be assessed based upon our receipt of your written cancellation request:

Days Prior to Departure (trip destination)

- 90 or more ..... \$200
- 60 to 89 ..... \$500
- 45 to 59 ..... 50% fee
- 1 to 44 ..... 100% fee

Itineraries are subject to change.

No partial refunds are possible for any unused portion of your trip.

Penalties on airline tickets are subject to the individual air carrier's rules and regulations. Departure is defined as the date of the first flight, or the trip departure date as indicated on our Trip Schedule, whichever comes first.

Once a trip has been confirmed medical circumstances will not be considered as exceptions to our cancellation policy. However, if you have purchased a comprehensive Travel Insurance plan that covers cancellation, you may be able to retrieve some of the funds.

