



## Vietnam Tailor Made Tour 14 Days

Designed for Ms. Judy Ho by Huy

Please note: this is a tailor-made itinerary - all elements can be fully customised

### Key

B = Breakfast  
L = Lunch  
D = Dinner  
G = Guide  
GP = Guide pick-up  
DP = Driver pickup

### Day 1 (Saturday, 24 March 2007): Hanoi arrival (D, GP)

Arriving at Noi Bai airport in Hanoi, you'll be met and driven to your hotel. You'll have time to relax after your journey. \*Pick up 2 train tickets at front desk.

In the afternoon (5PM), you'll cruise ride around the Colonial Quarter in a cyclo to discover the city's architectural mixture of French colonial style, social realism (mostly public buildings - designed or influenced by the USSR), pagodas and communal houses with many Chinese features, merchants' residences, 'tube' dwellings, modern buildings and vernacular houses.

You'll have a welcome dinner at a good restaurant. In the evening, you'll have tickets for a performance of traditional Water Puppetry (an art form unique to northern Vietnam, and an interesting, light-hearted introduction to its rural culture). Your overnight stay will be in Hanoi.

### Day 2 (Sunday, 25 March 2007): Hanoi orientation (G)

You'll have the whole day to explore Vietnam's capital city. Your guide will take you to the Temple of Literature, the first university in Vietnam dating back to the 11th century, and a popular attraction, as is Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum. You'll then drive to the excellent Ethnology Museum for an overview of Vietnam's 54 distinct ethnic groups in anticipation of your trip to Sapa.

After lunch, you'll call in at the serene Tran Quoc Pagoda, the oldest in Hanoi, on the banks of Hanoi's Ho Tay (West) Lake. The centre of Hanoi, including Hoan Kiem Lake, the Ngoc Son temple and the bustling Old Quarter is a magnet for visitors. It's a maze of shopping streets and restaurants with a hotchpotch of architecture - traditional tube houses, religious buildings, artisans' workshops and cottages, colonial houses and modern concrete edifices. It's noisy and hectic, but definitely a 'must-see' attraction.

*We'll arrange your programme to avoid the busy times at popular destinations, but if there's anything you particularly want to see, let us know.*

In the evening, you'll be free until your car arrives to take you to Hanoi railway station in time to board the 10 pm overnight sleeper to Lao Cai.

### Day 3 (Monday, 26 March 2007): Lao Cai/Sapa (L, G)

You'll arrive in the early morning, at around 6 am. You'll be met and taken up into the mountains to Sapa, a small town perched on the mountainside opposite Mt. Fan Si Pan, Vietnam's highest peak. After breakfast, you'll hike down a scenic valley calling in at the H'mong ethnic minority villages on the way. After a streamside picnic lunch, you'll drive to more villages belonging to the H'mong, Day and Red Dao ethnic minority groups. Later in the afternoon, you'll return to Sapa for your overnight accommodation.

### Day 4 (Tuesday, 27 March 2007): Sapa/Coc Ly ethnic market/Hanoi (L, G)

After breakfast, you'll be taken to visit a market frequented by ethnic minority peoples. The first part of your journey will take you through Lao Cai, which is a border crossing point, and alongside the river marking the boundary with China. After a picnic lunch, you'll return to Lao Cai for a shower and freshen-up before boarding the sleeper train to Hanoi.

*Although it's quite a long drive, the landscape is attractive and the ethnic markets are a fascinating experience. Unlike those in the tourist areas, the markets that we choose are for not only buying and selling, but also meeting places for ethnic minority people to meet and exchange news. There will be plenty of colour and authentic costumes, but very little to buy as souvenirs unless you want to barter for a water buffalo or a sack of fertiliser!*

The trips to ethnic minority markets must be on Tuesday (Coc Ly Market).

**\*\*Get tickets before leaving guide!**

### **Day 5 (Wednesday, 28 March 2007): Hanoi/Ha Long**

When you arrive at Hanoi railway station at around 5 am, your car will arrive to transfer you to Halong Bay. **Driver pick up at Hanoi train station via Stay in Vietnam.**

After an early breakfast, you'll leave for Ha Long Bay, one of the most spectacular UNESCO World Heritage Areas and the world's largest marine limestone 'karst' landscape. There you'll board a wooden junk to take you to the busy World Heritage area and then to an island beach. Weather permitting, you'll be able to swim, fish, and climb a hill (not a mountain!) for an overview of the Bay's remarkable seascape. From there, you'll board a tender to visit a fishing village - you'll also have an opportunity investigate one of the bay's sea level caves in a small sampan or a kayak. The route is designed to avoid the busy areas and includes a very quiet location for your overnight stay.

*For your two-day Ha Long excursion, you'll board the Ginger, the best wooden boat on the Bay. It's a wooden junk based on the model of the old Vietnamese court vessels with two barge sails, a wide transom and rectangular superstructure. The boat can accommodate a maximum of 20 people, so you're likely to be joining other travellers for the cruise.*

*All cabins are air-conditioned and have windows overlooking the bay. The floor area of each of the eight Superior cabins is 14 m<sup>2</sup> - the two Deluxe cabins are 16 m<sup>2</sup> each. Superior cabins are furnished with two twin beds - Deluxe cabins have a double queen size bed. The interior panelling, floor and furniture are of hard wood. Each cabin has a wardrobe, desk, pillows, white cotton sheets, and an en-suite toilet and shower with a good selection of high-quality toiletries. All meals, usually based on fresh seafood, will be provided on board. Kayaking is available upon request and at surcharge.*

### **Day 6 (Thursday, 29 March 2007): Ha Long/Hue**

You'll wake in fresh air of the bay with a swim and/or a Tai Chi session on the large sundeck (beginners welcome!). After a light breakfast pastry and tea or coffee, you'll dock to visit one of the most famous caves in the Bay. You'll return to the junk for a brunch while cruising back to dock around noon whereupon you'll leave for the airport for your evening flight to Hue (**VN247 19:30-12:40 19:25-20:35**). Your overnight accommodation will be in Hue. **Driver pick up at Hbay to airport via Stay in Vietnam.**

### **Day 7 (Friday, 30 March 2007): Hue (approximately 40km) (D, G)**

After breakfast, pick up at 8AM. You'll cycle along the Perfume River to visit the Citadel and Hue's best-known religious site, Thien Mu Pagoda (famous in Vietnam for the protests against the communists at the time of the American war).

After lunch, you'll continue along country lanes accompanied only be light local traffic - (mainly bicycles, buffaloes and Hondas!) to the tombs of King Tu Duc and Khai Dinh, with some sections of

off road through lush countryside. If time permit, you might consider a ride to Thanh Toan covered bridge as well.

In the evening, you'll sit down for dinner in the pleasant surroundings and a comfortable atmosphere of a garden house. The owner will prepare and serve a traditional meal based on the distinctive characteristics of classic Hue cuisine. Your overnight stay will be in Hue.

*Each Royal mausoleum reflects the personality of the Emperor it commemorates. The most majestic is that of Emperor Minh Mang, a staunch follower of Confucianism with many wives, concubines and a small army of children. Planned by the Emperor and built shortly after his death in formal Chinese style, it's opulent and exotic, and a good example of classic Sino-Vietnamese architecture.*

*The tomb of Tu Duc, the 'poet Emperor', is set in an elegant garden with a magnificent lake and pavilion complex. The tomb, unlike the others, is simplicity itself despite the lavish opulence of his reign (it's really just a monument - he was buried elsewhere to thwart grave robbers).*

*In complete contrast to Emperor Tu Duc's stylish creation, the tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh is an unprepossessing concrete construction on the side of a wide valley. Its interest lies in the uneasy combination of Vietnamese and European features, the use of fragments of ceramics and glass for decoration, and the striking views from the courtyard in front of the mausoleum.*

*The garden houses are a unique feature of Hue. The houses are traditional, privately owned, and set in attractive formal gardens. Some have connections with the old Royal Imperial Court. Hue traditional architecture has long had close associations with the natural environment. The garden houses reflect this association. Each is highly individual - house and garden, people and scenery, plants, clouds and water co-exist and blend with each other in a harmonious context. The narrow streets and abundant flora give the garden house area a country village feeling.*

#### **Day 8 (Saturday, 31 March 2007): Hue/Danang/Hoi An (approximately 40km) (L, G)**

A classic day of cycling, riding as much or as little as desired. You'll drive by bus beyond the city limits of Hue 18km (or 20 minutes) out to the coast before beginning the ride off the beaten track for 40km along a picturesque, very narrow peninsular road from Thuan An beach to Vinh Loc. You'll cycle in the shade of coconut trees, stop to explore the hundreds of ancestral tombs scattered in the large sand dunes. At the end of the peninsular, you'll hop on a local ferry to cross the estuary of the Perfume River and ride a further 11km along this spectacular trail to loop to Highway 1. From here there is no other option but to hit the highway. You'll then be transferred the rest of the way to Hoi An, a delightful old trading town and UNESCO World Heritage Site. You'll spend the night in Hoi An. **\*\*Get tickets before leaving guide!**

#### **Day 9 (Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup> 2007): Hoi An**

After breakfast, visit the Ancient Town and see its considerable significance in the history of Vietnam. After that, your time will be your own. You'll spend the night in Hoi An.

*Hoi An town is a UNESCO World Heritage area. An ancient trading port, once the largest in Indochina, Hoi An was a meeting point for many cultures that left their mark in the different architectural features of its wooden buildings. The original traditional street pattern still exists, as does the quay that once welcomed ships from all over East Asia and beyond. Many remained there for months at a time, waiting for favourable trade winds to carry them home.*

*There are plenty of good restaurants offering a variety of cuisines and price levels. The town is also a good place for shopping for silk. You can have your clothes tailor-made within a day or two at reasonable cost.*

#### **Day 10 (Monday, April 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007): Hoi An/Danang/Dalat (transit in Ho Chi Minh City)**

After an early breakfast, **find a driver** to take you to the airport for your morning flight to Ho Chi Minh City (VN321 8:00-9:10) to connect with the flight to Dalat (VN464 11:10-11:50 ~~10:50-11:30~~). On arrival, **find transport** to the city centre for your check-in. You'll then visit the Linh Phuoc Pagoda and an embroidery workshop in an attractive garden setting and Dalat market. Your overnight stay will be in Dalat.

The flight VN464 (10:50-11:30) departs on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only.

**Day 11 (Tuesday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> 2007): Dalat biking and hiking (approximately 30km) (L, G)**  
Go to Phat Tire Venture in Dalat by 9AM. Their address is 73 Truong Cong Dinh - Dalat.

After breakfast, you'll cycle on trails along the lakes, then hike to the top of Pinhatt Mountain. This mixed activity combines a great off-road ride on single track through pine forest with a hike up to one of the best lookout spots in Dalat. You'll then cycle down to Tuyen Lam Lake, ditch the bikes before hiking up the mountain, have lunch and then ride back up to Dalat. Your overnight stay will be in Dalat.

**\*\*Get tickets before leaving guide!**

**Day 12 (Wednesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007): Dalat/Ho Chi Minh City (G)**

**Find driver** to take you to the airport for your flight back to Ho Chi Minh City (VN465 9:50-10:30 ~~12:10-12:50~~). After check-in at your hotel and refreshment, pick up at 1:45-2PM. You'll visit the History Museum where there is a special exhibition of the 5th century 'Oc Eo' civilisation. The Museum of War Remnants provides a very partial, but riveting, perspective of the 'American War': not for the squeamish! The huge Ben Thanh market, one of the liveliest areas of Ho Chi Minh City, is packed with every conceivable commodity. You'll spend the night in Ho Chi Minh City.

The flight VN465 (12:10-12:50) departs on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday only.

**Day 13 (Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 2007): Cycling to Cu Chi (approximately 30km) (G)**

A morning drive will take you out of the crowded area. You'll then mount your bike and start a 30 km ride through the countryside to see how rural people live and work. You'll have opportunity to view occupations such as cashew nut farming, duck breeding, rice farming and production of rice paper, a key ingredient in Vietnamese cuisine. You'll reach the famous Cu Chi tunnels, a byzantine maze of underground passages, chambers, rooms and booby traps used by both the Vietminh and the Viet Cong to suddenly materialise as if from nowhere, launch a lightning ambush, and vanish equally rapidly. You'll spend the night in Ho Chi Minh City.

**Day 14 (Friday, April 6<sup>th</sup> 2007): Ho Chi Minh City**

**Mekong Delta trip via Stay in Vietnam.** Pickup at Hotel at 8AM.

The price for this private tour for 2 people is per person in US dollars: US\$2,452.00

These prices are valid to April 30, 2007. Please note bank transfer fees are not included.

**Our price includes:**

- Breakfast and accommodation sharing a twin or double room.
- Pick-ups and transfers by private air-conditioned vehicle as specified in the itinerary above (please note: pick-ups will be either by a guide and driver or, where a guide is not necessary, a driver - all unaccompanied drivers will be briefed in advance, and will carry a mobile phone to ensure smooth transfer arrangements)
- Domestic flight tickets: Hanoi - Hue, Danang - Ho Chi Minh City, Ho Chi Minh City - Dalat - Ho Chi Minh City (all economic class), including domestic airport taxes.

- Return train tickets: Hanoi - Lao Cai - Hanoi (four-berth Superior cabin in Victoria Express carriage).
- Boat cruise as specified in the programme. In Halong Bay, you'll cruise on Ginger Junk. The boat will be fully licensed and comply with current safety regulations.
- Road travel in an appropriate private air-conditioned vehicle for transfer and back up when cycling as itinerary with an experienced safe driver.
- The use of bicycle/mountain bike and cyclos.
- The services of experienced English-speaking guides as indicated in the itinerary (please note: guides will be on hand from pick-up until guests' return to their hotel or reaching their destination). Free days or part days will not include the services of a guide unless requested and included in the final itinerary.
- Where necessary, entry fees for all visits as mentioned in the programme.
- Lunches and dinners (as specified in the itinerary) in the best local restaurants, or picnics where no suitable restaurant is available, and full board on the boat in Ha Long Bay.
- Drinking water for cycling days as itinerary
- Snack, soft drink and local fruits for cycling days
- Simple First Aid Kit for cycling days.
- VAT and other taxes.

### Our price does not include:

- International flight tickets and airport tax.
- Visas.
- Lunches, dinners except as specified above.
- Drinks, gratuities and personal expenses.
- Camera fees (if any)
- Insurance.
- Charge for hotel early check-in (before 14:00) and/or late check-out (after 12:00) (if any).
- Other services not mentioned above.

### \*\*\*\* Hotel list:

- Hanoi: Gouman Hotel (\*\*\*\* comfortable hotel about a fifteen-minute walk from the city centre - Run-Of-House room).
- Sapa: Victoria Sapa Resort (\*\*\*\* the best hotel in Sapa, indoor swimming pool/fitness centre in separate building - Superior room).
- Hue: Saigon Morin Hotel (\*\*\*\* colonial building overlooking the Perfume River - Superior room).
- Hoi An: Life Resort [Featured Hotel] (\*\*\*\* low-rise colonial-style architecture on the Thu Bon riverbank, shuttle boat to beach, good spa and 'wellness' facilities, etc. - Superior Garden View room).
- Dalat: Novotel Hotel (\*\*\*\* city centre - Deluxe room).
- Ho Chi Minh City: Grand Hotel (\*\*\*\* colonial architecture, in the heart of the commercial centre - Deluxe room).

Please note that Vietnam hotels do not recognise provisional reservations, so specific hotels cannot be guaranteed until you have booked your chosen tour. As many of the better hotels are often full during the October to April peak season, early booking is advisable.

### Visa services and prices (if required):

#### Option 1: visa in advance

We send you a form requesting basic information (full name, passport details and so on). You fill in one for each person and send them to me. We then apply for the visas at the Immigration Office in Hanoi. After about five working days, we'll be able to pick up the approval paper and fax it to the Vietnamese Embassy in your country. We'll let you know so you can send your passports to the Embassy by post with a cheque to pay the visa fee. Alternatively, after we fax the approval paper to the Embassy, you can go there to pick up your visas in person. Please ring the embassy for their opening hours and arrangements. For this service, we charge US\$25 per person for the application procedure and fax.

**Option 2: visa on arrival**

We can apply for visas upon arrival for you. For this, we send the approval document direct to you by fax or by scanned attached file. In the extremely unlikely possibility that you'll be asked about your visa status, the official document will ensure that you'll have no inconvenience at your departure airport. When you arrive at Hanoi airport, our guide(s) will be waiting for you at the immigration desk to help you to fill in the form to obtain your visas. For this service, we charge US\$20 per person for the application procedure and assistance at the airport. You'll also have to pay a further US\$25 per person directly to the customs officer for the visa stamp, making the total cost of each visa US\$45 per person. For this type of visa, each of you will need one colour passport photograph to give to the immigration officer.

[Please view our booking conditions at www.haivenu-vietnam.com](http://www.haivenu-vietnam.com)