VIETNAM ITINERARY | NOVEMBER 1–13, 2019

Renaissance and Reconciliation: Immerse yourself in the rich and complex history of this resolute country on a true insider’s tour of Vietnam.

NOVEMBER 1

Depart the United States for Ho Chi Minh City.

NOVEMBER 2: HO CHI MINH CITY  R, D

• Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to rooms at the five-star Caravelle Hotel (or similar), located in the heart of the business, shopping, and entertainment district.

• This evening, enjoy a cocktail reception and welcome dinner.

NOVEMBER 3: HO CHI MINH CITY  B, L, D

• Begin the morning with a lecture on contemporary Vietnamese history by Tim Dooling, author of Exploring Ho Chi Minh City.

• Enjoy lunch at Pho Binh Restaurant which was originally owned by Mr. Ngo Van Toai, supporter of the communist struggle against the South Vietnamese Government. The restaurant became the center of Viet Cong strategy in Saigon. Downstairs locals enjoyed bowls of noodle soup while on the second floor, an elite Viet Cong cell planned activities which changed the course of the war.

• After lunch, visit the War Remnants Museum which opened in 1975 as the Gallery of American Crime. The museum offers a chilling account of the Vietnam War, known in Vietnam as the American War.

• Dinner at Hoa Tuc Restaurant, located in a former opium refinery.

Scheduled events and their timing are subject to change.
NOVEMBER 4: MEKONG DELTA, HO CHI MINH CITY

- Take a full-day excursion to the Mekong Delta. We’ll begin with a drive to the natural beauty of the Bến Tre province. Known as “Coconut Island,” it’s home to people who still rely on centuries-old methods of production. Our program focuses on the Giồng Trôm and Phong Nam districts, areas relatively untouched by commercial tourism. We’ll meet with a group of local people to learn about the villages they call home and the idyllic rivers they use as a part of their daily lives.

- Upon arrival in Bến Tre, take a xích lô (cycle rickshaw) ride through the local village of Hưu Định to admire the green fields and gardens. Continue with a short walk to Hưu Phước Bridge, where we will meet a private boat for a cruise through small canals surrounded by beautiful tropical scenery.

- Visit a family-owned coconut-processing business, where we will learn the hundreds of uses of the coconut. Return to our boat and cruise across the water to a brick-making factory, where the locals still use ancient methods to produce bricks by hand.

- Enjoy a very easy cycling trip and visit a local rice-noodle factory that produces hủ tiếu noodles, one of the most popular dishes in the region. Take a short walk to a private home to enjoy fresh fruits and tea before boarding a rowing sampan to continue our canal tour, an ideal way to experience the tranquility and lush beauty of the region.

- Enjoy lunch at the picturesque Mango Restaurant on the river. After lunch, our private boat will take us back to Bến Tre, where a bus will meet us for the return to Ho Chi Minh City in the late afternoon.

- Dinner tonight is at your leisure.

NOVEMBER 5: HO CHI MINH CITY

- For those who would like to try a traditional and very local Vietnamese breakfast, rise early and join the morning rush for a cup of Vietnamese black coffee (cà phê đá) or condensed-milk coffee (cà phê súra) and a Vietnamese baguette. It’s a great chance to see how the city wakes up and observe the crazy morning traffic made up of cars, rickshaws, and motorbikes.

- Meet with Dr. Biu Tran Phuong, former president of Hoa Sen University, who will give a lecture on the history of Vietnam including cultural changes since the end of the war and exploring the role of women as part of that change.

- Continue on to visit the Reunification Palace where the first Communist tanks parked upon arriving on April 30, 1975.

- Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

- Enjoy a presentation this morning with poet and literary critic Inrasara. From textbooks and poetry to literary criticism and publishing, this accomplished literary jack-of-all-trades will discuss the preservation of his culture, the challenge that launched his impressive career, and the state of contemporary Vietnamese poetry today.

- Visit the National Museum of Vietnamese History which has over 200,000 exhibits covering items from prehistory up to the 1947 revolution and the founding of the democratic Republic of Vietnam.

- End the afternoon meeting with journalist Dien Luong, a free-lance and investigative journalist who covers politics, inequality and globalization.

- Enjoy a delicious dinner at the Bloom Restaurant.
NOVEMBER 6: DA NANG  
**B, L, D**

- Take a morning flight to Danang. Upon arrival, drive to Hoi An, a city that retains the feel of centuries past. Explore the Japanese covered bridge and the Tan Ky House.

- Enjoy lunch at the Brother’s Café, located in a colonial era police station on the banks of the Thu Bon River.

- Travel by road to Mỹ Sơn, considered to be one of Vietnam’s most impressive Cham sites. Monuments are set in a verdant valley surrounded by hills and overlooked by Hon Quap Mountain. This site of 70 redbrick temple towers, dedicated to Hindu deities, represents the height of Cham spiritual and artistic expression, and a sense of ruined majesty provides the backdrop to the jungle not far away.

- Return to Danang for overnight at the Melia Danang.

- Enjoy dinner at a local restaurant.

NOVEMBER 7: HUE  
**B, L, D**

- This morning depart for the Cham Museum, which houses the finest collection of Cham sculpture in the world.

- Continue on to meet with staff from GreenViet, a biodiversity conservation center based in Da Nang that has been battling with land investors who are trying to develop the land for tourism infrastructure.

- After lunch at a local restaurant, drive to Hue, which served as Vietnam’s political capital from 1802 to 1945 under the 13 emperors of the Nguyen Dynasty.

- Overnight in superior rooms at the La Residence Hotel, an enchanting boutique hotel on the banks of the Perfume River overlooking the former imperial citadel.

- This evening, take a boat ride on the Perfume River to dinner at a lovely local restaurant.

NOVEMBER 8: HUE  
**B, L**

- Spend the day in the former demilitarized zone (DMZ), two hours north of Huế. The DMZ was established as a dividing line between North and South Vietnam as a result of the First Indochina War. During the Vietnam War, it became important as the battleground demarcation separating North Vietnamese from South Vietnamese territory.

- Meet with staff from Project RENEW which was co-founded by Chuck Searcy in 2001 as an effort to reduce the number of deaths and injuries caused by remaining cluster bombs.

- After lunch, drive about an hour to Khe Sanh to visit infamous battle sites along with former U.S. military bases.

- Return to Hue late afternoon.

- Dinner at leisure this evening.
NOVEMBER 9: HUE
B, L

• This morning, visit the imperial tomb of Tu Duc, considered one of the most beautiful imperial tombs of Hue.

• Enjoy lunch at Jardin Caramboles.

• After lunch, visit the Imperial City, a citadel-within-a-citadel, housing the emperor’s residence, temples and palaces, and the main buildings of state, within enormous long walls still punctured with artillery fire from the war.

• Enjoy the rest of the afternoon at leisure.

• Dinner is at leisure.

NOVEMBER 10: HANOI
B, L, D

• Take a morning flight to Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi, a charming city with pleasant lakes, shaded boulevards, and lush public parks. The city center is an architectural museum piece and its blocks of ochre buildings retain the air of a provincial French town of the 1930s.

• Drive to the Temple of Literature, which was erected in 1070 under Emperor Lý Thánh Tông during the construction of the royal city. The temple is home to two very important institutions: a shrine to Confucius as well as the site of the country’s first university. The cluster of well-preserved buildings is considered an excellent example of traditional Vietnamese architecture.

• Enjoy lunch at KOTO (Know One, Teach One). This stunning restaurant overlooking the Temple of Literature is also a training facility that works with disadvantaged children, who are each paired with a mentor.

• After lunch meet with Nguyen Qui Duc, a Vietnamese radio broadcaster, writer, editor and translator. Mr. Duc also owns Tadioto Cafe, a charming bar located in the city’s French Quarter for those who would like to visit on their free time.

• End the day with a discussion with leaders of the head of Viet Nature Conservation Center, whose goal is to research and apply sustainable solutions to nature and biodiversity conservation.

• Overnight at the Hilton Hanoi Opera on the executive floor. Walk to dinner at Club Opera House Restaurant.

NOVEMBER 11: HANOI
B, L

• This morning, visit Ho Chi Minh’s mausoleum. Built in 1975, it’s the final resting place of the Marxist-Leninist revolutionary, revered father of modern Vietnam, and liberator from French colonialism, who died in 1969.

• Nearby is the One Pillar Pagoda. Built of wood on a single stone pillar, the pagoda is designed to resemble a lotus blossom, a symbol of purity, rising out of a sea of sorrow.

• Continue on to Hang Da Market. Hanoi’s street food has been recognized as one of the best in the world. Stroll through the bustling market and learn about the intricacies of Vietnamese food and culture. We will purchase ingredients for our lunch which you will learn to cook.

• Walk to the Ngon Villa Restaurant for a cooking class to create your own lunch.

• After the class, take cyclos to the Zo Project, an award-winning social enterprise established in 2013 that works in collaboration with a village in Bac Ninh Province that produces traditional Vietnamese do paper.

• Dinner at your leisure.

NOVEMBER 12: HANOI
B, L, D

• This morning, visit a temple on Hoan Kiêm Lake. Legend says that, in the mid-15th century Heaven sent Emperor Lý Thai To a magical sword which he used to drive the Chinese from Vietnam. After the war, a giant golden turtle grabbed the sword and disappeared into the depths of this lake to restore the sword to its divine owners, inspiring the name of the lake which translates to Lake of the Restored Sword.
• Enjoy lunch at Uu Dam Chay Restaurant.

• After lunch, meet with Sophie Hughes, founder of Sophie’s Art Tour, where we will explore Vietnam’s modern and contemporary history through its art.

• Enjoy an afternoon at leisure to explore Hanoi. The hotel is within walking distance of picturesque lakes, parks, shopping and museums. Meet for a lovely farewell dinner at the Home Restaurant.

• Celebrate your adventure with a farewell dinner at La Badiane Restaurant.

**NOVEMBER 13**

• After breakfast, return to the airport for flights home.

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**PRICING**

$6,599  
double (plus $320 internal air)

$1,530  
single supplement

*Rates are based on standard accommodations. Suites, superior rooms and other upgrades carry an additional fee.

**INCLUDED**

- Accommodation, based on double occupancy, in hotels as listed
- Airport transfers on designated arrival and departure dates
- Meals as listed in the itinerary, including bottled water
- Bottled water on the bus at all times
- All sightseeing and excursions in a private air-conditioned bus
- All private events and speakers as listed
- All entrance fees listed
- Services of an English-speaking local guide/tour manager who will travel with the group from the beginning to end
- Services of a local Vietnamese guide
- Cocktail reception at the hotel in Ho Chi Minh City
- Meeting rooms as listed
- Porterage
- Gratuity to tour managers-guides and bus driver

**NOT INCLUDED**

- International airfare to Ho Chi Minh City and from Hanoi
- The following economy class flights within the itinerary which will be billed at a rate of $320
  - Ho Chi Minh City to Hue
  - Da Nang to Hanoi
- Drinks with meals
- Passport fees
- Visa fee for Vietnam, which is currently $30 if done online to obtain an E-Visa
- Excess luggage charges
- Travel insurance
- Items of a purely personal nature
- Any item not listed