

A VIETNAM JOURNEY

April 16 - May 3, 2012

PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- Roundtrip air – Los Angeles to Vietnam
- Domestic air flights in Vietnam
- 15 nights in Deluxe (4 star) hotels
- Meals (15 breakfasts, 8 lunches and 5 dinners)
- One overnight on Halong Bay - onboard a luxury junk
- Mekong River and canal cruise
- Admission to all listed tours and sights
- English speaking guides
- Vietnam Visa processing and fee
- Travel insurance: Accident, personal injury, emergency medical transportation and baggage protection

Tour Escort:

Owner and experienced Vietnam tour operator, Mr. Bill Ridley

TOUR PRICES PER PERSON (include taxes and fees)*:

Double Occupancy - \$5,185.00

Single Supplement - \$1,549.00

Deposit: \$600.00 at the time of booking

Credit Card payments will require an additional 3.5% fee

* Subject to change due to currency exchange fluctuation.

Tour Highlights

Hanoi: Tour Hanoi to include: Fine Arts Museum, War Museum, Temple of Literature, Hoa Lo Prison (POWs' Hanoi Hilton), Ho Chi, Minh's Mausoleum and house, the water puppets show and more.

Halong Bay: Board a Junk (Halong Ginger) for a spectacular cruise, dining, exploration and overnight on the bay amidst breathtaking sea-scapes and 2,000 pinnacle shaped islands.

Hue: Former imperial city, with its Citadel, seat of the Nguyen emperors, Thien Mu Pagoda and tomb of Emperor Khai Dinh.

DMZ: Dong Ha, Hien Luong Bridge, Ben Hai River, tunnels of Vinh Moc, Rockpile, Dakrong Bridge, Quang Tri, and Khe Sanh.

Danang: Marble Mountain, China Beach and the Cham Museum.

Hoi An: 17th century port town, pagoda bridge and beach resort.

Saigon: Tour the city landmarks: Notre Dame Cathedral, former Presidential Palace, Old Saigon Post Office and Ben Thanh market.

Dalat: Beautiful mountain resort, location of the summer palace of Emperor Bao Dai, Lam Ty Ni Pagoda, Montagnard village, Domaint de Marie Convent and Prenn Waterfall.

Cu Chi: Explore the famous Viet Cong tunnel system constructed during the Vietnam War.

Cao Dai Temple: Travel to Tay Ninh in time for services at the Cao Dai Temple.

Mekong Delta: Travel to Cai Be on the Mekong River; cruise on the river and explore it's canal tributaries with stops at the floating market, lunch with a local farm family. Visit the farmer's property with gardens, and more.

Crafts: Vietnamese silk goods, jewelry, ceramic, tailored apparel and hat craftsmen.

Itinerary

DAY 1: MON (APR 16) — TRAVEL to LOS ANGELES

After arrival at the Los Angeles Airport (LAX), depart on an early AM (APR 17) Cathay Pacific flight to Hong Kong and then on to Hanoi.

DAY 2: TUE (APR 17) — IN - FLIGHT

DAY 3: WED (APR 18) — HANOI

Upon arrival at Noi Bai Airport, meet the guide and transfer to the Metropole hotel. After lunch, visit the Temple of Literature, the first university established in 1070. Next, travel to the Fine Arts Museum. Then enjoy a cyclo tour through the French and Old Quarter with 36 streets named for the 36 type wares sold there. The last visit is to the Water Puppet show, a unique Northern Vietnam art form that depicts scenes of rural life, legends and historical events in ancient Vietnam. A welcome dinner will be at a local restaurant. (L & D)

DAY 4: THU (APR 19) — HANOI

Tour starts at the historic Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum where the preserved body of "Uncle Ho" resides. A short distance is Ho's stilt house. Also, nearby is the One Pillar Pagoda. Wind your way to the Lake of Restored Sword (Hoan Kiem Lake). The lake is also home to Ngoc Son Pagoda, which sits in the middle of the lake. In the afternoon, visit the Army Museum and Hoa Lo Prison. This is known as the "Hanoi Hilton" where U.S. Pilots were imprisoned during the Vietnam War. (B)

DAY 5: FRI (APR 20) — HANOI to HA LONG BAY

Embark on a 3 ½ hour drive to Halong Jasmine with a stop at the Sao Do Handicraft village. On arrival, board the deluxe junk, the Halong Jasmine. Enjoy a seafood lunch while cruising the bay where hundreds of sculptured limestone islands rise from the bay like dragon teeth. After lunch, trek to a nearby island, kayak on the bay, swim on a quiet beach or sunbathe on deck. Later, take a sampan ride to a floating fishing village. Tonight, enjoy a candlelight dinner in the Tien Ong cave. (B, L & D)

DAY 6: SAT (APR 21) — HA LONG BAY to HANOI

Rise early to observe sunrise on the bay and enjoy Tai Chi on the sundeck. After a cup of coffee, depart from the Sung Sot grotto to view interesting stalactite formations. A brunch will be served while cruising back to the dock. On return trip to Hanoi, stop at Phu Lang, an ancient pottery village. Here, observe artisans at work with an opportunity to purchase their pottery. Here, observe artisans at work with an opportunity to purchase their pottery. Arrive in Hanoi, check in to hotel and free time. (Brunch)

DAY 7: TUE (APR 22) — HANOI to HUE

Early morning transfer to the airport for the flight to Hue. Upon arrival in Hue, meet the guide and check in to the Morin Hotel. Hue was the former imperial capital of the Nguyen Dynasty (17th-19th century). Tour begins with a 10 minute cyclo ride to the Imperial Citadel and Forbidden City, residence of the emperors. After a visit, travel by boat on the Perfume River to the Thien Mu pagoda. Lunch will be at the Ancient Hue Restaurant. From here, travel to the elaborate Royal Tombs of the former emperors Khai Dinh & Tu Duc. This evening offers a special dinner at the Tha Om, the restored royal home of one of a descendent family of the emperor. (B, L & D)

DAY 8: MON (APR 23) — DMZ

Depart Hue for Quang Tri province. This narrow province during the Vietnam War became what is known as the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). This was the border between North and South Vietnam, and location of extensive bombing and battle during the war. Areas visited will be: ancient citadel of Quang Tri, Khe Sanh, the Rckpile, Darrong Bridge, Hien Luong Bridge over the Ben Hai River and the Vinh Moc tunnels. (B & L)

DAY 9: TUE (APR 24) — HUE to HOI AN

Today, embark on a 3 ½ hour drive to Hoi An. En route travel over the Hai Van Pass and observe the spectacular panoramic views of the central coastline. In Danang, tour the Cham Museum dedicated to the art, artifacts and sculptures of the Cham Empire (2 AD to 1832). Next stop is Marble Mountain, a Viet Cong sanctuary during the Vietnam War. Here, explore the caves and marble formations. Travel on to the Victoria Hoi An resort on the South China Sea. (B)

DAY 10: WED (APR 25) — HOI AN

Hoi An is an ancient port from the 16th century. Day begins with a walking tour of the old quarter. One stop will be at the Japanese Covered Bridge (1593), built to link the Japanese and Chinese quarters. Other visits will be to the Phuc Kien Assembly Hall and the Quan Cong Pagoda. No visit is complete without a visit to the silk factory for the opportunity to learn the silk making process and time to shop for silk garments and apparel. Dinner is at a local restaurant. After dinner, enjoy a pedicab ride through the ancient city. (B & D)

DAY 11: THU (APR 26) — HOI AN to DALAT

The morning is free time until transfer to the airport for a flight to Dalat. Upon arrival, meet the guide and head toward Dalat. En route, tour the K'long Village (Chicken Village), noted for its enormous statue of a chicken and inhabited by the ethnic minority Co Ho people. Continue on to the Prenn Waterfalls and then to Dalat and check-in at the Sofitel Dalat Palace. (B)

DAY 12: FRI (APR 27) — DALAT

Dalat is a highland haven dotted with lakes, waterfalls, pine forest and gardens. It was established as a hill station at the beginning of the 20th century. Located on the Lang Biang Plateau with its French chalets and orchid varieties, Dalat is reminiscent of an alpine town. In the morning visit the Summer Palace of last emperor of Vietnam, Bao Dai. Then move to the Dalat railway station and board a train from Dalat to Trai Mat to visit Linh Phuoc Pagoda. Return to Dalat for lunch at the Dalat House restaurant. After lunch, travel to Lat Village where numerous ethnic minority groups live in thatched houses. There is time to explore the village, observe their way of life and visit with the craftsmen. Enjoy the Cong Chieng (Gongs) Show. Return to the hotel. Remainder of the day is free time (B & L)

DAY 13: SAT (APR 28) — DALAT to SAIGON

With the morning free until the afternoon transfer to the airport, there is time for shopping, individual exploration or a round of golf at the Dalat Palace Golf Course. Upon arrival in Saigon, meet the guide and travel along Dong Khoi Street to discover the beautiful architecture French colonial buildings built in the late 19th and early 20th century. View the splendidly restored exterior of the Opera House and Hotel de Ville. Visit the 19th century Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office, built by Gustav Eiffel in 1886. From here, transfer to the Caravelle Hotel. A hosted dinner with entertainment will be held at the home of former U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Henry C. Lodge (60-65). (B & D)

DAY 14: SUN (APR 29) — SAIGON

In the morning, travel to the Jade Emperor Pagoda, one of Saigon's most ornate. Then tour the former Presidential Palace, residence as well as headquarters of the South Vietnam Government during the Vietnam War. From here, travel to the War Remnant Museum with exhibits and displays of the Vietnam War and it's impact on the Vietnamese people. Final stop is the Ben Thanh Market (1914) with several hundred shopkeepers. It is a great place to catch up with shopping requirements. Dinner will be at a local restaurant. (B)

DAY 15: MON (APR 30) — MEKONG DELTA

The Mekong Delta, southwest of Saigon, is known as the rice bowl of Vietnam. Upon arrival at Cai Be, Vinh Long Province, board the Mekong Queen for the exploration of a portion of the Mekong River and it's canals. First visit is the Cai Be floating market, experience traditional trade and commerce on the river. Cruise continues from the river to the narrow connecting canals. A lunch stop on a canal is scheduled at the Mandarin house of a local farmer. After a lunch of feasting on Mekong Delta specialties, explore the orchards and agriculture property of the host. Upon return to Saigon. (B & L)

DAY 16: TUE (MAY 1) — CU CHI & TAY NINH

Drive two hours northwest of Saigon, near the Cambodian border, to tour the Cu Chi tunnels. This tunnel complex was begun in 1948 to protect the Viet Minh from French military activity. During the Vietnam War, the tunnels served as a communication center, food and weapons storage facility as well as a hospital and quarters for the Viet Cong guerillas. Then, travel to Tay Ninh and the Cao Dai Great Temple. The Cai Dai religion is a fusion of Taoism, Buddhism, Confucianism, with Christianity and Islam added. Arrival time is scheduled for 12:00 PM in order to observe the colorful midday service. Dinner is at a local restaurant. (B & L)

DAY 17: WED (MAY 2) — SAIGON (FREE DAY)

This is a day for individual shopping, sightseeing, exploration and relaxation. (B)

DAY 18: THU (MAY 3) — SAIGON to U.S.

Sadly, say tam biêt (goodbye) to Vietnam and board the departure flight through Hong Kong to the U.S.A. (B)

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