

# Vietnam and Cambodia Private Journey

ADVENTURES IN INDOCHINE



## WHEN TO GO

October to March

For our Private Journey trips, you choose your own group and your preferred dates—there are no set departure dates. Private Journeys are available to groups as few as two people or as large as you like. While many guests choose to book this tour exactly as is, our Area Specialists can work with you to customize it to your wishes. Contact us for availability, questions, or to book your adventure!



ITINERARY	3
ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE	11
EXTEND YOUR ADVENTURE	12
TRIP COST, PAYMENT & INSURANCE	14
LODGING	16
TRIP DETAILS	19



## Vietnam and Cambodia Private Journey

The intriguing world of Indochina beckons with marvelous landscapes, centuries of history, and a fascinating mix of cultures. On this Private Journey, explore vibrant Hanoi, with its 15th century Old Quarter, and enjoy the surreal beauty of Halong Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay, with two overnights aboard your own private sailing junk. Heading along the South China Sea, stop at China Beach, where American soldiers spent “R&R” during the Vietnam War, and continue to the picturesque riverside town of Hoi An, with its wonderful markets and an option for bicycling along country lanes. After visiting the royal city of Hue, your grand finale is a visit to Cambodia’s exquisite Angkor, an ancient temple city lost in the jungle. We also offer a wildly popular pre-trip extension to Laos to explore the ancient town of Luang Prabang, a World Heritage Site of royal temples, and fascinating hilltribe markets. Enjoy daily activities with your regional private guides, who specialize in each area that you visit. Fun add-on options include a water puppet performance in Hanoi, a cooking class in the beautiful city of Hoi An, and a Cu Chi Tunnel Tour in Saigon.

### ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel’s escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—even if it’s just the two of you—yet still enjoy a guided adventure.



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# Itinerary

Note: Depending on your choice of airline, you must depart the US one or two days early to arrive in Hanoi on Day 1. We also suggest you consider arriving a day early to recover from jet lag (at additional cost).

## DAY 1 HANOI, VIETNAM

Arrive in Hanoi, where you will be met at the airport by your guide and transferred to your hotel. The balance of the day is free and you can ask your guide for dining options. Overnight at La Siesta Hotel & Spa...meals on your own

Optional Upgrade: Hotel Sofitel Metropole  
*See the Lodging section for photos and descriptions*

## DAY 2 EXPLORE HANOI

Hanoi is fascinating mix of new and old, with stately French colonial buildings, tree-lined boulevards, scenic lakes, and a buzz of bicycles, motorbikes, and tuk-tuks zigzagging through the busy streets. After breakfast at the hotel, your guide and driver will pick you up for a full day of exploring. Typically, we begin with a visit to Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and Museum, a great center of pilgrimage for the Vietnamese, as it is the resting place of Vietminh leader, Ho Chi Minh. His embalmed body lies preserved in the main central hall, and is protected by a military honor guard (please note: the mausoleum is currently closed on Mondays and Fridays. It may also be closed during certain months for the re-embalming process.) Nearby is the One Pillar Pagoda, resting on a single stone pillar emerging from the water. This Buddhist was built in 1049, and is shaped like a lotus flower on its stalk. Within the pagoda is a statue of the Goddess of Mercy with its legendary "thousand arms and thousand eyes." You will then visit Ho Chi Minh's house, seeing where he lived and worked.

On this morning, you'll also have time to visit one of the following sites (you can decide when you're in Hanoi):

**The Fine Arts Museum:** Housed in two colonial-era buildings that were formerly the French Ministry of Information. They contain an excellent overview of contemporary Vietnamese art.

**The Museum of Ethnology (closed on Mondays):** With a collection of traditional costumes and artifacts from Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups (this museum is not located in the central area of the city and requires an extra 30-minute drive each way).

**Hoa Lo Prison:** The former "Hanoi Hilton," where John McCain and other Americans were held as political prisoners during the Vietnam War (which the Vietnamese call "the American War"). While only part of the original complex is left, it is an excellent display of the Vietnamese perspective of the war.



## TRIP DETAILS AT-A-GLANCE

**Length:** 13 days  
**Arrive:** Hanoi, Vietnam  
**Depart:** Siem Reap, Cambodia  
**Lodging:** 10 nights in comfortable hotels (first class or deluxe option) 2 nights aboard private junk  
**Meals:** All meals as noted (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner)  
**Activity:** Archaeology, Cultural Adventures  
**Trip Level:** 1 2 3 4 5 6  
City exploration, cultural touring, optional easy biking and kayaking

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Two-night cruise in the mystical karst landscapes of Halong Bay
- Optional biking around enchanting Hoi An and Hue
- Extraordinary temples of Angkor, a World Heritage Site



# Itinerary (cont'd)



After your morning sightseeing visits, your guide will suggest a conveniently located restaurant where you can have a delicious lunch on your own. Afterwards, you will visit the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's foremost Confucian Sanctuary. With its lovely pavilions and courtyards, it is one of the few structures remaining from the original 11th century built by the Ly Kings. Continue to the Vietnamese Women's Museum, offering insights into the women and various ethnic groups of Vietnam. Next, your guide will take you on an afternoon walking tour of the Old Quarter, a one-square-kilometer jigsaw of twisting lanes and tile-roofed houses that evolved from medieval market stalls. The Old Quarter's street names date back 500 years to the era when each street was dedicated to a certain artisan guild, such as paper makers or tinsmiths. Today many streets still specialize in certain wares. Just walking around the Old Quarter brings a feast for the senses, as many businesses spill out onto the sidewalks, where everyone from furniture-makers to food vendors work in front of their shops. Your guide will drop you back at your hotel for dinner on your own. Overnight at hotel...B

## Optional Add-On

### Water Puppet Performance (duration: 1 hour)

In the early evening of Day 2, you can attend this theatre performance with Vietnam's traditional marionettes on a stage of water. Early evening transfer from your hotel to a public theatre for a water puppet performance, a uniquely northern Vietnamese art form said to have originated in the flooded rice fields of the Red River Delta where villagers entertained themselves by manipulating puppets over the water. Modern performers stand chest-deep in water behind a screen and use long rods to move the colorful wooden puppets in a life-like way to depict scenes based on Vietnamese folklore. The skits are set to traditional music using drums, wooden bells, horns, bamboo flutes and cymbals. Scenes may also be accompanied by operatic songs narrating the action.

*See "Trip Cost" section for additional costs*

## DAYS 3-4

### HALONG BAY AND BAI TU LONG BAY

In the morning, your guide and driver will pick you up for a 2.5-hour drive to Halong Bay. Arriving just before lunchtime, you will board your private boat and enjoy lunch on board as we head out for an overnight cruise in Bai Tu Long Bay, one of the natural marvels of Vietnam. Bai Tu Long National Park protects a spectacular karst landscape of sheer limestone islands jutting out of the South China Sea, and is part of the adjoining Halong Bay World Heritage Area.

You will be welcomed aboard by your private staff, including a small crew. Enjoy a welcome cocktail and brief cruise orientation from your host, before beginning your sail around the bay, where you will view stunning karst rock formations and lagoons.

Your explorations today and tomorrow (Day 3 and 4) may include Vung Vieng, a floating village where we can see a bit of the daily life of the fishing



communities who live in the bay. You may also visit Thien Canh Son Cave, a huge fairytale cavern full of magnificent limestone stalactites and stalagmites. There could be a stop at Ban Chan beach for swimming, along with kayaking in the Cong Do area. In addition to swimming and kayaking, you can also enjoy tai chi lessons, if you wish.

Please note that your exact itinerary and activities are subject to change, as they are dependent on tide and weather patterns. However, being aboard a private boat is truly a delight in itself. Your overnights in Bai Tu Long Bay allow you a unique opportunity to capture and photograph the evening and early morning vistas...BLD

#### DAY 5

##### HALONG BAY AND BAI TU LONG BAY / HANOI

After breakfast on board and the opportunity for more kayaking, disembark your junk and drive back to Hanoi, with a small snack en route. Dinner on your own and overnight at La Siesta Hotel & Spa...B

Optional Upgrade: Hotel Sofitel Metropole

*See the Lodging section for photos and descriptions*

#### DAY 6

##### HANOI / DANANG / HOI AN

In the morning, transfer to the airport and fly to Danang, where you are met by your private guide and driver for a 15-mile drive along the South China Sea to



## Itinerary (cont'd)

Hoi An. En route, visit the small Cham Museum, with its Champa sculptures (2nd to the 15th centuries) and then view the Marble Mountains, five hills representing the traditional five elements of the universe. Make a short stop at historic China Beach, where American soldiers spent “R&R” periods during the Vietnam War. Continue south along the coast to arrive at lovely Hoi An, a picturesque riverside town that was a major international trading port from the 15th to 19th centuries. The small, enchanting Old Quarter of Hoi An is full of small mansions built by prosperous Japanese, Chinese, and European merchants.

This afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An with your guide. This charming World Heritage-listed town is recognized for its well-preserved architecture and pedestrian-only streets. Atmospheric sights include the collection of old merchant houses, with influences of Chinese and Japanese architecture, and the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge, built by the Japanese community in the 1590s to link them with the Chinese community across the stream. Head to the Assembly Hall of the Chaozhou Chinese Congregation, with its intricate wood carvings, and the colorful market stalls here offer great shopping, with silk clothing and colorful “Hoi An” lanterns a specialty. Lunch and dinner are on your own, with an overnight at the Anantara Hoi An Hotel. The Anantara has a spa and an excellent open-air restaurant along the river...B

### DAY 7 EXPLORE HOI AN

My Son, Vietnam’s most evocative Cham archaeological site, is a 4th century ruined capital set in a bowl of lush wooded hills and overlooked by Cat’s Tooth Mountain. This UNESCO World Heritage Site is a majestic setting about 30 miles from Hoi An. The stone towers and sanctuaries that remain today are enhanced by their isolated rural setting. Your guide and driver will bring you to My Son for a stroll around this beautiful complex, with its 20 temple towers (left from an original 68 towers). Return to Hoi An for lunch on your own.



The flat roads and rural setting around Hoi An are perfect for an afternoon bike journey of about 10-12 miles. Join your guide for cycling along the Thu Bon River, with its fishing boats and country villages, and head inland on quiet trail past coconut groves and rice paddies to reach palm-fringed Cua Dai Beach. Explore the local fishing village of Cham Thanh, where the Thu Bon River meets the sea. On your way back to Hoi An, you can stop at Tra Que Vegetable Village, where farmers work organic fields using traditional methods. The rich soil from this village produces some of the most flavorful vegetables and herbs in Hoi An. Dinner are on your own, with an overnight at the Anantara Hoi An Hotel...B

### Optional Add-On

#### Private Red Bridge Cooking School Experience (duration: 4 hours)

Set in three acres of lush tropical gardens, Red Bridge Cooking School is one of the highlights of the culinary scene in Hoi An. On the morning of Day 7 (around 8:00 am), meet with your chef at Hai Café in the Old Town for a brief introduction and a welcome drink. Meander through Hoi An's central market with your chef to enjoy the sights, sounds, and aromas. This is your chance to learn about how to select fresh produce and ingredients essential for Vietnamese cuisine. Embark on a 20-minute boat ride to the school. Get your camera ready as the cruise offers glimpses of local river life. Upon arrival, visit the school's herb garden before enjoying a private hands-on cooking class. After the lesson, enjoy what you have created in the lovely restaurant overlooking the river.

*See "Trip Cost" section for additional costs*

### DAY 8

#### HOI AN / HUE

A beautiful coastal drive this morning brings you to Hue (drive time: approximately 7-8 hours, with a stop). The road crosses Hai Van ("Sea Cloud"), a rural mountain pass with spectacular views of the central coastline. Arrive in Hue, a small city that became Vietnam's capital in the early 19th century and was later influenced by French culture. Hue's walled citadel, set along the Perfume River, is the site of the once-glorious Imperial City, created in the same symmetrical layout as Beijing's Forbidden City. Across Dong Ba Canal is Hue's original merchant quarter, where ships once unloaded their cargo. The European (French) part of the city, now the modern center, is between the Perfume River's south bank and the Phu Cam Canal. After checking into the hotel, you'll have option to bike with your guide alongside the Tam Giang Lagoon between Hue and the South China Sea, or relax on your own. Lunch and dinner on your own. Overnight at Pilgrimage Village Hotel...B

Optional Upgrade: Azerai La Residence Hotel or Ancient Hue Garden Houses

*See the Lodging section for photos and descriptions*



# Itinerary (cont'd)

## DAY 9

### EXPLORE HUE

In the morning, visit the Nguyen-era tombs Royal Tombs of Minh Mang, Tu Duc, and Khai Dinh. You can bike to these tombs, riding through scenic areas of tall trees and green rice paddies. Your support van is always available should you decide that you do not want to bike at any point.

In general, Hue's Nguyen emperors lived within the walled Hue citadel, but they built elaborate mausoleums around the city, which are fascinating to visit, with their waterfalls, artificial lakes, fantastic sculptures, and romantic garden settings. Enjoy a lunch of typical Hue cuisine before visiting the Thien Mu Pagoda, a historic seven-story temple. Next, walk through the Imperial Citadel, built in the 19th century. Dinner is on your own. Overnight at hotel...BL

## DAY 10

### HUE / SAIGON (HO CHI MINH CITY)

In the morning, transfer to the airport and fly to Saigon. Upon arrival, your guide will meet you and take you to your hotel, where you'll drop off your luggage and head out for a full day of touring. Ho Chi Minh City, more commonly known by its pre-1975 name, Saigon, is a big, effervescent city perched on the west side of the Saigon River not far from the South China Sea. There has been a tremendous economic revival in this city since the policy of doi moi (economic liberalization) was implemented in 1986. The frenzy of new construction includes office towers, fine hotels, glamorous shops, cosmopolitan bars, along with the attending street traffic (mopeds, bikes, cyclos, and increasing numbers of jeeps and cars).



Your walking tour brings you to Doi Khoi Street, or “Rue Catinat,” to see some of the beautiful French colonial buildings built in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Next, head to landmarks including the splendidly restored Opera House, one of the finest colonial buildings in Saigon. Walk up to the French-built Notre Dame Cathedral (which currently can't be visited inside because it is under restoration), then head across the square to the Central Post Office, an Art Deco treasure-trove designed by Gustave Eiffel (of Tower fame). The former Presidential Palace, a short drive away, was headquarters of the Saigon Government during the Vietnam War and reveals the history of Saigon during its turbulent recent past. City Hall (the former colonial Hotel de Ville), completed in 1908 by the French, is a stunning colonial monument, especially when it is floodlit at night. Sit down at a street-side coffee shop for a break and observe daily life in Saigon with your guide.

In the afternoon, drive to the War Remnants Museum for a vivid glimpse of the “American War” through the eyes of the local people (please note: some of the photographs are very graphic). Head to Chinatown to visit the Thien Hau temple, built by the Cantonese congregation in the early 19th century to honor the goddess of the sea. The temple's interior is always full of life, as worshippers from the Chinese community come to offer their prayers. You can take time to make a wish, write it on a small card, and attach it to one of the incense coils,



a local custom. Continue to FITO, the first museum of traditional medicine in Vietnam, with insights on how traditional medicine was used in the past. Lunch and dinner on your own, and overnight at Hotel Majestic Saigon...B

Optional Upgrade: Caravelle Hotel

*See the Lodging section for photos and descriptions*

### **Optional Add-On**

#### **Cu Chi Tunnel Tour in Saigon** (duration: 5 hours)

Saigon is a great place to spend an extra day so that you have a chance to tour the Cu Chi Tunnels. This legendary network of underground passageways, with its kitchens, meeting rooms, firing range, etc., was used by the Viet Cong during the war. This tour begins in the morning and lasts 5 hours, requiring an additional overnight in Saigon (at extra cost) and adding one more full day onto the trip.

*See "Trip Cost" section for additional costs*

### **DAY 11**

#### **SAIGON / SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA / TEMPLES OF ANGKOR**

Transfer to the airport for your flight to Siem Reap, Cambodia, where you will meet your guide and driver and transfer to your hotel. After lunch on your own, explore the Temples of Angkor, and architectural masterpiece constructed between the 9th and 13th centuries. This complex is a lasting monument to the glory of a bygone Khmer civilization. This vast city of temples covered with intricate bas-reliefs is one of the wonders of the modern world, built to glorify a succession of Khmer kings, the temples are massive and majestic, with wide causeways, imposing gateways and towers, huge moats, and colossal sculptured Buddha images—all in a wonderful tropical setting. Many temples are vast representations of the cosmic plan of the Hindu-Buddhist universe, with all its attendant symbolism. Most of Angkor was abandoned in the 15th century and the temples became cloaked by jungle. The site became the source of scholarly interest in the late 19th century, and efforts were made to clear away the jungle vegetation that threatened to destroy the monuments. The restoration under UNESCO and various national projects continues today.

Take an afternoon tour of Angkor Wat, Angkor's grandest and most inspiring temple complex. You can explore its many galleries, libraries, pavilions, courtyards, and ponds full of water reflecting the temple. Intricately carved bas-reliefs extend the length of the outer walls and corridors, depicting mythological scenes of Hindu epics and day-to-day life at the time of Angkor's construction. Your day ends with a sunset visit to beautiful Bakong Temple. Overnight at FCC Angkor Hotel...B

Optional Upgrade: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor

*See the Lodging section for photos and descriptions*



# Itinerary (cont'd)



## DAY 12 ANGKOR WAT

Wake up very early, around 5:30 am, and join your guide to enjoy the spectacle of the sun rising behind the five soaring towers of Angkor Wat. Afterwards, return to the hotel for breakfast (or enjoy a packed breakfast if you prefer), and then head out on a full-day tour including the enchanting Ta Prohm Temple. This temple remains in its original state, wrapped by the roots of enormous fig trees. Next, head to the famous Bayon Temple, noted for its gigantic Bodhisattva sculptures. Other temples of interest include Ta Keo, Chau Sa Tevoda, Thammanon, Bantey Kdei, and Sra Srang. In the afternoon, visit Angkor Thom, the royal city itself, which covers four square miles. Its 50-tower temple is an awesome sight. Further visits include Baphou, Terrace of Elephants, the Terrace of the Leper King, and Royal Palace area. Overnight at hotel...B

## DAY 13 DEPART

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your departure flight, or join one of our extensions (including our Bangkok Extension)...B



# Arrival & Departure

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## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE

Upon confirming your trip reservation, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a list of documents (passport, visas, etc.) required for your trip. Please feel free to call if you would like this information before making your air arrangements.

Hanoi, Vietnam, is the starting point for the trip. You will be met and transferred to the hotel upon arrival on Day 1. On Day 13, you will be transferred to the airport in Siem Reap, Cambodia, for departure on international flights.

## ARRIVAL FOR LAOS PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

If you are planning to add the Laos Pre-Trip Extension to your Private Journey, please plan to arrive in Luang Prabang instead of Hanoi.

## FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

Trip members are responsible for making their own arrangements for air transportation. Please do not purchase your airline tickets until you are confirmed on the trip and have reviewed your proposed air schedule with our office. Once your tickets have been purchased, please send us a copy of your airline schedule so that we can send it on to the local guide (make sure to include your Trip Name and Trip Dates on it). Note: The name on your airline ticket must match the name on your passport exactly; otherwise you may be denied boarding. Please remember this when reserving your flights. In addition, your passport must be valid for at least six months after your date of return to the US (in most cases).

# Laos: Luang Prabang Extension

Savor the delights of Laos, with its gilded temples, French-Indochinese architecture, and traditional Buddhist culture. Our extension visits the enchanting town of Luang Prabang, the heart and soul of the old Lao kingdom, a place to enjoy tranquil rural rhythms and a dramatic setting on the Mekong.



## DAY 1 LUANG PRABANG, LAOS

Arrive in Luang Prabang, Laos' ancient royal capital, where you will be met and escorted to your hotel. Located on the Mekong River and encircled by mountains, Luang Prabang is a delightful and regal town, now preserved as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The area is known for its outstanding handloom weavings, and the local market is a venue for the Hmong hilltribe communities, with their unique cross-stitch and applique work. In the afternoon, visit the spectacular, three-tiered Kuangsi waterfall, set in lush green surroundings about 20 miles south of town. En route, visit the Hmong village of Ban Na Oune to see how traditional hill tribe people live. Hmong villagers still practice ancient animistic rituals and dress in traditional handmade clothing and silver jewelry. Also visit Ban Tha Pane, a village of the Khmu minority group. Return to the hotel for overnight...meals on your own

## DAY 2 SPIRITUAL LUANG PRABANG / PAK OU CAVES

In the morning, meet a local Buddhist meditation teacher who will provide information on Buddhism and Lao meditation practices. With your teacher, take a boat ride across the Mekong River to the temple of Wat Kok Phap. Here, climb 60 or so stairs to reach the temple, where you will mingle with the monks and nuns and stroll around this beautiful complex, surrounded by forest. It is customary to give a small offering to the monks, which can be food or cash, depending on what is needed at the time of your visit. Meditation is one of the practices here, and you will be able to sit and relax near the temple before heading back to the boat.



After lunch, once again board a local boat for a scenic trip up the Mekong River to Pak Ou Caves, a Buddhist pilgrimage site located above the river. Over the last five centuries, processions of worshipers from kings to peasants have brought Buddha images to the caves, and it is a fascinating site to visit. Afterward, visit Ban Muang Keo village where local weavers and traditional whisky distillers continue their age-old crafts. Return to Luang Prabang by car, with the rest of the day at leisure. Overnight at hotel in Luang Prabang...BL

## DAY 3 OLD LUANG PRABANG

Enjoy a morning walking tour through the atmospheric lanes of old Luang Prabang. Visit the Royal Palace, now a national museum housing the heirlooms of the royal family (please note: the museum is currently open from 8:30 am-11:30 am and from 1:30 pm-3:30 pm daily except on Tuesdays). You'll also walk to the magnificent stupa of Wat Visoun and pass by Wat Aham along the

way. Continue to Wat That Luang and Wat Mai, Luang Prabang's oldest pagoda. Next, visit Wat Xieng Thong ("Golden Temple"), with its classic Laos-style roofs. End your tour with an optional climb up Mount Phousi (328 steps), a sacred site with panoramic views of Luang Prabang and the Mekong. Transfer to the airport for your departure flight...B

Please note: When visiting temples, it is recommended that women have shoulders covered and refrain from wearing shorts or very short skirts. Men should wear trousers and shirts with sleeves. Shoes must be removed before entering the temples.

Airline flights to/from Luang Prabang are not included in the Tour Cost. Wilderness Travel can book them for you at additional cost, or you can book them on your own.

#### LAOS EXTENSION INCLUDES:

Local English-speaking guide; accommodations; meals as indicated (B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner); activities as indicated and entrance fees for activities listed; ground transportation and transfers as indicated.

#### LAOS EXTENSION DOES NOT INCLUDE:

International airfare; any additional hotel nights that may be needed before or after your extension; airport departure taxes; any meals not specified after each itinerary day; gratuities to local guides, drivers, and transfer agents; pre-trip expenses of medical immunizations; visa fees (if applicable); travel insurance; any other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, sodas, laundry, etc.).

#### LAOS EXTENSION COST

##### Prices valid through Spring 2024

\$1195 per person (3-6 members)

\$1245 per person (2 members)

\$2145 solo traveler

\$450 single supplement

Prices are not guaranteed until services are confirmed.



# Trip Cost, Payment & Insurance

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## TRIP COST

**Prices are per person, valid through 2024**

\$4,995 (9-10 members)

\$5,495 (5-8 members)

\$5,995 (3-4 members)

\$6,395 (2 members)

Single supplement: \$1,195

Internal airfare: \$795 (subject to change)

Optional Water Puppet Performance in Hanoi: \$40

Optional Cu Chi Tunnel Tour in Saigon: \$70

Optional Private Cooking Class in Hoi An: \$175

A Holiday Surcharge may apply for travel between December and January. The surcharge amount will depend on the exact dates of travel and availability of featured accommodations.

*Prices are based on double occupancy and not guaranteed until services are confirmed.*

## Make it Your Trip!

The prices above are for the ready-to-book adventure outlined in this Detailed Itinerary, a popular option that has been handcrafted by our Area Specialists to include the best of every destination. While many travelers choose to book this tour as is, our Area Specialists are also happy to work with you to customize this Private Journey to suit your specific interests and style of travel. We can arrange for longer or shorter stays, offer hotel upgrades (see below for sample costs), or add an extension to additional places of interest. We can even add special activities or customize excursions depending on your interests. We invite you to contact us to discuss your options!

## Optional Hotel Upgrades

*All upgrade pricing is per person, per night, based on double occupancy. Please call for single occupancy pricing.*

Hanoi: Hotel Sofitel Metropole, from \$250

Hue: Azerai La Residence, Hue, from \$200

Hue: Ancient Hue Garden Houses, from \$95

Saigon: Caravelle Hotel, from \$50

Siem Reap: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, from \$150

## CHILDREN

This is an excellent trip for children and families. The recommended minimum age is 10.

## TRIP COST INCLUDES

- English-speaking private regional guides for northern Vietnam, central Vietnam, southern Vietnam, and Cambodia
- Accommodations as noted
- All meals as noted
- Kayaks, paddles, PFDs (life jackets) on Halong Bay
- Cannondale or TREK-style bicycles, helmets, and support van for optional bike routes
- All transfers as noted
- Entrance fees for all sites and activities as noted

## TRIP COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

International airfare; any meals not specified after each itinerary day; optional hotel upgrades; optional activities; airport departure taxes; optional tipping or gratuities to staff; additional hotel nights made necessary by airline schedule changes or other factors; pre-trip expenses such as medical immunizations (if any), travel insurance, or passports and visas; and other expenses of a personal nature (alcoholic beverages, laundry, etc.).

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## SIGNING UP FOR A TRIP

Early reservations are recommended since accommodations often sell out far in advance. Please call 1-800-368-2794 and ask for our Asia Manager or email us at [asia@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:asia@wildernesstravel.com) with any questions that you may have about this trip. To reserve your Private Journey, we will need to know your preferred dates of travel. We will then check availability and send you a proposed itinerary with exact pricing for your adventure. We can typically hold a provisional booking for one week. At that time, we must collect your initial deposit or accommodations will be released. We accept Visa, Mastercard, or American Express card. Upon receipt of your deposit, we will send you a Welcome Packet that includes a letter of confirmation, Detailed Itinerary, Trip Application, Medical Form, and Pre-Departure Information Booklet with information to help you prepare for your adventure. Please see our Cancellations and Transfer Fee Schedule for specific payment information.

## PAYMENT SCHEDULE

At time of reservation: \$1,000  
90 days prior to departure: Balance

## CANCELLATION AND TRANSFER FEE SCHEDULE

Minimum fee: \$1,000 per person  
61-90 days prior to departure: 25% of trip cost  
46-60 days prior to departure: 50% of trip cost  
45 days or less: 100% of trip cost  
\*Please note that this differs from our regular catalog departures.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

We highly recommend you purchase travel insurance. You can take advantage of a comprehensive Travel Protection Plan designed for Wilderness Travel by Travelex, or purchase other insurance on your own. See our website for details: [www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/insurance)

# Lodging

## DAYS 1 TO 2 (2 NIGHTS) & DAY 5 (1 NIGHT): HANOI, VIETNAM

In Hanoi, we stay at one of the following properties based on choice of accommodation and availability:



### LA SIESTA HOTEL AND SPA

An oasis in Hanoi's bustling Old Quarter, La Siesta Hotel & Spa is just a 5-minute walk from Huan Kim Lake. This lovely boutique hotel features top-notch hospitality, stylish modern rooms, a spa, and an excellent breakfast buffet along with a full restaurant, The Red Bean. It's easy to walk around the Old Quarter from here, day or evening, with lots of good places to eat nearby.



### HOTEL SOFITEL METROPOLE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

The Hotel Sofitel Metropole is a French colonial-style hotel built at the turn of the century by two private French investors. It's considered Hanoi's "grand old dame" and its guest list has included presidents, ambassadors, and royalty, as well as authors Somerset Maugham and Graham Greene. Guest rooms in the Opera Wing are tastefully decorated and feature one queen bed or two single beds, beautiful polished wood floors, and bathrooms with all the amenities. The hotel offers a fitness center, outdoor pool, spa facilities, and three restaurants, including an award-winning French restaurant.

## DAYS 3 TO 4 (2 NIGHTS): HALONG BAY AND BAI TU LONG BAY, VIETNAM



### PRIVATE JUNK

Traveling aboard a private junk (motor-sailer) in Halong Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay is a wonderful way to capture the evening and early morning vistas of this magnificent World Heritage Site. Our modern boat is constructed of teak and bassia wood to resemble the centuries-old Chinese style, with its flat bottom and high stern. Cabins typically have outward-facing windows, with twin or queen beds, fans, as well as air-conditioning, and private bathrooms. Multiple-course meals are served. Our junks are staffed by a small crew, including a private chef. While this is a sailing vessel, it will travel by motor in order to cover the distances needed. Please note: The boat we charter for each departure varies due to availability, but they are all of similar high quality.

These are our signature accommodations for this trip. Although it is highly unlikely, we may make substitutions when necessary. To see more photos and descriptions, please visit our *Vietnam and Cambodia Private Journey* webpage and click on the "Lodging" tab.



## DAYS 6 TO 7 (2 NIGHTS): HOI AN, VIETNAM



### ANANTARA HOI AN

Set along the scenic Thu Bon River in Hoi An's French colonial quarter, the Anantara features three restaurants and guest rooms with one queen bed or two single beds and private balconies offering views of the gardens or river.

## DAYS 8 TO 9 (2 NIGHTS): HUE, VIETNAM

In Hue, we stay at one of the following properties based on choice of accommodation and availability:



### PILGRIMAGE VILLAGE HOTEL

The Pilgrimage Village Hotel, on the outskirts of Hue, is an elegant haven of tranquility. The resort offers a serene country setting with tropical gardens and lily and lotus ponds. Spacious, well-appointed guest rooms feature garden or countryside views from private balconies. Need pampering? The spa offers an extensive range of soothing treatments. And don't miss a dip in the gorgeous swimming pool. All in all, a great place to recharge your batteries.



### AZERAI LA RESIDENCE, HUE (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Located on the Perfume River near the center of Hue, Azerai La Residence is a former governor's residence renovated into a boutique hotel with a French colonial ambiance. The hotel overlooks the Citadel of Hue and features tranquil, jasmine-scented gardens, Art Deco-inspired rooms, bar, and restaurant. Unwind in the luxurious spa, swim a few laps in the huge saltwater pool, check out the gym and tennis court, or rent a bike from the hotel for a spin through town.



### ANCIENT HUE GARDEN HOUSES (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

On the banks of the Perfume River, these five wooden houses are set in a landscaped garden around a year-round heated pool. Built according to strict Feng Shui principles, the homes are designed to bring in the elements of garden, pond, and yard. The restaurant, located in the main Garden House, features Asian and European flavors that are said to be reminiscent of ancient royal feasts. Enjoy a creative cocktail made with local fruits in the Lounge bar, or unwind with a massage at the spa.

# Lodging (con't)

## DAY 10 (1 NIGHT): SAIGON, VIETNAM

In Saigon, we stay at one of the following properties based on choice of accommodation and availability:



### HOTEL MAJESTIC SAIGON

Full of character and a sense of history, this classic French colonial-style hotel has maintained its old world glamour (it's been around since 1925). Located on the riverside, it's just a few steps away from the city's famous landmarks. Facilities include an outdoor swimming pool and a rooftop bar, a great place to relax and enjoy a refreshing drink.



### CARAVELLE HOTEL (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

The chic Caravelle is situated adjacent to the Saigon Opera House in the heart of downtown. Many luminaries have stayed here, including former US President Bill Clinton and actor Michael Caine, and the Saigon Saigon Bar, once a famous gathering place for war correspondents, is still a lively venue every evening. Guest rooms offer a choice of king-sized or two large single beds with views of the city. Recreational facilities include a fitness center, outdoor pool, Jacuzzi, salon, and spa. The Caravelle has two restaurants, four bars, and a casino. Shoppers take note: Some of Saigon's best shopping is in the streets immediately around the hotel.

## DAYS 11 TO 12 (2 NIGHTS): SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

In Siem Reap, we stay at one of the following properties based on pricing and availability:



### FCC ANGKOR HOTEL

The boutique-style FCC Angkor Hotel is set on the leafy grounds of the French Ambassador's old mansion in the heart of Siem Reap. Even with its chic modern and minimalist décor, the hotel still exudes an old French colonial ambiance. Facilities include a saltwater swimming pool, Jacuzzi, and full service spa. The hotel is just across the street from the river, a great spot for an early morning walk or run. And don't miss the bar's Happy Hour, where drinks are half off!



### RAFFLES GRAND HOTEL D'ANGKOR (OPTIONAL UPGRADE)

Step back into a gracious and elegant era! Exuding historic charm and the splendor of bygone days, this hotel is a lovely oasis after a busy day exploring the temples of Angkor. The spacious guest rooms have views of the landscaped garden or swimming pool, and the staff is exceedingly friendly and helpful. Among the several dining options are the "1932" restaurant, which offers amazing Khmer cuisine.

# Trip Details

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## WHAT THE TRIP IS LIKE

This trip is rated Level 2, easy to moderate. It is designed to offer an enjoyable, active vacation. All bicycling is optional, bike routes are on relatively flat terrain and you will always have a support van along should you decide not to bike (and to offer a cool, refreshing drink!).

## WEATHER

October through March is the ideal season for travel in Vietnam and Cambodia. You will experience a range of temperatures and climates because Vietnam covers many climate zones.

Vietnam lies within various climate zones, and where it may be cold and drizzly in Hanoi, it is very likely to be hot and steamy in Saigon: Hanoi in October, November, and March should be warm and pleasant (70s°F) during the days with pleasant evening temperatures (60s°F). Hanoi in December through February can be chilly (50s-60s°F) during the days with cold nights (50s°F) with the possibility of light rain and drizzle. Halong Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay are typically a bit cooler, with the possibility of light rain throughout the year. Hue during October-March has a very varied climate (different from all other regions) that may include light drizzle, but can be very humid. Hoi An during October-March should be pleasant, sunny and warm (70s-80s°F) with nice sea breezes. Saigon during October-March (their "cool" season) will be quite hot and humid during the days (80s-90s°F) with warm, pleasant evenings (70s°F)—a climate similar to that of Bangkok.

Cambodia (Angkor) during October-March (their "cool" season) is likely to be very hot and sunny during the days (80s-90s°F), but with warm, pleasant evenings (70s°F). The climate at Angkor is dryer than that of Saigon/Bangkok and therefore more pleasant. April through September is monsoon season in much of Southeast Asia, and therefore is not recommended for travel.

If you do the Laos Extension, it is usually warm-hot (80s°F) during the days during October, November, and March, with lovely evening temperatures (60s°F). Laos in December-February will be cooler (70s°F), with cool-cold nights (50s°F). There is usually a small chance of rain during the "cool" season, which runs from November through early March, and weather for the most part should be sunny.

## PRIVATE JOURNEY GUIDED SERVICES

For this Private Journey, you will have private English-speaking guides in each region that you visit: one for northern Vietnam, one for central Vietnam, one southern Vietnam, and one Cambodia. If you do the Laos Extension, you will have a private guide with you there as well.

## CHOOSING THE RIGHT TRIP

Adventure travel often involves exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, or activities you may not have participated in previously. We work hard to help you choose the right trip for you, paying attention to your individual interests, abilities, and needs. If you have questions about the level of comfort or any of the activities described in this itinerary, please call Wilderness Travel at 1-800-368-2794 and ask for the Asia Manager or email us at [asia@wildernesstravel.com](mailto:asia@wildernesstravel.com).

## REFERENCES

We'd be happy to put you in touch with a past client that has traveled with us on this or a similar trip.

## ABOUT PRIVATE JOURNEYS

Wilderness Travel Private Journeys are designed for people who want to travel with their own small private group, but who still want to experience the same superb itinerary design, great accommodations, and signature quality of Wilderness Travel's escorted group trips. These Private Journeys allow you to choose your own dates and your traveling companions—even if it's just the two of you—yet still enjoy a guided adventure.

## TOUCAN CLUB

Please note that Toucan Club discounts do not apply for our Private Journeys. However, your participation on these trips will count toward your Toucan discount on future departures of Wilderness Travel's regular expeditions. For more information regarding our Toucan Club bonus program, please visit our website at [www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan](http://www.wildernesstravel.com/toucan).

## VISIT OUR WEBSITE

At [www.wildernesstravel.com](http://www.wildernesstravel.com), you can find out about added departures, last-minute deals, and special WT Expeditions that aren't listed in our catalog. You can also access a complete library of our detailed itineraries and browse the customized reading guides for each of our adventures.



## WILDERNESS TRAVEL HAS BEEN AWARDED:

**Best Travel Specialists in the World:** *Conde Nast Traveler*, 2024, 4-time winner

**World's Best Tour Operators:** *Travel + Leisure*, 11-time winner

**Best Wildlife, Hiking & Walking Trips:** *AFAR Magazine*, 3 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *USA Today*

**Trip of the Year:** *Outside Magazine*, 9-time winner

**50 Tours of a Lifetime:** *National Geographic Traveler*, 9 years in a row

**Best Adventure Travel Companies:** *National Geographic Adventure*, 3-time winner

Please be advised that California has established a Travel Consumer Restitution Fund under the California Seller of Travel Law that took effect January 1, 1996. This fund is designed to protect consumers from unscrupulous practices by discount airfare ticket sellers or air charter operators. Unfortunately, this law does not cover non-California residents and, even in the case of California residents, it does not cover any foreign travel where the foreign "providers of transportation or travel services" are not in compliance with the Sellers of Travel Law (compliance being defined as registered as a Seller of Travel in California and a participant in the Travel Consumer Restitution Fund). Thus none of Wilderness Travel's tours qualify and we are required by law to advise each client that they are not covered by the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires sellers of travel to maintain a trust account or bond. This business has a trust account. California Seller of Travel #100769640

While as accurate as possible at the time of printing, this itinerary should be considered an approximate indication of the schedule and scope of activities and trip routing, rather than an inflexible schedule of events; it is subject to change due to circumstances beyond our control. This trip is subject to the Limitation of Liability and all the terms and conditions as detailed in the General Information section of the Wilderness Travel Catalog.

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