

# Great Explorations



## Trip Dates

### 2011:

Feb 15-25  
Dec 21-31  
Dec 27- Jan 6

### 2012:

Feb 14-24  
Dec 19-29  
Dec 25- Jan 4

Custom trips available  
and can start any date.  
Call or email for details

## Trip Size

8-16 participants

## Total Days:

11 days/ 10 nights

## Arrive/Depart:

Hanoi/ Dalat\*

\* if doing extension(s)  
your trip will finish in  
either Mui Ne, Saigon or  
Siem Reap

## Activity Level:

Moderate  
20-40+ miles daily  
van supported

## Vietnam, Biking Casual

Enchanting and exotic, and fast becoming the most popular destination in Indochina, Vietnam features lush countryside, colourful village markets, dramatic beach coastline and friendly, engaging people. Whether cycling along rice paddies, walking ancient trails, or on the water visiting floating markets, our trip offers the best of this fascinating country.

*Please note: we offer daily 'non-cycling' options for those who choose not to ride.*

## Itinerary



### Pre-Trip extension (optional):

*Ha Long Bay* - Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ha Long Bay is often described as the eighth wonder of the world. This archipelago marvel is an ideal introduction to the country and one that will not be soon forgotten. Your arrival night hotel into Hanoi is included. Next morning, you'll shuttle to the coast where you'll board a Chinese "junk" vessel to explore the over 2,000 limestone islands. Cruising through the bay, there are optional stops where you can hike through cathedral caves and visit remote fishing villages. This extension includes one night at the Galaxy Hotel, and two days, one night cruising Ha Long Bay, meals (2B, 1L, 1D) and transfers.

### DAYS 1+2:

*Hanoi* - Your arrival night hotel is included in the trip and as people will be arriving at different times, we leave this evening free for you to dine where you choose. On the morning of Day 2, we meet at 9h00 to enjoy a walking tour of Hanoi's sites including the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, museum and stilt house, War Museum, and Hoan Kiem Lake district. There will be time to shop in the Old Quarter which is filled with galleries and cafes. Dinner will be at a French bistro, where the cuisine combines French and Asian influences. We'll stay at the Galaxy Hotel, ideally situated in the Old Quarter and recently renovated.

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## Terrain:

Moderate with some hills

## Cost:

### Land Cost (current year):

US \$2950

Includes 10B/6L/8D

### Single Supplement:

US \$650

### Bike Rental:

US \$290

### Pre-trip Extension:

Price: US \$395 2D/2N

### Post -trip extensions:

Price: US \$395 2D/2N each

### Additional Airfare Saigon to Siem Reap:

US \$185

## DAYS 3+4:

*Hue* - After a short flight to Hue, the religious and educational center of Vietnam, we'll cycle along quiet roads bordered by rice paddies and farming communities. You will be amazed at the reception you receive when cycling through the countryside as you pass children and farmers waving Xin Chao. The riding is flat and easy-going and gives a great introduction to what is to come. We stay at the Orchid Hotel, located in the center of Hue, close to restaurants and cafes. Our guide will give a cultural talk and overview of the history of Vietnam on this evening, before dinner at a favorite restaurant. Next morning, we start our day with a visit to Hue's moated Citadel, a surreal world of deserted gardens and ceremonial halls. Constructed for the Emperor



in 1804, it contained the famed Imperial Forbidden City, which was reserved for the private life of the emperor, eunuch servants and royal concubines. Along our ride, we will have a chance to meet a famed Hue historian and conservationist, whose family's ancestry has links to a former emperor; a visit to his home - the former residence of a Nguyen Dynasty princess - will be a highlight. Afterwards, we boat down the Perfume River to visit the majestic tomb of Minh Mang. *Cycling distances: D3: 35 km; D4: 35 or 45 km*

## DAYS 5+6:

*Hoi An* - Departing Hue, we'll ride along Vietnam's Central coastline with an optional climb over Hai Van Pass at 460 meters (the descent is breathtaking); the road has no traffic as all of the vehicles now take the new tunnel through the mountain. In Hoi An, we stay at the Hoi An Hotel, ideally situated walking distance from town. With its candle-lanterns, historical homes and quaint riverside setting, Hoi An is one of our favorite villages in Vietnam. Our guide will give a walking tour of the town finishing at a renowned tailor where suits/dresses are made to measure in less than 24 hours. Next day, we cycle from the hotel through the flower and vegetable gardens and lush countryside. We finish the day with a cooking course with one of the region's top chefs. It will be one of your best meals in Vietnam! *Cycling distances: D5: 30-40 km; D6: 30-40 km*

## DAYS 7+8:

*Nha Trang* - After a short flight to the bustling coastal resort city of Nha Trang, we will check in to the Novotel Nha Trang, a new hotel directly across from the beach. After lunch, there will be a cycling option along a new coastal road that is gently rolling, freshly paved and traffic-free. Other options include sailing, snorkeling or simply relaxing pool/beachside. Dinner will be at a favorite restaurant where our guide will introduce us to 'locals night' with fresh seafood in a convivial setting. Next day our morning ride is one of the best of the trip, leaving you the afternoon to relax at the private beach of our hotel. Dinner options include local restaurants or the Nha Trang Sailing Club with a hip vibe and superb beachside setting. *Cycling distances: D7: 17 or 34 km; D8: 52.5 km*

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## DAYS 9+10:

*Dalat-* Leaving the coast, we'll welcome the contrast of Vietnam's Central Highlands, featuring spectacular waterfalls, pine tree forests and minority villages. Arriving to Dalat, we will be welcomed to the Hotel Du Parc, built in 1932 in French colonial style and completely renovated in 1992. The next day's ride is usually a favorite of the trip (we always save the very best for last) with a ride that descends over 15 km and then rolls gently past orchards and flower gardens (we shuttle back up to Dalat). After lunch, we visit the local market, Bai Do's palace and the 'Crazy House Hotel' and then finish the trip with a celebratory dinner at one of the best restaurants in Dalat. *Cycling distances: D9: 52km; D10: 50 km*

## EXTENSIONS DAYS 11-17:

Although the regular trip finishes in Dalat, we highly recommend continuing with our extensions to each of Mui Ne Beach, Saigon and Angkor Wat, Cambodia; you can choose these separately or together.

## EXTENSION – MUI NE BEACH DAYS 11+12:



*Mui Ne Beach* - The 1400-meter descent from the highlands back to the coast promises to be an exhilarating day as we cycle our way down forested countryside, by bamboo jungles and past sparsely populated villages on a beautifully paved road. Arriving to Mui Ne, we stay at the enchanting Coco Beach Hotel located directly on the beach. Cycle early the next morning on a scenic road hugging the turquoise coast, catching a glimpse of local fisherman bringing their fish to market. For those preferring to relax or sail out into the South China Sea, options are many. Mui Ne beach has recently become a Mecca for kite surfers and you can watch

the aerial acrobatics from the comfort of the hotel or take a lesson and join in! *Cycling Distances: D11: 53 km; D12: 30 km. Includes 2 nights, meals (2B/ 2D), transfers, guide, support vehicle, bike rental etc. US\$395*

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## **EXTENSION – SAIGON DAYS 13+14:**

*Saigon* - From Mui Ne, we cycle a recently paved road that follows the coast south past idyllic beaches that are largely undeveloped. After lunch, we transfer into Saigon. We'll stay at the new three star Elios Hotel, in the heart of Saigon's shopping and dining districts. Dinner on this night will be at Quan An Ngon, a Saigon institution. On our second day, visit the infamous Cu Chi tunnels north of HCMC and after lunch the War Museum and other sites. Dinner is at Temple Restaurant, recently featured in NY Times. *Cycling Distances: D13: 60 km* Includes 2 nights meals (2B/2D), transfers, guide, support vehicle, bike rental etc. US\$395

## **EXTENSION- ANGKOR WAT DAYS 15-17:**

*Angkor Wat* - Fly to Siem Reap, Cambodia for two days of exploring the World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat with local guide. You will be met on arrival and shuttled to the Auberge Mont Royal D'Angkor, Canadian owned and managed. Our local guide will take you to see the most important sites including Angkor Thom, Angkor Wat, Ta Prohm, and other temples that are among the most incredible wonders in the world. Your final night dinner will be at MERIC, the restaurant at Hotel de la Paix, for a 7-course Khmer tasting extravaganza with wine pairings included. Bon appetite! Price includes 2 nights with breakfast daily, guide and transport for two days, dinner, and airport transfers. US\$395 (flight from Saigon to Siem Reap- \$185 and 3 day Temple Pass- \$40 are additional)

**DAY 17:** Depart at your leisure for onward travel.

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## Accommodations



### **Galaxy Hotel, Hanoi**

The recently renovated building dates to 1929 and is located just north of the Old Quarter; the A/C rooms are large and there is a good Asian restaurant and bar on site.



### **Orchid Hotel, Hue**

This is a new hotel located in the heart of the town center and has up-market amenities including DVD players in each room.



### **Hoi An Hotel, Hoi An**

This hotel is located in town, a short walk from the historical town. Rooms are spacious with tile floors, and the central pool is large and inviting.



### **Novotel, Nha Trang**

The newest hotel in Nha Trang and directly across from the beach, this hotel boasts a contemporary design and comfortable rooms.

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## Accommodations



### **Hotel du Parc, Dalat**

This hotel was built in 1932 and was totally renovated in 1997, keeping its historical touches such as glossy wooden floors, molded high ceilings.



### **Coco Beach, Mui Ne**

This beach-front hotel has wooden bungalows on stilts, each with comfy balcony area. Service is attentive and genuine. There is a swimming pool and two restaurants on site.



### **Elio Hotel, Saigon**

This new 90-room hotel overlooks a leafy park in Pham Nu Lao district. Recently featured in NY Times article, it is a wonderful hotel to finish our trip in Vietnam.

\*Please note that hotels are subject to change.

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## What's Included in the Cost of Your Trip?

### What is included: Regular trip

- services of one or more experienced bilingual guides and support vehicles
- 10 nights lodging
- 10 breakfasts, 6 lunches, and 8 dinners
- wine receptions on first and final nights and drinks on us at two 'local night dinners'
- entrance fees for selected historical sites and museums
- map and detailed route instructions
- all baggage transportation
- all transportation from initial meeting point to final drop-off including flights between Hanoi-Hue and Danang- Nha Trang (see arrive/depart cities)

### What is included: Ha Long Bay Extension (prior to Regular trip)

- Arrival night hotel at Galaxy Hotel with breakfast
- Two day one night cruise in Ha Long Bay
- Meals (2B, 2L, 1D)
- Airport transfer on arrival, and transfers between Hanoi and Ha Long Bay

### What is included: Mui Ne Extension

- Two nights at the Coco Beach Hotel with breakfast daily
- Bike rentals for two days, support vehicle and guide
- Meals (2B/2D)

### What is included: Saigon Extension

- Cycling with guide between Mui Ne and Saigon
- Two nights at the Elios Hotel with breakfast daily
- Guided visit and transport to Cu Chi Tunnels
- Meals (2B/2D)

### What is included: Angkor Wat

- Two nights at the Auberge Mount Royale with breakfast daily
- Guided visits for two days with transport and airport transfers
- Meals (2B/1D)
- Temple Pass and flights between Saigon and Angkor Wat are additional

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Please note: Final itinerary is subject to revision; any changes made are done so in an attempt to provide the best possible trip given route conditions and available services. Due to the nature of our business and exchange rates, prices are subject to change. All prices quoted are U.S. dollars but we gladly accept payment in Canadian dollars also. Due to cancellations and waiting lists, trip availability fluctuates daily. If you have any questions or would like to confirm space on this trip before making your reservation, please contact us at [info@great-explorations.com](mailto:info@great-explorations.com) or by telephone at 604.730.1247

