

Great Explorations



Trip Dates

2011

Jan 10-20

Jan 30-Feb 9*

*Tet New Year trip

2012

Jan 9-18

Jan 29-Feb 7

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

Trip Size

8-16 participants

Total Days:

10 days/ 9 nights

Arrive/Depart:

Hanoi/ Saigon

Activity Level:

Moderate
20-40+ miles daily
van supported

Terrain:

Moderate with some hills

Vietnam, Biking Luxe

Enchanting, exotic, and fast becoming the most popular destination in Indochina, Vietnam features lush countryside, colorful 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.

This trip will be an incredible opportunity to cycle a country that is changing quickly but remains one of the most fascinating regions in SE Asia. On this trip, the Halong Bay extension will start on Jan 8 and the Siem Reap extension will be offered Jan 6 also so you can do that prior to Hanoi arrival or after the regular trip.

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

Itinerary



Pre-Trip extension (optional):

Hanoi & 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 luxurious 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 with local school children who delight in rowing us through their 'community on water'. Our luxurious junk boasts large private cabins featuring floor to ceiling windows, private balconies and large granite and glass bathrooms. This extension includes one night at the Hanoi Metropole, and two days, one night cruising Ha Long Bay, meals (2B, 1L, 1D) and transfers.

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Cost:

Land Cost (current year):
US \$3450
Includes 10B/6L/8D

Single Supplement:
US \$950

Bike Rental:
US \$290

Pre-trip Extension:
Price: US \$595 2D/2N

Post -trip extensions:
Price: US \$595 2D/2N
each

Additional Airfare Saigon to Siem Reap: US \$185

DAY 1:

Hanoi - Your arrival night hotel is included in the trip at the luxurious Sofitel Metropole in the French Quarter; we meet at 7:00 pm in the Metropole lobby and head to dinner at La Badiane, whose French chef combines the best of French and Asian cuisine in his cooking.

DAYS 2+3:

Hue -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. We depart Hanoi on an afternoon flight for Hue, the religious and educational center of Vietnam. Arriving to our hotel, the Pilgrimage Village, we will be greeted with welcome drinks and then ushered to our sumptuous suites. Our guide will give a cultural talk and overview of the history of Vietnam on this evening, before dinner in the hotel dining room. 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 4+5:

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 Life Hoi An Resort, 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*

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DAYS 6+7:

Nha Trang - After a short flight to the bustling coastal resort city of Nha Trang, we will check in to the five-star Ana Mandara Resort. After lunch at the beachside restaurant around the pool, 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 Amandara's dining room 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*

DAYS 8+9:

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 Sofitel Dalat Palace, built in 1922 in French colonial style; the spacious rooms boast clawfoot tubs, fireplaces and spectacular views. 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 10-16:

Although the regular trip finishes with a flight to Saigon, 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 10+11:

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 Blue Ocean Life Resort. 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\$595 US\$595

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Single Supplement:

US \$950

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Additional Airfare Saigon to Siem Reap: US \$185

EXTENSION – SAIGON DAYS 12+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 historic Grand 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\$595. Note that the Saigon extension can be done without doing Mui Ne and it would include airfare from Dalat.

EXTENSION- ANGKOR WAT DAYS 14-16:

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 incomparable Raffles Grand Hotel, which has undergone a \$70 million renovation and is unquestionably one of the finest hotels in Asia. 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 at the Raffles Grand with breakfast daily, guide and transport for two days, dinner at Meric, and airport transfers. US\$595 (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:

[Sofitel Metropole, Hanoi](#)

[Pilgrimage Village, Hue](#)

[Life Resorts, Hoi An](#)

[Ana Mandara Resort,
Nha Trang](#)

[Sofitel Dalat Palace,
Dalat](#)

Post trip:

[Blue Ocean Life Resort,
Mui Ne Beach](#)

[Grand Hotel, Saigon](#)

[Raffles Grand Hotel
D'Angkor, Angkor Wat](#)

Accommodations



Sofitel Metropole, Hanoi

This French colonial-style hotel has stood proudly since 1901 and is thoroughly steeped in historic grandeur. Located in the center of Hanoi, the charming Metropole blends the hospitality of the Vietnamese people with true European luxury. As a Sofitel property, it has all of the expected amenities of a hotel in this class.



Pilgrimage Village, Hue

This charming hotel, located in an updated rustic village setting away from the bustle of town, offers a harmonious balance between the natural environment and local culture. Guest rooms are in stylish, upscale bungalows and villas. The richly appointed Verdana Spa on site offers massage services and a variety of natural treatments.



Life Resorts, Hoi An

Life Resort's charming French colonial exterior is complimented by the eclectic interior design blending elements of French, Japanese, Chinese and Dutch cultures which have influenced Hoi An town over the last 4 centuries. Located on the Thu Bon River, this spa resort is right on the doorstep of Hoi An's colorful and bustling Ancient Town.



Ana Mandara Resort, Nha Trang

Exquisitely decorated with native wood and rattan, the hotel is located directly on the beach with over 20,000 square meters of private tropical gardens overlooking the sea. Blending graceful architecture and gracious service, peaceful atmosphere and captivating scenery, Ana Mandara offers its guests a unique experience in simplicity, serenity and refinement.

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[Sofitel Dalat Palace,
Dalat](#)

Post trip:

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Mui Ne Beach](#)

[Caravelle Hotel, Saigon](#)

[Raffles Grand Hotel
D'Angkor, Angkor Wat](#)

Accommodations



Sofitel Dalat Palace, Dalat

Sofitel Dalat Palace Built in 1922 and once the home of the emperor Bai Dai, this 5-star hotel boasts large rooms with original wooden floors and large claw-foot tubs in the washrooms. There are three restaurants, tennis courts, large pool and spa...



Blue Ocean Life Resort, Mui Ne Beach

This new resort, located on the best stretch of beach in Mui Ne, has comfortable rooms and large grounds and swimming pool. The restaurant on site is excellent and the staff are very friendly and welcoming.



Caravelle Hotel, Saigon

Located just next to the HCM Opera House, the Caravelle boasts a wide choice of restaurants, spa and pool and the rooftop bar, Saigon which was a favorite of war correspondents. In 2001, Caravelle Hotel hosted the cast and crew filming Graham Greene's epic novel The Quiet American, starring Sir Michael Caine.



Raffles Grand Hotel D'Angkor, Angkor Wat

As the guide book says, "for luxury, atmosphere and convenience, there is no better choice in Siem Reap....guest rooms are large, with classic French doors and windows, tiled entries, fine furnishings...the courtyard pool is large and inviting."

*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 Great Explorations guides and support vehicle
- 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
- detailed map and 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 Metropole Hotel with breakfast
- Two day one night cruise in Ha Long Bay on luxury boat
- 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 Blue Ocean Life Resort 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 Grand Hotel with breakfast daily
- Guided visit and transport to Cu Chi Tunnels
- Meals (2B/2D)

What is included: Angkor Wat

- Two nights at the Raffles Grand Hotel with breakfast daily
- Guided visits for two days with transport and airport transfers
- Meals (2B/1D)
- Temple pass and flights between Saigon and Ankor 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 or by telephone at **604.730.1247**

