

Vietnam Guided Walking Holiday

Tour Style: Worldwide Multi-Centre

Destinations: Vietnam & South East Asia

Trip code: VNWHW

Trip Walking Grade: 1



HOLIDAY OVERVIEW

Discover the world-famous Ho Chi Minh City and Mekong Delta before heading on to historic Hanoi. Walk through rice terraces, rolling hills and rural villages nestled in the mountainous terrain of the north, and then unwind with a luxury cruise around the magnificent Halong Bay.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- 12 nights' accommodation in en-suite rooms and 2 nights' en-suite cabin on a luxury boat
- Full board from dinner on arrival to breakfast on departure
- A full programme of guided walks led by a local tour director, local guides, and HF Holidays' leader
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- Internal flights and travel by air-conditioned coach/minivan
- Tips

HOLIDAYS HIGHLIGHTS

- Cruise on Halong Bay and stay overnight

- Modern history such as the Viet Cong tunnels at Cu Chi and the 'frozen in time' Reunification Palace
- Historic cities and ruins of the coast – Hoi An, My Son and the imperial city of Huế
- Excellent walking in the northern hill tribe areas around Sapa, and a visit to the vibrant local market in Bac Ha
- City walks in Ho Chi Minh City, Hue and Hanoi to discover contrasting but distinctly Vietnamese places
- Excellent hotels, all 4- and 5-star city hotels or resorts
- Delicious Vietnamese cuisine

TRIP SUITABILITY

Walks are between 1-4 miles (1½-6½km) with some gradual ascent on some days. There will be a choice of walks around Sapa on one day, with the harder walks up to 9 miles (14½km) with up to about 1,500 feet (450m) of ascent.



ITINERARY

Day 1 - 4: Ho Chi Minh City & Mekong Delta

Fly from London Heathrow to Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to the hotel for a stay of 3 nights. Take an afternoon walk through the city to Reunification Palace, with its interesting and turbulent history.

During our stay we'll travel out of the city to Cu Chi, and see amazing network of tunnels dug by the Viet Cong. This afternoon enjoy a walking tour of Saigon, including the cathedral of Notre Dame, Vinh Nghiem pagoda, and the historic Chinese district of Cholon.

The next day we head south out of the city towards Ben Tre, on the Mekong Delta. Visit coconut growers and experience daily life here. Take a boat cruise and enjoy a local lunch.

Day 5 - 6: Hoi An

Fly to Danang and drive to the picturesque old port of Hoi An (2 nights), visiting the Cham museum en route.

The following day we visit to the ancient city of My Son for walks in the Holy Valley area, a 4th century religious sanctuary. Return to Hoi An for a walking tour of its ancient winding streets, once the biggest port in Asia, a centre of the spice trade and meeting point between Chinese, Japanese, and European traders.

Day 7 - 8: Hué

Travel up the coast, stopping for a walk at the Marble Mountains for scenic coastal views. Arrive in the ancient Imperial capital of Hué (2 nights), and take a boat trip on the Perfume River to Thien Mu pagoda.

We'll enjoy a walking tour of Hué's ancient city, visiting the Royal Citadel, the Forbidden Purple City and Dong Ba market.

Day 9: To Hanoi

Fly to Hanoi (1 night). Take a walking tour of the capital to the Temple of Literature, including a cycle ride around the fascinating old quarter. Evening visit to the water puppets show.

Day 10 - 12: Sapa

Take the new highway into the hill country to Sapa (2 nights). After we check in we'll explore the town, market and Ham Rong mountain.

Walk by the rice terraces, narrow rivers and the beautiful scenery of the Muong Hoa valley to Tavan village.

We'll visit the Bac Ha market and tour Pho village and H'mong Palace before travelling to Hanoi.

Day 13 - 14: Halong Bay

After breakfast, we drive to the coast, stopping in rural villages on the way, to the extraordinary scenery of Halong Bay. Board our well-appointed cruise boat to explore the highlights of Halong Bay (2 nights), stopping off for a short walk on one of the islands or enjoy a relaxed kayak, with islets dotted all around. We overnight on our cruise boat in the peaceful waters of the bay.

Day 15 - 16: Hanoi & Return Flight

Wake to the beautiful scenery of Halong Bay and cruise through the waters. Afternoon return to Hanoi (1 night) followed by our return flight the next day.

ACCOMMODATION

Pullman Saigon Centre, Ho Chi Minh City - Vietnam

In Ho Chi Minh City we stay at the Pullman Saigon Centre located in the heart of the city near to Notre Dame Cathedral and Reunification Palace. The modern rooms offer stunning views of the city or the Saigon River. The hotel has the highest rooftop bar in the city.

Little Hoi An Central Hotel, Hoi An - Vietnam

A 4-star hotel with 108 rooms, Little Hoi An is housed in a colonial style building and is adjacent to the old town. The hotel features an outdoor pool and a private beach area.

Pilgrimage Village, Hué - Vietnam

A wonderful boutique hotel located in quiet countryside outside Hué. Rooms are thatched bungalows designed in a traditional Vietnamese style yet with full modern conveniences and are set around a large pool with beautiful tropical gardens. The hotel is a member of the Small Luxury Hotels of the World group.

Pan Pacific Hotel, Hanoi - Vietnam

This is a large 5-star hotel with an excellent central location close to Hoan Kiem Lake. The hotel has large rooms and the extensive range of facilities expected from a hotel of this rating.

Victoria Hotel, Sapa - Vietnam

A lovely 4-star resort hotel, perched on top of a hill overlooking the valley, in the style of a traditional mountain chalet with wooden furniture and a cosy fireplace. Rooms offer a touch of local authenticity with traditional handicrafts yet provide the comfort of an international hotel.

Cruise, Halong Bay - Vietnam

Cruise through the waters on a spectacular 2 night trip and wake to the beautiful scenery of Halong Bay.

USEFUL HOLIDAY INFORMATION

Weather & Seasonality

Vietnam's climate varies from south to north, and from lowland and coastal areas to highland and mountain regions. There are also distinct seasons in the far north of the country. In general, our holidays are during the drier season.

Temperatures in the south of the country rarely fall below 20°C, with daytime temperatures in the high 20's. Further north temperatures are lower, but even in Hanoi the average daily temperature is usually in the high teens. There may be some light rainfall in the central coastal area during our visits.

In the higher mountain areas temperatures during the day are ideal for walking, and rarely drop to freezing at night

Joining Instructions (With Flights)

For those travelling on our HF Holidays' group flight, please proceed to the arrivals hall once you have passed through passport control, customs and baggage reclaim, when you arrive at your destination. Your leader or local leader will assemble the group in the arrivals hall. Look out for the HF Holidays' sign.

Joining Instructions (Without Flights)

If you are arriving ahead of the group, and are meeting them at the first hotel, please leave a message at the hotel reception for the HF Holidays' leader or local leader, detailing your room number, and a mobile telephone number if possible. The leader will contact you once the group arrives. If you are arriving after the group, a message will be left for you at the hotel reception, welcoming you and giving details of the time and place to meet the group. If your flight arrives before the group flight and you would like to join the transfer to the first hotel, please contact our Abroad Administration team on (0)20 8732 1261. They will have a list of the relevant transfer costs.

What To Bring

Suggested Kit List

As you'll be carrying your own luggage at airports and between your transport and hotels we recommend you try to keep your luggage to a minimum. These items are a general suggestion of what to pack for an active outdoor and walking holiday; depending on your destination, you may need more of some things and less – or none! – of others. You'll know best what you prefer to wear when out walking or while taking part in other outdoor activities.

- Walking boots (worn in), with good ankle support and spare bootlaces
- Walking socks
- Walking sandals
- Lightweight fleece, waterproof trousers and jacket
- Shorts and short-sleeved t-shirts
- Long trousers and long-sleeved lightcoloured shirts with collars to protect from the sun.

Your clothing should ideally be pre-treated with insect repellent and in-built sun protection (available from specialist clothing stores such as Rohan, Cotswold Outdoor).

- Warm fleece, scarf/buff hat and gloves
- Torch
- Comfortable clothes and shoes for evenings and sightseeing
- Sun protection – sun hat, sunglasses, high factor sunscreen and lip protection
- Water bottle – at least 2-litre capacity
- Lightweight survival bag
- Small/medium rucksack (30 litre) and a liner or cover to keep contents dry
- Insect repellent
- Universal travel plug
- Personal first aid kit including: personal medication, tissues, plasters, blister kit, painkillers, antiseptic wipes, Imodium, rehydration sachets

Essential Equipment

- Passport (and copies)
- booking confirmation
- insurance cover note
- HF Holidays' registration form.

Please ensure you have access to emergency funds should you need them; carrying a credit card is probably the most convenient method.

Optional Equipment

- Trekking poles (especially if you find these useful for descents)
- camera
- umbrella
- binoculars
- high energy food bars

Please note that the HF Holidays' leader reserves the right to refuse to take any guest on a walk should they consider that a lack of suitable clothing/footwear may affect safety

Safety On Your Holiday

Insurance is a condition of booking. Therefore, if you have not already arranged insurance, it is imperative that you do so, and advise us of the insurance company and policy number.

We have negotiated special holiday insurance and full details of this cover can be found in our brochure or at www.hfholidays.co.uk. There is no extra charge for pre-existing illnesses.

If you would like to purchase insurance from us, please call us on 020 8732 1220 or email holidayservices@hfholidays.co.uk.

For more information about healthcare abroad and its costs, please visit: www.dh.gov.uk/travellers.

If you are arranging your own travel insurance, please ensure it is adequate for your specific itinerary.

Generally, this should include cover for walking at altitudes over 2,000m - the highest point on the harder walks may go up to 2,700m.

Once you have made your booking, you will receive a pre-holiday questionnaire where we ask for details of next of kin and insurance details. You must complete and return this to us - we need to have this from you at least 10 weeks before travel.

Please also inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders have to consider both group and individual safety at all times.

Whilst out with the group, we respectfully request that you:

- Please listen to any safety instructions from the leader
- Keep group members in view, especially if weather or visibility is poor
- Please stay where you are if you become separated from the group. The leader will retrace their steps to find you.

Each leader carries a first aid kit but is not allowed to supply any medication including aspirin, paracetamol, antihistamines and antiseptic cream. You may wish to bring these items with you in your own kit (see Suggested Kit List).

In the unlikely event that your leader is incapacitated, please use any emergency kit in their rucksack and call emergency services on 911. Please then call our emergency number (see page 8) and let us know there is a problem.

Dietary Requirements

Please contact us as far in advance as possible if you have any specific dietary requirements and we will do our best to meet your needs.

If you require a specific meal on the flight, please let us know as soon as possible, and no later than 96 hours before travel.

Vaccinations & Health

Before booking, you should check with your doctor to see if any health precautions are needed.

The following websites provide a wealth of information on travelling and health:

<http://www.travelhealthpro.org.uk/> www.redplanet.travel/mdtravelhealth

Vaccines: Diphtheria, Hepatitis A, Typhoid & Tetanus vaccinations are recommended. Malaria and Rabies prevention are sometimes recommended too.

There have been reported cases of Dengue fever, you should use suitable insect repellent and wear appropriate clothing to avoid being bitten.

Passports & Visas

Passport

Your passport should be valid for at least one month after visa expiry to enter Vietnam.

Visa

Up to 30 June 2021 'British Citizen' passport holders do not need to apply for a visa for tourist visits/stays of up to 15 days. This means you do not need a visa for our Vietnamese Highlights tour. If you are planning to stay longer than 15 days and up to 30 days, an e-visa can now be obtained online. You will need to upload a copy of your passport data page and a photograph. You will receive a registration code. Cost is 25 USD. If your e-visa is approved, please print the e-visa and take it with you to Vietnam. If you are planning to stay longer than 30 days the visa must be obtained beforehand from the nearest Vietnamese Embassy.

You should retain the yellow customs form on entry to Vietnam, this is required for exit.

Most other nationalities, including different types of British nationality (e.g. 'British national (overseas)'), require a visa to enter Vietnam. Please enquire at your nearest Vietnamese embassy or consulate.

Useful Information

Vietnamese, or tieng Viet ('dee-uhng veeuht') is the official language of Vietnam. It belongs to the Mon-Khmer language family and has Muong (a hill-tribe language) as its closest relative.

Most Vietnamese sounds also exist in English, so the pronunciation isn't as hard as it might at first appear. Some basics to get you started include:

'Xin chào' ('Sin jòw) – Hello

'Tạm biệt' ('Daam bee-uh't) – Goodbye

'Vâng' ('Vuhng) or 'Đa' (Ya) – Yes, in the North and South

'Không' ('Kawm) – No

'Làm ơn' ('Lààm ern) – Please

'Cám ơn' ('Gáám ern') – Thank you

'Bạn có nói được tiếng Anh không?' ('Baan gó nóy đuhr-erk ding aang kawm?' – Do you speak English?

Luggage

Luggage Allowance

1 piece checked-in luggage (max 30kg)

Please check details of your airline's baggage allowance, as shown on your e-ticket. Remember to also check any connecting flights you may have booked.

Lost Or Damaged Luggage

If your bag or its contents are damaged or lost while in the airline's care, this should be reported to the baggage service agents at the airport on arrival. They will assess the damage; in some cases, the airline may decide to settle your claim immediately.

You will be given a reference to quote to your insurance company if an immediate settlement is not possible - in many cases, baggage claims can only be accepted in writing. A baggage claim form must be obtained from the airport.

Local Currency

Vietnamese Đông (VND). Credit cards are increasingly accepted. ATMs can be found in the major tourist locations.

It is easy to exchange foreign currency at banks, hotels and exchange bureaux - US dollars are easily exchanged, but if you are using them in shops etc, they must be clean, and not torn.

Tipping

Tips are included on this holiday.

Local Time

GMT/UTC +7 hours

Electricity

Electricity supply is 220V with a frequency of 50hz.

Suggested Reading & Maps

Lonely Planet, Vietnam (Aug 2018)
Martin Zatko and Rachel Mills, The Rough Guide to Vietnam (Mar 2018)
Graham Greene, The Quiet American (Oct 2004)
Bill Hayton, Vietnam Rising Dragon (Sep 2011)

Although you won't need them, if you'd like any maps of the destination, you can obtain some in advance from The Map Shop: <https://www.themapshop.co.uk/>

HOW TO BOOK

When you're ready to book, you can choose to **book online** or book **over the phone**. Our website offers secure online booking for our holidays, is available 24/7, and offers more in-depth information about all our holidays. If you prefer to call us, our experienced and knowledgeable team are available to answer any specific questions you have and can offer guidance as to which holiday is best suited to your needs.

Our office is open: Monday to Friday: 9am – 7pm Saturday & Sunday: 9am – 1pm Bank Holiday Monday: 9am – 1pm

PAYING YOUR DEPOSIT

To secure the holiday of your choice, you will need to pay a deposit: UK & European Holidays: £150 per person and Worldwide Holidays: £250 per person. You can pay your deposit by debit or credit card with no additional card fees charged or make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account, please see details under BACS payments. You can also pay your deposit by cheque within seven days of booking. Cheques should be made payable to 'HF Holidays Ltd' with your booking reference / Order ID on the back.

ASSOCIATE'S FEE

Non-members can join our holidays by paying an Associate's fee of £10 per person per holiday. Alternatively, full life membership is available from £100 – visit hfholidays.co.uk/membership for details.

BACS PAYMENTS

Please quote your booking reference / Order ID when you make your payment online: Bank Name: Svenska Handelsbanken AB (publ) Account Name: HF Holidays Ltd Account Number: 35923304 Sort Code: 40-51-62 IBAN: GB92HAND40516235923304 Swift / Bic Code: HANDGB22

Once we have received your booking and deposit, we will send a confirmation invoice to the lead name. Please check this carefully. For bookings 'with flights' it is essential that the names on your booking confirmation invoice match those on your passport for bookings overseas. Please advise us immediately of any errors. Any name changes after the balance of your holiday has been paid will be subject to a fee levied by the airline.

MANAGE MY BOOKINGS

Payments can also be made through the Manage My Booking function on our website. Click on the link at the top of our homepage. This is available to all customers who provide an email address at the time of booking.

YOUR FINAL BALANCE

The balance is due 10 weeks before departure. As with paying your deposit, you can pay your final balance by debit or credit card, make an online BACS payment directly into HF's bank account or pay by cheque.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

Travel insurance is an important part of any booking and essential for one of our holidays. HF Holidays works with specialist. Insurance Brokers Campbell Irvine Direct. For more information or to obtain a quote call them on 01702 427 236 or visit hfholidays.co.uk/insurance

PEACE OF MIND

ATOL:

The air holidays and flights in this brochure are ATOL-protected, since we hold an Air Travel Organiser's Licence granted by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 710. In the unlikely event of our insolvency, the CAA will ensure that you are not stranded abroad and will arrange to refund any money you have paid us for advance bookings. For further information visit the ATOL website atol.org.uk

MEMBER OF ABTOT:

HF Holidays is a member of ABTOT (The Association of Bonded Travel Organisers Trust Limited) which provides financial protection under the Package Travel, Package Holidays and Package Tours Regulations 1992 for HF Holidays Ltd and in the event of their insolvency, protection is provided for the following: 1. non-flight packages commencing in and returning to the UK; 2. non-flight packages commencing and returning to a country other than the UK; 3. flight inclusive packages that commence outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland, which are sold to customers outside of the UK and Republic of Ireland. 1, 2 and 3 provides for a refund in the event you have not yet travelled. 1 and 3 provides for repatriation. Please note that bookings made outside the UK and Republic of Ireland are only protected by ABTOT when purchased directly with HF Holidays Ltd.

TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid based on the date printed at the bottom of the page. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure. We will send you the latest trip notes prior to departure through a link in your pre departure documents or we can send you a copy in the post if preferred.

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call HF Holidays and ask to speak to one of the team about this itinerary.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; so please be prepared to be flexible where necessary. At times, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned due to weather conditions, political, physical or other factors. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements to maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

PRICE GUARANTEE

We promise that our earliest published prices will always be the best and if we reduce our holiday price after your booking has been confirmed, we will pass this reduction on to you. Our price promise applies if any subsequent offer price is for an identical holiday, duration, location and date and does not cover any optional extras, flights or additional services.

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