

Walking with sightseeing in Vietnam

Trip style: Walking with sightseeing

Destination: 📍 Vietnam

Trip code: VTN14-WHW10

Trip Walking Grade: 1/2

Carbon Footprint: 🌳 3373kg CO2



Holiday Overview

The green peaks around Ninh Binh and rice paddy-covered valleys of Mai Chau form the backdrop for this northern Vietnam tour. Embark on a lesser-travelled route that celebrates the area's eye-catching natural beauty and heritage. Not only will you cruise the emerald waters and limestone outcrops of Hả Long Bay to discover caves, kayak around inlets, and swim, but you'll take in the city sights of Hanoi, explore imperial Hué, and marvel at riverside architecture in delightful Hoi An. And then there's the food. Eat your way around the evening markets for a taste of what's quickly becoming Asia's foodie capital and get hands on with a Vietnamese cooking lesson.

WHAT YOU'LL LOVE

- Discovering the vibrant and historic Hanoi on a walking tour
- Exploring the dramatic landscapes and cultural melting pot of the rural north
- Cruising between stunning limestone karsts in Ha Long and Lan Ha bays
- Uncovering the charming town of Hoi An and the Imperial city of Hue
- Sharing a vegan lunch and conversation with a Buddhist monk
- Visiting an artisan village and exploring local craft traditions in Ninh Binh
- Tasting Vietnamese cuisine, known for its fresh and vibrant flavours

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Local Tour Manager who leads walks and sightseeing
- 11 nights' touring accommodation across Vietnam
- Comfortable homestay in Mau Hich village with private facilities
- Two nights en-suite cabin on a deluxe boat, one night aboard sleeper train. Cabins are 4-berth and are on a shared basis with same gender per cabin.
- 14 breakfasts, 10 lunches & 9 dinners
- Vietnamese cooking demonstration
- All sightseeing and entrance fees (as per itinerary)
- Return flights from the London including baggage and transfers (arrive Hanoi, depart Da Nang)

Please note: : On day 10 we travel on an overnight sleeper train. Subject to availability cabins can be booked for sole use or for two passengers. Call our sales team to get prices and request.

WALKING GRADES AND OPTIONS

This holiday is walking grade 2 which is the upper level of leisurely. Walks are between 2.5 - 7.5 miles (4 - 12km) with some gradual ascents and descents on some days. The terrain will be uneven under foot on rural walks and in the ancient sites. There will be stairs to negotiate, and good mobility is essential for getting on and off boats of different sizes and types.

ITINERARY VERSION 1

Day 1 Depart the UK

Our with-flight guests depart the UK on an overnight flight to Hanoi

Day 2 Arrive Hanoi

Arrive in Hanoi and transfer to our hotel in Hanoi's atmospheric Old Quarter. Later the whole group will meet for a welcome dinner and a chance to meet your fellow travellers.

Day 3 Hanoi Sightseeing

Distance: approx. 4.5 miles (7 km)

Today we will explore on foot the sights and sounds of Hanoi, Vietnam's vibrant and historic capital. Founded as the capital in 1010 by Emperor Lý Thái Tổ it was then called Thang Long – Rising dragon symbolising prosperity and power. Our walk begins at Train Street where buildings are inches away from the active train tracks. Visitors often enjoy a coffee while watching the trains go by and feeling the gust of wind they create. From here we head to the Temple of Literature, founded in 1070 it is a complex honouring Confucius and later becoming Vietnam's first national university. Five architecturally beautiful courtyards tell the story of Vietnam's intellectual history and manicured gardens, and lotus pools create a serene haven from the contrasting bustle of Hanoi. After lunch we explore the Ho Chi Minh Complex which includes a museum with exhibits relating to Ho Chi Minh's life and his mausoleum, his final resting place. Tree lined avenues take us past the Imperial Citadel which served as a royal political centre for over a millennium. You have the option to stay and visit the citadel and make your own way back to the hotel or continue walking with your Tour Manager back to the old town.

Day 4 Mai Chau Valley

Distance: approx. 7.5 miles (12 km)

Leaving Hanoi, our journey takes around four hours and brings us to Mai Chau valley, surrounded by high limestone mountains and filled with rice fields. This area is home to the White Thais, and we'll pass many hamlets of wooden houses on stilts, stopping to meet a local family for a traditional lunch and a chance to learn more of their way of life.

Spend the afternoon walking on backroads and paths between rice fields, villages, and vegetable plots, observing the farmers and their buffaloes at work. Our walk ends at the serene Mai Hich village where we will become immersed in the local culture for the next two nights in our comfortable home stays.

Day 5 Hang Kia

Distance: approx. 7 miles (11 km)

Today we drive to the mountainous province of Hoa Binh known for its stunning landscapes and vast lakes. We arrive in Hang Kia a highland community known for its misty peaks and the Hmong people. Agriculturists with traditions going back thousands of years they create colourful textiles, clothes full of intricate embroidery each pattern telling a story. We will meet a local family and take part in a batik workshop, learning about techniques passed down through generations.

Lunch is in one of the Hmong homes where we will sample local dishes and flavours which showcase the close connection to the land. In the afternoon we take a downhill walk from the mountains on a mix of pathways and trails through wild scenery to meet up with our bus and return to Mai Hich.

Day 6 Pu Luong Nature Reserve

Distance: approx. 6 miles (10 km)

This morning, we travel to Pu Luong nature reserve an off-the-beaten track region famous for its emerald rice terraces, lush jungles and waterfalls. We will explore Ban Don village on foot passing ethnic stilt houses built from wood and bamboo, meeting the residents and seeing the stunning terraced rice fields. The village in the Central Highlands has a rich mix of ethnicities including indigenous groups like the Ede, Lao and Khmer who settled there.

Our journey continues on our coach to Ninh Binh province, often called 'Ha Long Bay on land' because of its dramatic limestone mountains. We will reach our base for the next two nights Tam Coc in time to see the sunset from the multi-

tiered Buddhist complex of Bich Dong pagodas. Connected by steps and caves these three pagodas have beautiful carvings, statues and panoramic views.

Day 7 Ninh Binh

Distance: approx. 6.5 miles (10 km)

Today we have a rural “day in the life” of Ninh Binh. For those who would like to do an early morning visit to experience the hustle and bustle of a local market your Tour Manager will meet you in reception. On return to the hotel enjoy a leisurely breakfast before a gentle walk through an artisan’s village famous worldwide for intricate lace and thread embroidery. It is not just about clothing, the artisans also produce home décor, unique thread paintings and even small souvenirs like bottle holders using traditional and modern designs. Try your hand with this traditional craft said to date back 800 years. From the village we board our sampans for a ride through Thung Nang, navigating limestone karsts, caves, and quiet waterways. A sampan is a traditional flat-bottomed boat that uses oar power to get around. Thung Nang or Sunshine Valley is a tranquil ecotourism spot known for its rivers that reflect the emerald-green of the rice fields or golden fields during harvest. Disembarking we head to a local home and meet our hosts who will provide a delicious home-made lunch in a garden setting. Enjoy some free time back at the hotel before a short drive to Hang Mua Mountain to climb the 500 stone steps to its summit. Viewpoints feature a dragon statue and a pagoda, and the climb is worth the effort as it rewards with stunning panoramic views over the surrounding countryside.

Day 8–9 Overnight Cruise Ha Long and Lan Ha Bays

Departing early, we drive across the Red River Delta to the coast and the Gulf of Tonkin where we embark on a two-night cruise aboard a deluxe cruise boat and one of the prettiest in Halong.

Over the next two days we’ll sail through one of the world’s most majestic UNESCO-listed locations. Relax on deck, tuck into delicious meals, and take in the ever-changing landscape as we explore the lesser-known channels of Ha Long and Lan Ha bays. Lan Ha bay is a less-crowded alternative offering turquoise waters and emerald-green limestone mountains. As we cruise you may spot primates in the foliage of the islands or the abundant marine life and even rare birds.

There’s the opportunity to visit limestone caves, kayak in coves, and swim in the emerald waters. Early risers can enjoy a sunrise Tai Chi session, or you could take part in a cooking demonstration.

Paradise Grand Cruise

Sail through one of the world’s most majestic UNESCO-listed locations aboard the 5-star Paradise Grand. With just 39 cabins, this luxury cruise offers an intimate experience, complemented by spacious, elegantly appointed rooms – all with a balcony or terrace for uninterrupted views of emerald waters and limestone cliffs. Onboard highlights include a jacuzzi, spa, sundeck, piano lounge, and Michelin-starred menus. Join morning Tai Chi, try Vietnamese cooking with the resident chef, or watch a classic film under the stars.

Day 10 Sung Sot Cave, return to Hanoi, sleeper train to Hue

Cruising through the bay this morning, we visit Sung Sot Cave, the largest and most famous in Halong, known for its immense chambers and stunning stalactites and stalagmites. As we return to the harbour, we enjoy brunch on deck and then disembark for the journey back to Hanoi. We have day use rooms to freshen up before transferring to the station where we will board the night train to the imperial capital of Hue.

We travel on an overnight sleeper train. Subject to availability cabins can be booked for sole use (£196) or for two passengers (£70). Call our sales team to request. These prices are in addition to the single supplement for the rest of the holiday.

Day 11 Huè's Imperial Heritage

Distance: approx. 4.5 miles (7km)

On arrival in Hue this morning we transfer to our hotel where breakfast is waiting. Then we'll set off for a walking tour of Hue's imperial past. The Imperial City was Vietnam's political, cultural and religious centre under the Nguyen Dynasty from 1802 – 1945. We enter through the Northern gate which was designed for the King's private use. This vast complex includes palaces, temples, moats, gardens and the Forbidden Purple City which was the royal residence.

After exploring this grand city, we will stop for lunch and then there is free time back at the hotel where you can use the pool or relax in the gardens, or stay out and explore more of Hue independently.

Day 12 Tu Duc Tomb, the Perfume River, lunch with Buddhist Monk

After breakfast, we visit Dong Ba market, one of the oldest and biggest in Hue. With more than 2,700 stalls filled with fresh foods, conical hats, silk items, lacquer ware and steaming cooking pots with fragrant street foods, this is a fascinating insight into the Vietnamese way of life. A short drive outside Hue is Tu Duc Tomb built by a romantic Emperor who loved art, poetry and nature. Tu Duc's palace where he relaxed and wrote poetry, became his final resting place in 1883. There is a central lotus-filled lake with an island, a memorial temple, various pavilions including Bi Dinh which houses a huge stone stele with the emperor's autobiography etched into it. All surrounded by gardens.

Nearby Thuy Bieu Village is our next stop where we will visit a local house and garden and meet our host who will welcome us with home-made ginger jam and tea. We take a walk around the village and then cruise on the famous Perfume River with a visit to the 7-storey octagonal tower of the Thien Mu Pagoda.

Our lunch is a very special and exclusive experience for our groups. We will share a vegan lunch and conversations with a Buddhist Monk at the pagoda. Your Tour Manager will facilitate the conversation so that you can ask any questions you have.

Return to our hotel in Hue and enjoy free time.

Day 13 Hue to Hoi An

Distance: approx 2.5 miles (4km)

Today our journey continues to the charming town of Hoi An. Along the way we will pass Lang Co Bay which is recognised as one of the world's most beautiful. Pristine white beaches and clear turquoise waters have a backdrop of lush green mountains. We will travel on the Hai Van Pass, known as the "Ocean cloud pass" it is famous for its dramatic coastal views.

Close to Hoi An we stop at Tra Que a charming centuries-old farming village where we can see local agricultural practises and meet some of its residents. From here it is an easy walk to Hoi An and our riverside hotel. Settle in and relax before exploring Hoi An's legendary street food scene. Your Tour Manager will introduce you to some of the freshly prepared local delicacies like crispy savoury pancakes, fragrant noodle soups and the iconic Vietnamese sandwich Banh Mi.

Day 14 Hoi An Old town & cooking lesson

Distance: approx. 3 miles (5km)

Our day starts with a walk around the UNESCO world heritage old town, a well-preserved former trading port with a blend of Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese and European influences. A silk route hub from the 15th – 19th centuries today it offers a charming walkable experience of laneways with yellow Merchant houses, an iconic Japanese covered bridge and various temples.

We delve into the local market wandering around colourful stalls laden with fresh produce, spices and herbs perfect ingredients for our cooking lesson. We travel by boat to a small farm tucked away on an island in the Thu Bon River. Here we will have a hands-on cooking lesson with our local chef and taste the results of our cooking prowess. Walking through farmlands we return to Hoi An and the remainder of the day is free to relax or explore further.

Day 15 Free day in Hoi An

Today is free to explore the delightful port town of Hoi An at your own pace, or perhaps take the opportunity to do some shopping – it's famous for its excellent tailors. You could also head to a nearby beach - An Bang beach is a popular choice for locals and visitors alike. This evening we'll meet up for our farewell dinner and a chance to reflect on our adventures in Vietnam.

Day 16 Departure Day

Our tour ends after breakfast. Transfer to Danang International Airport which is around an hours drive.

Day 17 Arrival UK

With flight guests arrive back in the UK.

Daily Walk Options



Easier Walks

Good paths but walks are a bit longer. Some walks, particularly in mountain areas, may have sections over rough or steeper terrain.

Accommodation

Bespoke Trendy Hotel, Hanoi – Vietnam – 7 Oct, 28 Oct, 11 Nov 2

Located in the atmospheric old quarter of Hanoi, the Bespoke Trendy Hotel combines modern with traditional Hanoi charm. Contemporary design with stylish décor, the air-conditioned rooms boast comfortable beds and thoughtful storage features. All mod-cons are provided, including TV, Wi-Fi, hairdryer, and tea and coffee-making facilities.

Tirant Hotel – Hanoi, Vietnam – 2027

The Tirant Hotel is located in Hanoi's Old Quarter just a short walk from the beautiful Hoan Kiem Lake. Opened in 2025, it is a new addition to the Hanoi hotel scene that offers a seasonal outdoor swimming pool, a restaurant, and a

rooftop Skyline lounge where guests can enjoy a refreshing drink whilst watching the sunset. Rooms are decorated in Indo-Chinese style and are well appointed with free Wi-Fi, tea and coffee making facilities, and a mini-bar.

Homestay Mai Hich Village, Mai Chau – Vietnam

Experiencing a homestay in Vietnam is something not to be missed. It is a great way to spend time with local people and learn about their lifestyles. The properties we use have private rooms with en-suite bathrooms, ensuring comfort while still providing an authentic experience. Our groups will be spread across a number of different homes, all with unique character, welcoming hosts, and homecooked meals.

Hidden Charm Hotel, Ninh Binh – Vietnam – 28 Oct, 11 Nov 2026

The Hidden Charm is in an emerald-green valley of rice fields. There is a spa, and outdoor pool and an octagon-shaped garden bar – a shape that is considered to bring good fortune in the practice of Feng shui. All public spaces have large windows with views of the stunning natural surroundings. Rooms are decorated in rich warm tones, and all have tea and coffee making facilities, a mini bar and a luxury bathtub with a large showerhead.

Paradise Grand Cruise, Ha Long Bay – Vietnam

Sail through one of the world's most majestic UNESCO-listed locations aboard the 5-star Paradise Grand. With just 39 cabins, this luxury cruise offers an intimate experience, complemented by spacious, elegantly appointed rooms – all with a balcony or terrace for uninterrupted views of emerald waters and limestone cliffs. Onboard highlights include a jacuzzi, spa, sundeck, piano lounge, and Michelin-starred menus. Join morning Tai Chi, try Vietnamese cooking with the resident chef, or watch a classic film under the stars.

Saigon Morin Hotel-Hue – Vietnam

Opened in 1901, the Saigon Morin Hotel is one of Vietnam's most historic stays, perfectly positioned in central Hue overlooking the Perfume River. Once host to Charlie Chaplin and his new wife in 1936, this elegant French colonial hotel features parquet floors, marble bathrooms, and charming period touches throughout. There is an outside pool with bar, café/lounge and three dining areas. Rooms are spacious and blend colonial charm with modern facilities including a mini bar, TV and Wi Fi. Historic photographs lining the corridors tell the hotel's fascinating century-long story.

Lantana Riverside Hotel – Hoi An – Vietnam

Set in a peaceful spot on the Thu Bon River yet just a short walk from Hoi An's old town, the Lantana offers scenic views of both river and village life. There is a shallow pool in a courtyard with lounge chairs where you can relax and soak up the sunshine. The bar has great views of the river and is open all day into the evening. Airy, stylish rooms feature calming colour schemes, air conditioning, LED TVs, minibars, and modern bathrooms with mosaic accents, walk-in showers or bathtubs.

Le Clos du Fil Hotel, Ninh Binh – Vietnam 2027

Located in Van Lam 700 year old craft village, this hotel was established by a family of embroiderers who wanted to welcome guests to this special historic region. The family embroidery studio is nearby and will be visited when your Tour Manager takes you for a tour of the village to meet various artisans. A charming hotel, Le Clos du Fil offers a tranquil retreat with traditional Vietnamese design with modern comfort and facilities including a spa, an outdoor pool and a bar where you can enjoy signature cocktails. Rooms are light filled and stylish with locally made furniture and embroidered décor. Facilities include a minibar, smart TV and Wi Fi.

Useful Holiday Information

Vietnamese weather varies by region and time of year. Light breathable clothing is advised for warm days and the humidity in Vietnam. During winter (Nov- March) layers including a jacket/fleece is advisable especially for the evenings. Rainy season is from May to October though tropical showers can be experienced during the dry season too.

Essentials

- Walking shoes that have ankle support and good grip (heavy boots are not necessary)
- Waterproof jacket
- Insulated jacket/top
- Lightweight clothing for the humidity
- Walking clothing
- Walking socks (plus spares)
- Sunhat
- High-factor sunscreen (minimum SPF 30)
- Sunglasses with a dark lens
- Insect repellent
- Torch (handy for hotel grounds and in the room)
- Water bottle (water is provided throughout the tour)
- Rucksack/day pack
- Personal first aid kit (containing your medication, blister plasters, etc.)
- Passport
- Visa (if applicable)
- Copy of your travel insurance policy

Recommended

- Collapsible walking poles (if you prefer using them)
- Swimwear and travel towel (hotels have pools)
- Snacks (for coach trips)
- Dry bags
- Camera/mobile phone

Optional

- Mat (something small to sit on for picnics or rest stops when walking)

Trip Information

Please inform us of any medical situation which may affect your enjoyment of the holiday. This is important because our leaders must 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 and other directions 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.. Please then call our emergency number (sent in your final dispatch) and let us know there is a problem.

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.

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/> or 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

Your passport should be valid for at least six months after your arrival date to enter Vietnam, and have a minimum of 2 blank pages. Your passport should not be damaged.

Visas

Vietnam has introduced visa waivers for the nationals of 13 countries, including the UK. Visa waivers allow for visits to Vietnam for up to 45 days without the need to apply for a visa.

If you are staying for extra nights then you can either:

1. Book a tour with a travel agent in Vietnam requesting that the agent applies for a visa pre-approval letter for your travel to Vietnam. On receipt of the pre-approval letter by the Vietnamese Embassy, your agent will inform you when to collect your visa from the Embassy;

2. Apply for an e-visa online through the [online portal](#). E-visas are issued for stays of up to 90 days, single entry only. Use of the e-visa is limited to certain entry/exit points which you must select at the time of application. You cannot make any amendments once your application is completed.

Customs Rules

If you're taking prescription medication into Vietnam, carry it in your hand luggage with a copy of the prescription. If it has a total import value greater than 100 US dollars (or equivalent), you must declare it at customs.

If you're taking cash into or out of Vietnam, you must declare amounts over:

- 15 million Vietnamese dong
- 5,000 US dollars (or the same amount in other currencies)

Tripnote validity

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.

Document produced: 23 July 2026

