

Celebrate Tet Festival 2019

Year of the Pig

Jan 22 – Feb 03, 2019
Hanoi – Halong – Hue – HoiAn – Saigon –
Can Tho-Mekong Delta
13 Days / 12 Nights

Small Group Journey 2-10 guests
Guaranteed Departure minimum 2 passengers

Tour features

- Street food tasting in Hanoi
- Pedicab ride and private puppetry performance
- Picturesque Halong Bay
- Experience the traditional Kitchen God Day
- Visits traditional villages to witness how people prepare for Tet holidays
- Hustle and bustle Can Tho Floating Market
- Boat trip in Cai Be and Thu Bon Rivers
- Unique experience about Vietnam's Tet holidays and traditional customs

Included features

Private air-conditioned vehicles
Local English speaking guide in each city
Accommodations based on Twin/Double share with daily breakfast
Meals (excluding drinks) as specified
Boat fee & sightseeing fee as specified, on a private basis
Government tax and services charges
Complimentary bottled drinking water

Accommodation

Hanoi: Silk Path Hotel / Premium Deluxe Room
Halong: Pelican Cruise / Deluxe cabin
HoiAn: La Residencia Hoi An / Jr. Suite
Hue: Imperial Hue / Deluxe City View
Saigon: Grand Saigon Hotel / Deluxe Premium Room
Can Tho: Victoria Can Tho Hotel / Superior Room



Day 1 / Jan 22 Arrival Hanoi

Arrive in Hanoi airport. Welcome by local tour guide and private transfer to the hotel. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 2 / Jan 23 Hanoi street food & full day city tour (B,L)

The street food tour begins with a visit to a local market. Then we visit Tran Quoc Pagoda, the oldest pagoda in the city, originally constructed in the sixth century. Driving back passing by Opera house, Hoan Kiem Lake, and political center Ba Dinh Square, we stop at Hang Be market to learn about the fresh Vietnamese ingredients. We will pass a famous Pho restaurant where people are always in peak hour lines. We continue walking the streets tasting different street foods and learning about "local cuisine culture". Experience foods such as cha que (sausage with cinnamon), banh cuon (Vietnamese rolling cakes), bun cha (rice noodles served with cha que), nem (fried egg rolls) and che (a popular dessert soup with many varieties kinds of beans).

Our tour ends at a local café where you can enjoy sipping café dripped from a Vietnamese style filter.

Afternoon, we drive by the Presidential Palace (façade only), a one-thousand-year old One Pillar pagoda, and stop to visit the Temple of Literature – the oldest university of Vietnam. The day ends with a traditional cyclo ride through Hanoi's Old Quarter, passing Hàng Mã Street specializing in votive, paper crafts and home decorations for Tet holiday. Return to hotel and the rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 3 / Jan 24 Hanoi – Dong Ho Painting Village – Nhat Tan & Quang Ba Flower Garden – Private water puppetry performance (B,L)

Today we drive to visit traditional villages around Hanoi and watch people preparing for Tet.

We visit Dong Ho painting village (50 kms from Hanoi) In the dynastic time, Dong Ho village is one of the few places which had the tradition of making folk paintings, along with Hang Trong, Kim Hoang and Sinh villages. Almost all Dong Ho villagers were involved in the manufacture of paintings from carving a wood block, producing "điệp papers, then obtain natural colors to create new themes and printing. We will have an opportunity to interact with an artist – Mr. Nguyen Dang Che at Dong Ho Village. We then return to Tay Ho District and visit the bustling Nhat Tan and Quang Ba flower gardens, famous for the myriad of pretty peach and kumquat trees used for decorating during the Tet holidays. These are days of relaxation, happiness and joyful family celebrations. Lunch at local restaurant. After lunch, we will visit the mini stage of one famous puppeteer in Hanoi. We not only get to watch the water puppet show but are also encouraged to handle the puppets. Then we have a warm talk with the puppeteer to learn more about the culture and story of the unique art originated in Vietnam's wet rice civilization.

Day 4/ Jan 25 Hanoi – Halong (B,L,D)

Morning we depart to Halong Bay driving through the landscape of the Red River Delta country side.

On arrival, enjoy a welcome drink on board, receive cruise brief programs and safety instructions. Then we check-in and enjoy lunch while the ship starts its cruising into a quiet area of Halong Bay, passing small islets. Visit caves and grottos by bamboo boat then stop at Ti Top beach for swimming and kayaking (optional). You can enjoy cruise activities such as a cooking class, Happy Hour time, watching movies, or squid fishing at night (if weather permits). Enjoy dinner and relaxing time on board.

Day 5/ Jan 26 Halong Bay – Hanoi – Hue (B)

The day starts early onboard with Tai Chi session on the sundeck. Coffee, tea and pastries for breakfast are served in the dining room with morning view of bay's landscape.

Visit one of the biggest caves in Halong bay with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites. Return to the boat, check-out and cruise back to the Wharf. Disembark and say farewell to the crew.

Drive back to Hanoi airport for flight to Hue, widely known for its monuments built under the Nguyen Dynasty (1802-1945). Upon arrival, local tour guide welcomes and transfers to the hotel in Hue check-in. Overnight in Hue.

Day 6/ Jan 27 Hue – Thanh Toan Village – Decorating Traditional Tet Cake (B,L)

In the morning, we drive through the surrounding countryside passing peaceful streams and verdant rice paddies to arrive at the small village of Thanh Toan – home to a legendary market. Learn more about the role agriculture plays and spend time exploring the small town. Stop by the beautiful Thanh Toan covered bridge or simply soak up the atmosphere while sipping Vietnamese coffee at the village café. Then we drive to visit Thanh Tien Village to see people making colorful paper flowers for Tet. Lunch at local restaurant.

After lunch, we visit Tu Hoan – a small pagoda where we can join the nuns in preparing kudzu root powder and traditional little cakes decorated with beautiful imprinted seals for Tet. We will enjoy local tea and these specialty cakes while chatting with the nuns

Day 7/ Jan 28 Hue City tour – Kitchen God Day (B,L,D)

In the morning, visit Dong Ba market to witness people buying carp fish to be set free in the river or lake as a show of respect for animals and as a wish for good fortune. They will also buy flowers, peanut candies, and fruit to prepare for honoring Ông Táo, (the Kitchen God who is known as the household advocate reporting between heaven and earth on each family's worthiness for prosperity and happiness in the coming year). This is an important ritual signaling the start of Tet preparations. Then we take a boat trip to visit Thien Mu Pagoda, a symbol of Hue. Lunch at local restaurant. In the afternoon, we visit the former Imperial Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage site and also the royal garden with beautiful bonsai and flowers. Tonight, enjoy special Vietnamese dinner at Tuyet Nguyen Family and learn more Vietnamese traditional customs.

Day 8/ Jan 29 Hue – Hoi An Ancient Town (B)

Today we depart for Hoi An. Enjoy the beautiful scenery as we travel over the spectacular Hai Van Pass. Arrive in Hoian and check into hotel. Afternoon, take a walking tour along Hoian's waterfront from the Japanese Covered Bridge to the main market. Stop at the ancient house Tan Ky, the ornate Fu Kien Chinese Temple and continue down to the Hoian local market. Then take a boat trip on Thu Bon River and enjoy the beautiful landscape with green coconut trees on the two riversides and witness the fishermen's life. The rest of evening is free to explore the town on your own.

Day 9/ Jan 30 Hoian – Tra Que Village & Cooking Class (B,L) – joining basis

This morning, we have a short bike ride (optional) to TraQue village, a herbal and vegetable farm. We will be introduced to the history of the village, the cultivation of the vegetables and learn how vegetables are used in traditional Vietnamese medicine. You will be fascinated to experience the time-honored traditional life of a farmer by preparing the land yourself and fertilizing it with seaweed from the local lake. Later we prepare lunch with the chef of TraQue restaurant. You will learn the step-by-step preparation of each local dish. Lunch will be your own preparation and served in the cooking class. It will be a fascinating Vietnamese cultural culinary experience. The rest of evening is free for your own activities.

Day 10/ Jan 31 Hoian – Danang – Saigon (B,D)

Morning, transfer to the airport for flight to Saigon. Upon arrival, transfer to your hotel. Afternoon, we will take you to Chinatown for an overview of local life during Tet festival. Return to the downtown area to visit downtown Saigon: Colonial Quarter, Opera House, Hotel de Ville (City Hall), and the Central Post Office. Dinner at local restaurant.

A Vietnamese tradition before Tet, we visit calligraphers at the Youth Cultural House and ask for special writings for New Year's greetings, wishing for happiness, health, wealth, and longevity for the upcoming year.

Day 11/ Feb 01 Saigon – Cai Be – Making Traditional Sticky Rice Cake (B,L)

In the morning, we drive to Cai Be to visit some local villages with traditional workshops doing Tet preparations, such as pop-rice, rice paper, coconut candy, and other special sweets. We will have a chance to learn how to make the Southern Vietnamese rice cake, "banh tet" (a special cake for Lunar New Year). Then continue to Binh Hoa Phuoc Island to visit the Bonsai and flower gardens. Lunch will be served at a local house with a special menu prepared for celebrating the New Year. After lunch, we take a boat trip to Vinh Long town and a walking tour to the fascinating Vinh Long Market before driving to Can Tho where we stay overnight.

Day 12/ Feb 02 Can Tho Floating Market – Saigon (B,L)

After breakfast, we visit Cai Rang Floating Market, the biggest floating market in the Mekong Delta. Boats and barges of different sizes display their goods for sale. These interesting activities highlight the abundant, colorful and bustling river-life in the Delta. We drive to Sa Dec visiting one of the flower centers in the South of Vietnam. All type of flowers and bonsai are shipped to Saigon and other provinces and used to show-off their beauty for the Tet Holiday. Then continue to the friendly cultural experience of Sa Dec Central Market. Return to Saigon. Check in to the hotel. The rest of the evening is free time.

Day 13/ Feb 03 Departure Saigon (B)

Use your last morning in Saigon to visit the Saigon Flower Market and Ben Thanh Market and to witness and enjoy the energetic atmosphere of everyone preparing for the Lunar New Year. Check out of hotel at noon. Transfer to the airport for flight home. Imagine the journey!

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner