

MUSIC AND THEATRE ART OF VIETNAM

This comprehensive trip explores the best sights of Vietnam with stunning landscapes, fascinating cultures, friendly people - plus some exhilarant cities. The main attractions feature the image of both the new and the old city of Hanoi, the imaginary world of Halong Bay, the romance and peacefulness of Hue and Hoian, the hustle and bustle of Saigon and the fertile land of Mekong Delta, the sea paradise of Phu Quoc.



**HANOI – HOA BINH – HALONG – HUE – DANANG –
HOI AN – SAIGON – MEKONG DELTA**
13days 12 nights

Day 1 Arrive in Hanoi

Arrive in Hanoi, transfer to hotel check-in. The rest of day is at leisure.

Day 2 Hanoi City tour – Ca Tru Singing (B,L,D)

After breakfast, our morning tour includes Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (façade only), the One Pillar Pagoda, Hoan Kiem Lake, Ngoc Son Temple and the marvelous Confucian Temple of Literature. Lunch at local restaurant. Afternoon, enjoy 1-hour pedicab ride through Hanoi's Old Quarters. After dinner at local restaurant, we enjoy **Vietnamese ca tru**, recognized by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2009. Ca tru is a complex form of sung poetry found in the north of Viet Nam using lyrics written in traditional Vietnamese poetic forms. (Show from 8pm to 9 pm). Transfer back to hotel.

Day 3 Hoa Binh – Giang Mo village – Thay Pagoda (B,L)

At 8:00am, we take 2.5-hour drive to Hoa Binh - a lush, mountainous province about 75km South-West of Hanoi and home of colorful hill-tribe people like the Muong, Hmong, Thai, and Dzao. In Hoa Binh we visit Giang Mo village where we will have a chance to experience the

distinct culture and the daily activities of the Muong people. We will be entertained by their unique “gong” music shows while sipping their local special whiskey “Chuoì Rung”. The highlight of the tour would be to their spectacular stilted homes which are hand-crafted with local hardwood and palm-leaf thatch roofing. We visit a local home where we will see women sitting by the looms with beautiful pieces of brocade weaving. Have lunch in town and visit the Muong's cultural Heritage Museum in the afternoon before driving back to Hanoi. On the return drive we visit Thay Pagoda, a Buddhist temple located at the foot of Sai Son Mountain, around 30 kilometres south-west of Hanoi. According to village history, water puppetry originated at the Thay Pagoda, where it was introduced by the monk Tu Dao Hanh in the 11th century. Puppetry is the traditional art form closely connected with the long-standing spiritual life of the Vietnamese people. The largest outside theatre is currently located in Thay Pagoda. Return to hotel and free at leisure.

Day 4 Hanoi – Halong (B,L,D)

In the morning, you will take a scenic drive to Halong and transfer by tender to the deluxe junk at Dinh Vu (Hai

Phong)/TuanChau Island. Discover treasures such as fascinating caves, pristine beaches, picturesque floating villages, and dramatic rock formations rising up out of emerald water as we sail across the Bay of the Descending Dragon. Enjoy a relaxing afternoon on board. Dinner is onboard.

Day 5/ Halong Bay – Hanoi – Hue (B)

There is a Tai Chi demonstration on the sundeck for early risers. Enjoy the buffet breakfast while sailing across thousands of islets. Cruise ends at Dinh Vu (Hai Phong)/TuanChau in late morning. Drive back to Hanoi airport for a 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/ City tour – Hue Court Music (B,L,D)

Morning we travel eastward along the city river to Thanh Toan tile-roofed Bridge in Thanh Toan village, about 8 km from Hue city. Then we head to Vong Canh Hill to take in a vista of the beautiful Perfume River. We stop for a rest at Hè Café. Its owner, Mr. Nguyen Van He is an artist and a war items collector. A short walk from Hè Café is Từ is Hiếu Pagoda, also known as the resting place of the Nguyen Dynasty's eunuchs. Lunch at a local restaurant.

In the afternoon visit the former Imperial Citadel, the Forbidden Purple and Inner City, and the Royal Antiquities Museum. Enjoy the Performance of Tuong, a Hue Court music and royal dance at Duyet Thi Duong Royal Theatre, (inside the Imperial Citadel) the most ancient theatre of Vietnam constructed in 1827. Tonight enjoy special home-style dinner at Mrs. Tuyet's family.



Day 7/ Cat Tuong Quan Zen House – Ben Xuan Garden Theatre (B,L,D)

Today we have a special meditation program at CTQ Zen House, located in the beautiful pine forest. Arrive and receive greetings from Cat Tuong Quan. We will listen to the introductions of architecture and the spiritual meaning of Cat Tuong Quan, followed by instruction of 4 movements of qigong. Enjoy brown-rice tea and dried ginger jam after the qigong lesson. Experiencing meditation helps you find bliss in mind and body. Then we sit and discuss culture, meditation, and other topics with the owner before enjoying vegetarian lunch. After lunch, wash hands with herb cream and do walking meditations. We can take photos, walk around the peaceful garden and say farewells to the owners. We may visit Dong Ba Market before transfer to enjoy special dinner with a recital at Ben Xuan Garden House Theatre.

Day 8/ Hue – Hoi An City tour – Timing mask workshop (B,D)

Drive through Danang to Hoi An. Enjoy the beautiful scenery as we travel over the spectacular Hai Van Pass. Arrive in Hoi An, check into the hotel.

Take a walking tour along Hoi An's waterfront from the Japanese Covered Bridge to the main market then stop at the ancient house Tan Ky. Continue to the ornate Fu Kien Chinese temple and down to the Hoi An local market. Visit the Timing Mask workshop of the paper mask artist Mr Bui Quy Phong. Learn how this artist contributes to the effort of preserving his craft for future generations. Next, create a traditional folk mask under his guidance. Using specific patterns and colors, these masks communicate a vast array of character emotions in 'tuong' that you previously watched. Have dinner at a restaurant.



Day 9/ Join Red Bridge Cooking Class half day tour (B,L)

We will enjoy a cup of coffee at Hai Scout Café then pay a visit to Hoi An's colorful market where you will have the opportunity to learn about the ingredients used in the cooking lesson.

Then take a boat for a leisurely cruise along the river to the Red Bridge cooking school.

The 2-hour cooking lesson will demonstrate you how to make some of Hoian and Vietnam's most well-known dishes. Your food preparations will become your lunch for the day. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the town on your own or relax. This evening we enjoy 60-minute A O Show at the Hoi An Performing Centre.



Day 10/ Hoi An – Danang – Saigon (B)

On the way to the airport for your flight to Saigon we will stop to visit the Cham Sculpture Museum in Danang. Arrive in Saigon and transfer to hotel check-in.

Day 11/ Saigon City tour – Truc Mai Traditional Music House (B,L,D)

Morning, take half day city tour, featuring the War Remnants Museum, City Post office, Reunification Palace, Fine Art Museum and Ben Thanh Market. Lunch will be served at local restaurant.

Afternoon, we will go to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Mai. Their stories of Vietnamese history and culture can be heard and understood through traditional music. Mr. Truc and Mrs. Ngo (husband and wife) are experts at playing the melodious traditional Vietnamese musical instruments (monochord zither, bamboo xylophone, stone lithophone....) and have been granted special permission to share their knowledge with guests in Vietnam. For an

hour you will be taken on a journey back in time. Hear the instruments played and learn about the stories they tell. Then you will have a chance to have a go at playing some of the instruments yourself.

Then enjoy water puppet show, a traditional and unique Vietnamese art. Have dinner at local restaurant before return to hotel.



Day 12 Mekong Delta – “Dan ca tai tu” Southern folk music (B,L)

Today we drive to Cai Be (2,5 hours) and take boat trip to visit Cai Be floating market. We visit a village examining their traditional workshops making popped-rice cakes, rice paper and coconut candy. We then proceed to Tan Phong Island to visit workshops making country cottage roofs and other products such as baskets, bags, and hats from hyacinth. We have the option of biking on the island. Enjoy lunch with Mekong Delta specialties and enjoy Southern traditional music. Back to Saigon and *overnight in Saigon*.

Day 13 Saigon – Departure (B)

Transfer to the airport for departure flight. Have a wonderful journey!

B: Breakfast L: Lunch D: Dinner

Tour cost included:

- Private transportation as in program
- Accommodation on Double/Twin sharing room with breakfast
- Meals as indicated in program (excluded drinks)
- All sight-seeing and boat fees as in program
- Local English speaking guide
- Complimentary 01 bottle of mineral water per person per day tour