



VIETNAM TRAILS

Go Beyond Tour | 16 Days | Physical Level 3

Saigon - Mekong Delta - Hoi An - Hue - Hanoi - Sapa - Halong Bay

The perfect tour for a more in-depth exploration of Vietnam. Start in the very south in Saigon, venturing north through Hoi An, Hanoi and Halong Bay before heading up into the highlands to enjoy hikes and meet hill tribes amid Sapa's spectacular scenery.

- Paddle on the Mekong Delta
- Hike through verdant rice terraces
- Meet Sapa's hill tribes
- Enjoy a cooking class in Hoi An
- Explore Hanoi by cyclo
- Admire stunning Halong Bay
- Marvel at the Quintessence of Tonkin show

TOUR MAP



VIETNAM TRAILS TOUR INCLUSIONS:

- Return international economy flights, taxes and current fuel surcharges (unless land only is selected)
- All accommodation
- Meals as stated
- All sightseeing and entrance fees
- All transportation and transfers
- English speaking National Escort (if your group is 10 or more passengers) or Local Guides
- Visa fees for Australian passport holders
- Specialist advice from our experienced travel consultants
- Comprehensive travel guides

The only things you may have to pay for are personal expenditures e.g., drinks, optional excursions or shows, insurance of any kind, tipping, early check-in or late checkout and other items not specified on the itinerary.

GO BEYOND TOURS:

Venture off the beaten track to explore fascinating destinations away from the tourist trail. You will discover the local culture in depth and see sights rarely witnessed by other travellers. These tours take you away from the comforts of home but will reward you with the experiences of a lifetime. These tours include:

- Walking through classic sites
- Unique cultural experiences and encounters
- Off the beaten track destinations
- More evenings at leisure for independent exploration

PHYSICAL LEVEL 3:

All our tours feature a physical rating to help you select the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights.

‘Vietnam Trails’ is rated as a **physical level 3** tour. A good level of fitness is required as you need to be comfortable walking for several hours and covering longer distances. Walking or other activities such as cycling will be at a gentle pace and will involve straightforward terrain but may be at an incline.

- On several days, there will be sightseeing on foot for extended periods of time, particularly when hiking in Sapa
- You will be required to get on and off varying sizes of boats throughout the tour, sometimes without assistance

Of course, our National Escorts and local guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

JOINING YOUR TOUR:

The tour is 16 days in duration including international flights.

Travellers booked on a ‘Land Only’ package, the price includes your arrival/departure airport transfers if arriving/departing on the start and conclusion date of your tour. Please advise your international flight times to our reservations team.

Join the tour on Day 1 in Saigon and end the tour on Day 15 in Hanoi. Please refer to your final itinerary for more specific meeting instructions pertaining to your departure.

ITINERARY CHANGES:

We intend to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, the order of events or sightseeing may change as we look to improve our tours, or as dictated by local conditions. In these circumstances, we will endeavour to make the best possible arrangements whilst maintaining the integrity of your trip.

DETAILED ITINERARY**Day 1: Fly to Saigon**

Meals: D

On arrival, our representative will meet all travellers in the Arrivals Hall at Ho Chi Minh City Airport. You will then be transferred approximately 45-minutes to the hotel for check in, or store luggage if arriving earlier than the check-in time.



This evening, meet your group for dinner and a welcome briefing with your Vietnamese Local Guide or National Escort. Your guide will introduce themselves and the program at dinner.

Early check-in is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

Destination Information

Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) - The exuberant city of Saigon is driving Vietnam forward into the future, but also enjoys a wealth of fascinating heritage. During the 1960s and early 1970s, there were many different subcurrents of emotion in response to the American occupation. Today, timeless alleys and French colonial landmarks sit side by side with hectic streets and modern skyscrapers.

Day 2: Saigon

Meals: B, L, D

Confront the reality of guerrilla warfare at the Cu Chi Tunnels. These cramped tunnels were central to some of the Viet Cong's strategic operations, including the famous 1968 Tet Offensive. The tunnels were used as hiding spots in combat, as well supply routes, hospitals and living quarters. Sightseeing here involves two hours on foot on uneven mud paths, and, if you choose, crawling through a short section of the tunnels.



This afternoon, explore modern day Saigon (HCMC) with its heady mix of local culture and colonial French influences. We pass the Notre Dame Cathedral, visit the impressive Central Post Office, see the Reunification Palace and spend some time in reflection at the emotive War Remnants Museum. The latter displays military equipment, photographs and artefacts relating to the Vietnam War from 1961-1975. It can be emotional; you will have time to explore independently.

Destination Information

Cu Chi - The tunnels of Cu Chi are an immense network of connecting underground tunnels located in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, and are part of a much larger network of tunnels that underlie much of the country. The Cu Chi tunnels were the location of several military campaigns during the Vietnam War, and were the Viet Cong's base of operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968.

Central Post Office - The grand, French Colonial style Central Post Office building was constructed in the late 19th century. It blends Gothic, Renaissance and French influences.

Reunification Palace - The home and workplace of the President of South Vietnam during the Vietnam War. It was the site of the end of the Vietnam War during the Fall of Saigon on 30th April 1975, when a North Vietnamese Army tank crashed through its gates.

Day 3: Mekong Delta

Meals: B, L, D

Drive 2 and a half hours down to the picturesque province of Ben Tre, situated along the mighty Mekong. This area is known as the 'Rice Basket of Vietnam', because its rich and fertile lands produce huge amounts of rice, coconuts, vegetables and tropical fruit.

Spend the day cruising and exploring, travelling by motorised, wooden boats between the islands and changing to smaller, paddleboats in the canals. Sightseeing involves hopping on and off these boats, often on unsteady and slippery surfaces, sometimes without handrails or assistance. Return to Saigon this afternoon.



Destination Information

Mekong Delta - Although primarily rural, the Mekong Delta is a densely populated area where life progresses around its fertile banks. The Mekong Delta is the 13th longest, and the 10th largest, by volume alone and people live, trade, travel and even go to school on the riverbanks. The rice which is cultivated in the many farming lands is said to be enough to supply the entire country with a little extra.

Day 4: Saigon – Hoi An

Meals: B, L, D

Fly 1 hour and 15 minutes to Danang and transfer to the charming town of Hoi An. This afternoon, enjoy a walking tour of the narrow and ancient streets of this charming town. Visit one of Hoi An's oldest homes, built over 200 years ago and still occupied by the descendants of the merchant family that originally built it.

You will also visit the traditional Hoi An Market, the Quan Cong Chinese Temple and the Japanese Covered Bridge. Later visit the Reaching Out arts and crafts workshop.

If you wish to have anything custom-made by Hoi An's many tailors, sandal-makers or glasses-makers, it is recommended to visit these locations today or early on Day 6.

Please note: The local flight schedule is variable and subject to change. If your flight departs in the afternoon, the walking tour will be moved to the following day.

**Day 5: Hoi An**

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, head to the colourful market to experience the amazing sights, sounds and aromas. There will be an opportunity to interact with the local sellers and purchase some of the ingredients to be used in our cooking class today.

Next, head to a restaurant, where you will be given demonstrations of how to make some of the region's specialties, have a go at cooking yourself before enjoying the dishes you have prepared for lunch. The remainder of the afternoon is free at your leisure to explore the ancient town, or perhaps go to the beach.

**Day 6: Hoi An**

Meals: B, L, D

Enjoy a free day to explore Hoi An at leisure.



Day 7: Hoi An - Hue

Meals: B, L, D

Drive approximately 4 hours to Hue – a journey that will take you over the scenic Hai Van Pass. The scholarly city of Hue is the embodiment of Vietnam’s dynamic past, wearing its history on its sleeve.



Upon arrival, head to Emperor Minh Mang's Tomb to explore this opulent and exotic resting place, laid out in formal Chinese style. Emperor Minh Mang reigned in the Nguyen Dynasty, from 1820-1840. This beautiful mortuary complex comprises of almost 40 monuments and is surrounded by gardens and pools.

Then visit the Imperial Citadel and the Forbidden Purple City which is still being restored many years after the destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American War in Vietnam. Continue by road to Thien Mu Pagoda and take a cruise on the Perfume River.

Destination Information

Hue - The imperial capital from 1802 until 1945, after the last emperor abdicated, Hue is still regarded as a centre of Vietnamese culture. The city is dominated by the Imperial Citadel, modelled on the Forbidden City in China. There are many wonderful pagodas and temples of high significance, and it contains the Grand Tombs of the Nguyen Emperors.

Forbidden Purple City - Constructed for the personal use of the Imperial family, their concubines and eunuchs. This royal structure is still being restored many years after the destruction caused by street fighting and bombing during the American war in Vietnam, but retains its historic atmosphere.

Day 8: Hue - Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

This morning, fly 1 hour and 20 minutes to Vietnam’s capital city, Hanoi.

Begin at the Confucian Temple of Literature before an exhilarating cyclo ride through Hanoi’s Old Quarter and French Quarter. Each cyclo takes one passenger and is operated by a cycle driver behind the carriage. Wrap up your day’s touring with the opportunity to try a traditional Vietnamese egg coffee.

**Destination Information**

Hanoi - With a population of approximately four million, Hanoi is a charming and richly historic city of lakes, shaded boulevards and leafy open parks.

Ho Chi Minh Quarter - Dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam and where Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum stands in Ba Dinh Square. Ho Chi Minh first declared independence from French rule in 1945.

One Pillar Pagoda - Rebuilt in 1955 after damage during the French evacuation, the pagoda is made of wood and sits on a single pillar. Designed to reflect the shape of a lotus flower emerging from the water, it has become a popular spot for locals to enjoy the tranquil surroundings.

Humble House on Stilts - In the grounds of the Presidential Palace sits the two-storey wooden home of Ho Chi Minh who ruled Vietnam from here until his death in 1969.

Temple of Literature - Hanoi's first university, dating back to 1070; now dedicated to Confucian worship.

Hanoi Old Quarter - A maze of streets weaving through Hanoi and dating back to the 13th century. Each street specialises in merchants and artisans selling their wares of silk, silver, wood and more.

Day 9: Hanoi - Sapa

Meals: B, L, D

Take a road trip into Vietnam's northern Highlands, arriving in Sapa in the late afternoon. The vast panoramas of ribboning rice terraces that snake their way across these highlands are a testament to the extraordinary farming skills of the many communities in the region. Your hotel here will be your base for the next three nights.

You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Sapa. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up on your return.



Day 10: Sapa

Meals: B, L, D

Transfer to the small Giay village of Ta Van, in the breathtaking Muong Hoa Valley. Enjoy a scenic 1 and a half hour walk through the tranquil rice terraces towards the Black H'mong village of Lao Chai. Marvel at the cascading paddy fields that cling to the mountainside and take in one of Vietnam's most breathtaking views before heading over to nearby Lao Chai village where you will learn the art of Batik painting. Join a hands-on master class led by a local expert and take your creation home.



The day concludes with a stroll to the main road before transferring back to Sapa town.

Destination Information

Sapa - Located 1,600 metres above sea level and close to the Chinese border, this mountainous area with its spectacular landscapes and temperate climate is sure to make a lasting impression on its visitors. The H'mong and Dao people, the largest and most colourful ethnic groups in the region, are a cultural highlight.

Batik Painting - The beautiful textiles of the Black H'mong are famous around the world and Batik is a traditional part of H'mong culture. Under threat from modernization, Batik is now only practiced by a handful of villagers. By taking part, you will be supporting a sustainable tourism project that supports local women and ensures this amazing art form is handed down to the next generation.

Day 11: Sapa

Meals: B, L, D

Start this half-day walking tour by visiting the rustic village of Suoi Ho. Take a stroll through its sleepy streets and get a glimpse of village life.

Later, enjoy views of the stunning countryside as you walk along the Suoi Ho River, enroute to the second village of Ma Tra. Soak up its vibrant culture and visit its quaint Christian church, before being picked up by car and returning to Sapa Town. Walking today will be approximately 3 and a half hours.



Day 12: Mt Fansipan, Sapa Museum & Drive to Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

This morning you will have a chance to reach to the summit of Vietnam's highest peak, Mount Fansipan by cable car to admire stunning views of Muong Hoa valley and Hoang Lien National Forest from above.

The cable car transports you from the base of the 3,143-metre mountain to its highest point within 15-20 minutes. It stops near the top of Fansipan mountain for fantastic photo opportunities. Time permitting, you may wish to take the 600 steps to reach the summit (not recommended in wet weather).

Visit Sapa Museum before your afternoon drive back to Hanoi.



Day 13: Hanoi – Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

Drive around 2 and a half hours today from Hanoi to Halong, where you will take an overnight cruise to the far most corners of the bay. Boarding your boat could involve navigating your way over and through other boats, moored between it and the dock, sometimes without handrails, ladders or assistance from staff. Enjoy lunch on board as you cruise out into the bay, stopping to anchor for an afternoon of activities.



Activities are subject to change due to cruise selection and weather conditions. Sightseeing usually includes visiting underground caves on the islands which involves climbing up and down lots of steps. End the day on deck with a drink in hand to watch the sunset over the bay followed by a freshly prepared dinner, before retiring to your cabin for the night. You will need to pack a smaller overnight bag for your trip to Halong Bay. Main luggage will be left in safe storage at the hotel in Hanoi and picked up on your return.

Please note: Weather conditions such as mist, fog, wind, rain and storms may delay the departure time of your cruise, or in some cases your cruise may be cancelled. Notifications of any delays or cancellations may not be known until your arrival in Halong Bay. If your cruise is cancelled after your arrival in Halong Bay, you will have lunch in Halong City and return to Hanoi. If notification of the cruise cancellation is given prior to your departure for Halong Bay an alternative day trip will be arranged to Hoa Lu and Tam Coc or 'Halong Bay on Land', an area located approximately 2 hours from Hanoi. Our guides will make every effort to inform you at the earliest possible moment should there be any itinerary changes.

Day 14: Halong Bay – Hanoi

Meals: B, D

Spend the morning sailing through Halong Bay. After an early lunch (or brunch meal) disembark your cruise and return to Hanoi. This evening, attend The Quintessence of Tonkin show, an artistic open-air performance celebrating the rich history of northern Vietnam.



Day 15-16: Depart Hanoi

Meals: B

You will be transferred 1 hour from the hotel to the airport, according to the departure time of your international flight. Any time before your flight is at leisure.

Fly overnight, arriving in Australia the following day.

Late check-out is not included. Additional nights before and after your tour can be arranged. Please contact our Reservations team to book.

VIETNAM TRAILS TRAVEL INFORMATION

VISAS:

Entry visas are required by all visitors to Vietnam and Wendy Wu Tours Visa Department can assist you with the process of obtaining a visa. Please be advised that your passport must have at least six months validity left on it when you arrive back into Australia.

Please note the visa procedures and requirements may change at any time. These changes are often made by the relevant embassy or consulate, Wendy Wu Tours acts as a third party and has no influence on the process of a visa.

Wendy Wu Tours does not accept responsibility for lost or undelivered items.

All information with regards to visas will be updated regularly on our website as we find visas process' are changing on regular basis.

For the latest information on visa procedures, processing times and requirements, please kindly refer to our website <https://www.wendywutours.com.au/help-and-advice/passports-and-visas/>

INSURANCE:

We strongly recommend that you take out a policy as soon as you pay your deposit. Wendy Wu Tours cannot in any way be made liable for any additional cost incurred by the customer on any tour due to the customer not having adequate travel insurance.

We also encourage all customers to take a copy of their travel insurance documents (especially relevant international contact numbers) with them while on tour. We advise that you check the inclusions and procedures for lodging claims prior to your departure. These documents should be stored separately from the original.

EATING IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Southeast Asia is home to an incredibly rich food history. The local cuisine is known for its intense flavours, spices and some of the freshest ingredients you can find. In general, meals include either rice or noodles and are packed full of flavour. Lemongrass, ginger, lime leaves, coriander, fish sauce and soy sauce are used in many local dishes. Whilst Southeast Asian food has a reputation for being hot and spicy, each region actually has its own distinct characteristics. Vietnam, for example, is perhaps best known for its fresh and aromatic dishes – relying heavily on flavours from fresh herbs such as mint, basil and dill.

When dining in Southeast Asia, although some restaurants have adopted a western approach to dining, expect some restaurants to follow the traditional communal style of eating. Typically, this will mean each diner has their own small bowl and may serve themselves from a variety of shared dishes. At some local restaurants, appetizers and main courses might be served when they are ready instead of following a particular order.

Determining when it's appropriate to use chopsticks, forks or spoons can be challenging for some travellers, even other Asians, as each country has different customs. In Vietnam, dishes are normally placed in the centre and people serve food for themselves with their own chopsticks and bowl. Usually, chopsticks or other utensils are provided to scoop the food into your bowl to prevent your own chopsticks from touching the food that remains on the table. Dining in Southeast Asia is fairly casual with not too many rules. Leaving food on the plate is not considered rude.

Those with dietary requirements - just make sure to inform your booking agent of any specific requirements well in advance of your trip. Please read your travel guide, which you will receive with your final documents for more information about eating in Southeast Asia. We recommend that when it comes to Asia food, you stay open minded and try to be adventurous!

GROUP SIZE:

Most of our groups consist of 10 travellers or more and will be accompanied by a national escort. There will usually be no more than 18 travellers in a Go Beyond Tour, although you may encounter other Wendy Wu tour groups while you are travelling.

All our departures are guaranteed to operate with a minimum of 8 travellers booked (unless cancelled due to factors beyond our control). However, at our discretion we may operate departures with a smaller group size as we try to operate advertised departures wherever it is viable to do so. For groups with fewer than 10 travellers, departures will operate with local guides only.

ACCOMMODATION:

Your accommodation is selected for convenience of location, comfort or character, and can range from a business hotel in one city to a family run guesthouse in a smaller town. In more remote areas, accommodation may be of a lower standard and may not have all western amenities. Hotels are generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note that there is no international classification system for hotels and differences in facilities and quality do exist between Australia and Vietnam. All group tour hotels have private western bathroom facilities, air conditioning, TV and telephone. Plumbing and electricity supplies can be erratic and quite often the power in hotel rooms is turned off while guests are out of the room. If you experience any difficulty, please speak to your National Escort/Local Guide. Rest assured that all hotels used by Wendy Wu Tours are regularly inspected by our staff and our partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Solo travellers: If you are a solo traveller and willing to share a room, you will not have to pay a single supplement for any hotel rooms. Willing to share single travellers booking within 75 days of the first day of a group tour will be subject to availability. If no suitable match is available at time of booking you will be required to pay all single supplements.

PORTERAGE:

Please be aware that portorage is not included on our tours in Southeast Asia. You will therefore need to be able to handle your own luggage within the hotel and when using transportation like trains and coaches.

TRANSPORT:

Coaches: Coaches with air conditioning are used on our group tours for city sightseeing, short excursions to the countryside and longer transfers where necessary. **However, mini buses may be used for smaller groups (under 10 passengers).** Roads in Vietnam have generally improved over recent years, but traffic and/or weather conditions may extend driving times. Road construction work usually covers an enormous section of road - not just one or two kilometres as you may be used to. For this reason, the timings listed in the itinerary are approximations only.

Planes: Internal flights are based on economy class, with reputable airlines.

TIPPING POLICY:

Tipping while on holiday is common in most parts of the world and Vietnam is no exception. However, it is not always clear who it is appropriate to tip and how much. Furthermore, travellers may not have the right amounts of cash available at the right time. In order to avoid any inconvenience Wendy Wu Tours operates a tipping policy where a stated amount is given to your national escort at the beginning of your tour and tips are disbursed to local guides and drivers throughout your tour. The amount is designed to be at a reasonable level for travellers while being fair to the local people and includes a gratuity for the national escort.

If you are travelling in a smaller group with local guides only, then tipping is paid in each destination. To be fair to the guides we ask for slightly higher amounts per traveller with small groups.

We generally find that most customers appreciate the convenience of our tipping policy but we do recognize that it may not suit everyone. However, as this is a group tour we ask that everyone follows the same protocol to be fair to other group members and to ensure smooth operation of your tour.

DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA:

Although Southeast Asia is developing quickly, it still lacks the international standards of civil infrastructure and tourist facilities. Concepts of personal responsibility are also different to those in Australia. Consequently, tourist and public facilities may not uphold the same safety standards as in Australia; for example, you may see a hole in the road without a warning sign or safety barricade. All of our suppliers meet local safety standards as a minimum. We want you to have an enjoyable holiday so we ask that you take extra care, use your common sense, refer to notices and follow advice from your National Escort or Local Guides.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:

If you are travelling within the below Vietnamese Public Holidays, please note that celebrations can last a couple of days and during these times some businesses will be closed and coach, air and train travel may be affected. Tourist attractions will be open but may be crowded. In Vietnam, Tet Holiday is 29th January 2025 & 17th February 2026; International Labour Day is on 1st May every year; Reunification Day is on 30th April every year and National Independence Day is on 2nd September every year.

SOUVENIRS:

We want to be able to give you an opportunity to buy souvenirs, so we include some stops at museums or exhibitions which demonstrate a craft or product unique to that region with pieces available to buy. We understand that souvenir hunting is not for everyone, so we aim to take you to places, which hold local interest. We trust you will enjoy these opportunities to learn about local arts and crafts and understand their historical and cultural importance.

LUGGAGE:

All travellers are limited to two items of luggage each: a suitcase with a maximum weight of 20kg and one piece of hand luggage with a maximum weight of 5kg. It is essential that your luggage is lockable. Please note that authorities will only allow bottles onto the aircraft if they have been checked in as main baggage. Bottles in hand luggage may be confiscated.

PERSONAL EXPENSES:

You will need to take some extra money to cover drinks, laundry and souvenirs, plus any additional sightseeing that may be offered to you. Based on the advice of previous customers an approximate amount of \$300AUD per person, per week should be sufficient; however, for those that can't resist a bargain or may wish to participate in all of the optional excursions, consider allocating a higher amount.

CLIMBING STEPS:

Sightseeing at nearly all of the palaces, fortresses and some temples involves climbing quite a number of steps. These palaces were built to provide defense against potential invaders so nearly all of them stand on top of a hill, while the interiors have layers of narrow hallways and steps to slow down the advance of enemies once they were inside. The steps tend to be quite large, not level and sometimes without handrails. Hindu and Buddhist temples or pagodas also tend to be built at an elevation, as this is the most auspicious position according to ancient beliefs. This means you sometimes need to walk from the bus park to the entrance, and/or need to climb some steps inside.

People with knee or hip injuries, who have poor balance or are otherwise unable to complete these activities independently should consider the suitability of this itinerary carefully.

VACCINATIONS AND YOUR HEALTH:

We recommend that you contact either your GP or Travelvax (1300 360 164) for advice on vaccinations and travel health. Travelvax has a comprehensive website that you may also find useful www.travelvax.com.au

BEFORE YOU LEAVE:

We strongly recommend registering your travel plans with www.smartraveller.gov.au as in the event of an emergency, Australian Consular assistance will be more readily available. You can also access the Australian Government's travel advisory service for up to date information about your destination on the same website.

AFTER YOUR BOOKING:

Once you have booked with Wendy Wu Tours, you will receive a confirmation invoice including a visa application form (if applicable), and a help sheet. Your final documentation pack will be sent to you approximately 2-3 weeks prior to departure.

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