



VIETNAM NORTHERN EXPERIENCE

(Please note that this is a sample itinerary and can be amended to suit)



Briefed Itinerary

Day 1 Hanoi arrival
Day 2 Hanoi City tour
Day 3 Hanoi - Halong
Day 4 Halong - Hanoi
Day 5 Departure day

Quick Facts

Tour grade: Easy (customizable)
Trip code: VA07 (private tour)
Trip duration: 5 days / 4 nites

● ● ● ● ● Comfort 3
● ● ● ● ● Active 3

Highlights:

- Immerse yourself in the French colonial charm of Hanoi, winding through the famed Old Quarter of Hanoi.
- Learn about the rich and diverse culture and history of Hanoi and taste the delightful local cuisine.
- Embark on a traditional junk boat, winds its way through hundreds of limestone karsts, spend the night on the magnificent Halong Bay

Land Only Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Hanoi (D)

Upon arrival at Hanoi airport, you will be met by our local guide and transferred to your hotel in Hanoi. Depending on how much time you have, you may be able to briefly explore some of the city's sites or just relax. In the late

Trip Map





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afternoon, we will have 1-hour cyclo (rickshaw) ride, winding through the Old Quarter of Hanoi, also known as the "36 Streets". There are plenty of photo opportunities all around you. This tour is then followed by a traditional Water Puppet Show, a unique northern Vietnamese art form especially designed for depicting scenes from rural life and episodes of national history. Tonight we enjoy our welcome dinner in a local restaurant and return to our hotel for the night.

Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 2: Hanoi City Tour (B, L)

Our tour guide will meet us at our hotel and take us to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, as well as his former private residence between 1954 and 1969. We proceed to his house on stilts, the wooden traditional style house surrounded by peaceful gardens. In the same site is the One-Pillar Pagoda, one of the oldest Pagodas in Vietnam with its unique architecture. The structure has become an important symbol for the people of Hanoi and thousands of people pay their respects each year. The tour will continue to the Temple of Literature, which was known as the very first university of Vietnam (first built in 1076!). It also includes the Hoa Lo Prison, also known as the "Hanoi Hilton" during the American War. We take lunch at a local restaurant to sample some exotic Hanoi cuisine.

The afternoon will be filled with visits to the Museum of Ethnology where we can learn about Vietnam's diverse culture, beliefs and ethnic distributions. Our bus will then take us to Hoa Kiem Lake (Sword Restored Lake) to see Ngoc Son Temple before returning us to our hotel for the night.

Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 3: Hanoi – Halong Bay (B, L, D)

Halong Bay is our destination today. We'll take a 3.5-hour bus trip to Ha Long Bay through a picturesque countryside. We can even have a chance for photo-stops and a coffee break on the way. Once we board our boat in Halong Bay, we can enjoy a seafood lunch while we soak up the beauty of the UNESCO World Heritage area. In the afternoon, the boat continues to cruise through the limestone karst formations, clear waters and hundreds of islets to discover. Towards the end of the day we will see Sung Sot Cave (Amazing Cave) – one of the largest caves in Halong bay. We will then return to the boat which will take us to where we'll climb Titop Mountain for some sun-set panoramic pictures of the bay. Tonight we will enjoy a delicious dinner served by our crew. We will enjoy some cocktails to celebrate this special experience before retiring to our cabin for a good night sleep (the boat is fully equipped with twin-share cabin, toilets and ensembles).

Overnight on boat.

Day 4: Halong – Hanoi (Brunch)

We wake up with the sunrise, enjoy a buffet brunch on board and head back to the shore. We'll arrive at the pier for disembarkation, where our driver will take us back to Hanoi. On the way back we will make a stop at Phu Lang Village, one of the last survivors of an old pottery village amidst the modern pressure of industrialization. We wander around the village and chat with the artisans at Nhung Workshop.

Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 5: Departure Day (B)

Today is a leisure day until our flights home. End of our service.

Hotels to be used

Hotel Name	Location	Star Rating	Website
Silk Path Hotel	Hanoi	Hanoi	www.silkpathhotel.com
Bhaya Cruise	Halong	Luxury	www.bhayacruses.com



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Price

Policy Applied	Valid from now until 30 Sep 2010 Price per person in USD in party of						
Group Size	1	2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	Sgl Sup
Price list	899	562	509	456	434	420	155

Note: Price may be subject to currency fluctuation until deposit it made. Please note that these services have not yet been booked and this proposal is subject to availability.

Tour includes:

- Accommodation based on twin shared room at selected hotels with daily breakfast
Check-in time at all hotels is 14:00 and check-out time at all hotels is 12.00
Early check-in and late check-out is subject to availability with surcharge.
- Meals, drinks and other those mentioned in the itinerary (B= Breakfast, L= Lunch, D= Dinner)
- English speaking tour guide(s)
- Tours and transfers as mentioned by private air-conditioned vehicle
- Sightseeing fees and permits during guided time

Tour excludes:

- Travel Insurance (Compulsory)
- International flight tickets
- Visas and airport departure tax
- Meals, drinks and other those mentioned in the itinerary
- Laundry, telephone calls and expenditure of a personal nature
- Tips and gratuities

Practical Information

Country Facts:

- Official Name: The Socialist Republic of Vietnam
- Population: 84 million
- Language: Vietnamese
- Religion: Predominantly Buddhist, with Confucianism, Taoism and other minorities.
- Currency: Vietnam Dong (VND)
- Time Zone: GMT plus 7 hours
- Electricity: 220V, 50 Hz AC (some 110V, 50HZ AC) 2 pin plugs
- Weights and Measurements: Metric
- International Dialing Code: +84

Travel Insurance (compulsory)

Indochina Pioneer Vietnam does everything possible to ensure a safe and enjoyable trip. However, traveling always involves some risk, so we require that you purchase travel insurance to protect you and your possessions against trip cancellation, medical problems, baggage loss or damage.

Direct Customer Service: info@indochinapioneer.com

Website: www.indochinapioneer.com



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Passports

You must have a valid passport which expires no later than 6 months after the date you leave Vietnam

Visas

You must have either a letter of approval for a visa or a valid visa on arrival in Vietnam. You can get a Vietnam tourist visa from any Vietnam Embassy or consulate office world wide. Your travel agency can also obtain a visa on your behalf.

Your Health: Preventing Illness

We recommend you consult your doctor for vaccinations, preventions and medications needed for traveling in tropical country like Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

Your First Aid Kit

It's a good idea to bring a first aid kit stored in a watertight container. You may never need the following items, but it's good to be prepared.

Your Pre - departure Check List

- Travel documents (passport, visas, travel insurance certificate, air tickets, tour voucher)
- Money (traveler's cheques, cash, credit card, debit card and money pouch)
- Day pack for your personal needs during the day
- First aid kit
- Medication, including a doctor's letter if you are carrying a large amount of medication
- Prescription glasses and contact lens solution if required
- Alarm clock
- Flashlight
- Travel plug/international adapter
- Insect repellent
- Refillable water bottle and water purification method
- Sunscreen, hat and sunglasses
- Bathing suit
- Lightweight travel towel
- Ear plugs/eye mask
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Local language phrase book
- Camera, film and/or memory cards with spare batteries
- Raincoat/umbrella
- Waterproof jacket
- Tampons (difficult to buy in Vietnam)
- Clothes suitable for visiting temples (long pants or long skirts, long sleeved tops)
- Warm clothes for winter months. (Nov to Feb)

Please note: As domestic airlines impose a maximum baggage weight of approximately 20kg, try to travel light. Also, train cabins and boat cabins in Halong Bay have limited space so pack light and use soft luggage if possible.

Money

The local currency is the VND (dong). Bank notes come in denominations of 100, 200, 500, 1000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, 100,000d and 500,000 dong. Coins come in denominations of 200, 500, 1000, 2000, and 5000 dong.

Updated exchange rate can be found at <http://www.xe.com>



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Both Vietnam Dong and USD can easily be used for purchasing. ATMs are popular around the country. Credit cards are widely accepted in large shopping place and hotels, restaurants. Some small cash needed for petty shopping.

Departure airport taxes

Your international and domestic tickets include departure tax.

The Climate

The Vietnamese climate is variable and differs widely from north to south and within regions. Flooding may cause minor alterations to trip itineraries.

Check <http://www.weather.com>

Safety

Vietnam is considered one of the safest destinations in Asia. Women and independent travelers can travel easily here. Petty theft and purse snatchings sometimes occur, especially in the larger centres. The usual precautions are recommended: keep your bags zipped and close to you at all times. Do not carry large amounts of money. Keep some money in your hotel safe. When you are away from your hotel, you should remember to carry bottled water, toilet paper, a copy of your passport/visa/travel insurance/some limited cash/credit card cancellation numbers, your first aid kit, medications and hotel card. And don't forget your camera.

Food and Beverage

Travellers to Vietnam love the food! Its style is unique, relying on quality and seasonally fresh ingredients rather than added spice. The traditional Vietnamese breakfast is Pho – a bowl of rice noodles flavored with sliced beef or chicken and fragrant broth, garnished with fresh coriander and bean sprouts. Excellent and well priced seafood is available throughout the country. Duck, chicken, beef, and lean pork are also featured on most menus, as well as fresh salads and vegetable dishes and delicious legacies from the French colonial period.

The Buddhist influence also means lots of vegetables. Bottled mineral water, soft drinks, and Vietnamese tea and coffee are readily available. Beer, usually a light larger style, is the main alcoholic drink. The local rice wine (ruou gao) is popular with many Vietnamese.. Just remember, do not drink (or even brush your teeth) with tap water. Use bottled water instead. It is safe to have ice in your drinks, and there is no need to avoid fruits and vegetables. Strict vegetarians should make it clear that they do not eat meat and fish as either may be included in vegetable dishes.

Clothing

We recommend light, comfortable, and easy to launder clothing. It can be cool during Hanoi's winter and the rainy season in the central region, so a sweater or light jacket will come in handy. Thermal underwear is a must you are trekking in winter. You will need good walking shoes and sandals that can be easily removed for visiting temples and private homes. Your knees and shoulders should be covered when you are entering a temple.

Etiquette

Body language: You should know that most Asian people believe that the head is the most important part of the body. To touch a Cambodian or Laotian or some Vietnamese people on the head is a grievous insult. Conversely, the feet are the lowest and the dirtiest part of the body. To point your feet at someone is an insult. To point your feet at an image of Buddha is unforgivable. Women should never touch monks and avoid sitting next to them on public transport.

Business hours

Government agencies work Monday to Friday from 7:30 hrs to 16:30 hrs (excluding one-hour lunch) and are closed Saturday and Sunday. Banks are open Monday to Friday from 7:30 hrs or 8:00 to 11.30 hrs and from 13:00 hrs to 16:00 hrs and are closed Saturday and Sunday. Private shops are open from 8:00 or 8:30 hrs to 21:00 or 11:00 hrs



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Tipping

If you are happy with services provided by your local guides and drivers, a tip, though not compulsory, is appropriate. While it may not be customary to you, it is of great significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels, it inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across destinations. Here are our suggestions;

- Meals (restaurants): the average amount is \$1
- Guides: We recommend \$2-\$5 per day for local guides (depending on group size),
- Drivers: You will have a range of drivers on your trip. Some will be with you for a short journey while others may be with you for few days. We would recommend a higher tip for those more involved with the group however a base of \$1 to \$2 per day would be appropriate (depending on group size).
- Bellboy: the average amount is \$1
- Chambermaid: the average amount is \$1 per day.

For larger groups and adventure trips you may want to increase this. But please remember that it's totally up to you, these are guidelines only.

For fully detailed travel tips in Indochina, please click [travel guide](#) on our website

For any further information or inquiries, please feel free to email us at sales@indochinapioneer.com