



"Vietnam - Cambodia - Laos"

INDOCHINA PIONEER
Experience, Learn, Enjoy

INDOCHINA PAST & PRESENT

Hanoi • Mai Chau • Halong • Hue • Hoi An • Saigon • Can Tho • Chau Doc • Phnom Penh • Siem Reap •
Luang Prabang

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



Briefed Itinerary

- Day 1 Hanoi arrival
- Day 2 Hanoi full-day City tour
- Day 3 Hanoi – Mai Chau home stay
- Day 4 Mai Chau - Hanoi
- Day 5 Hanoi – Halong Bay
- Day 6 Halong – Hanoi – Fly to Hue
- Day 7 Hue City tour
- Day 8 Hue – Hoi An
- Day 9 Hoi An
- Day 10 Hoi An
- Day 11 Hoi An/ Da Nang – Fly to Saigon
- Day 12 Saigon – Cai Be – Can Tho
- Day 13 Can Tho – Chau Doc
- Day 14 Chau Doc – Phnom Penh
- Day 15 Phnom Penh – Fly to Siem Reap
- Day 16 Visit Angkor Wat
- Day 17 Angkor Wat – Tonle Sap Lake
- Day 18 Siem Reap – Flight to Luang Prabang
- Day 19 Pak Ou Caves
- Day 20 Kuang Si Waterfall
- Day 21 Luang Prabang Departure

Quick Facts

Tour grade: Moderate (customizable)
Trip code: VA01 (private tour)
Trip duration: 21 days/ 20 nites

Trip Map





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Highlights:

- Explore the charming Old Quarter of Hanoi by cyclo (rickshaw), experience the homestay overnight in Mai Chau
- Take in the stunning scenery of legendary Halong Bay, spend a night on boat cruise with scrumptious seafood meals.
- Discovered the foremost architectural wonders of the world, Angkor Wat, enchanted by the charm of Luang Prabang.

Land Only Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival day (D)

Our tour guide will meet you at the Hanoi Airport and escort you to your hotel in downtown Hanoi. The rest of the day is at leisure, allowing you to relax or explore the city. Welcome dinner in a Vietnamese restaurant.

Overnight in Hanoi

Day 2: Hanoi City tour (B, L)

Today you will enjoy a full day tour of Hanoi, Vietnam's charming capital. You will see Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum and his private home, a wooden stilt-house surrounded by lush gardens. You will also visit the One Pillar Pagoda in the same complex, an important symbol for Hanoians. The tour continues at the museum of Ethnology where we will see Vietnam's diverse culture through the Museum's display of articles and dress used in daily life. After lunch at a local restaurant we will visit the Temple of Literature (Confucius Temple), considered the first National University of Vietnam. Next, we visit Hoa Lo prison (known as the "Hanoi Hilton" during the American war). Then we enjoy a cyclo (rickshaw) tour through Hanoi's Old Quarter. This bustling area of narrow streets and alley ways houses thousands of small family businesses and shops. Traveling by cyclo is the way to get a real feeling for the town as well as some great photographs. In the evening we enjoy a performance of the traditional water puppet show, a typical northern Vietnam art form.

Overnight in Hanoi

Day 3: Hanoi – Mai Chau – Home Stay (B, L, D)

From Hanoi we take a four hour scenic drive to Mai Chau through a spectacular mountain range. This is an authentic hill tribe region and a fantastic base for treks and home stay adventures. After lunch, we will explore the surrounding villages on foot, meeting local people and learning about their lives raising crops and livestock.

Overnight with a local family

Day 4: Mai Chau – Hanoi (B, L)

After breakfast we will take a walking tour of the town and explore the local market. We can also visit the Quan Y (soldiers) cave before returning to our hotel for check out. We drive back to Hanoi, stopping to visit another village where the Muong minority lives. We will stop for lunch in Hoa Binh. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 5: Hanoi – Halong Bay – Bai Tho Junk (B, L, D) share boat, private transfer with tour guide

This morning, a four hour journey through the rich farmlands of the Red River Delta brings us to legendary Halong Bay. On arrival, we board our boat where we enjoy a seafood lunch. The afternoon is spent cruising among hundreds of islets discovering unspoiled pockets of the Bay. We will also visit "Sung Sot" Cave, one of the most imposing grottos of the area. Tonight we enjoy dinner and a night on board ship.

Overnight on Junk Boat

Day 6: Halong - Hanoi – Flight to Hue (B, L)



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In the morning we rise to enjoy the tranquil beauty of the bay and perhaps an early morning swim, followed by breakfast. Our cruise around the bay continues. At around midday we will return to the main harbor before transferring to our private vehicle for the four hour journey to the Saigon Airport. From there we fly to Hue.

Overnight in Hue

Day 7: Hue city tour (B, L)

Our day starts with a trip to the ancient walled Citadel where we'll see the former Imperial Palace, closely modeled on the Forbidden City in Beijing. Significant damage was caused by French aerial bombing and the Tet Offensive of 1968, however, much of the city is now being restored thanks to UNESCO funding. Following our tour of the Emperor's residence we travel to the surrounding countryside to see the final resting place of the Emperors, visiting one of Vietnam's most impressive Royal Tombs. In late afternoon, we cruise the Perfume River and visit Thien Mu Pagoda.

Overnight in Hue

Day 8: Hue – Hoi An - The Shopping Mecca (B)

This morning we drive south to the riverside town of Hoi An. Our five-hour trip, hugging the coastline along the South China Sea, provides breathtaking views that grow ever more spectacular as we wind our way up Hai Van Pass ("Pass of the Clouds"). The rest of the day in this old merchant town is free for further exploration.

Overnight in Hoi An

Day 9: Hoi An (B)

From the sixteenth to eighteenth century, Hoi An was a thriving international commercial port. Today it is a quaint riverside town popular with tourists for its eclectic architecture, tailor shops, and cafes. We enjoy a half-day walking tour through the narrow winding streets of the Ancient Quarter visiting Chua Ong Pagoda, Assembly Hall, the 200-year-old Tam Ky house, and the Japanese Covered Bridge. After lunch we take a short boat trip to a nearby island to visit the village of Thanh Ha, where to see hand crafted ceramics and a boat building business.

Overnight in Hoi An

Day 10: Hoi An (B)

Your day is at leisure to explore the town or just relax.

Overnight in Hoi An

Day 11: Hoi An - Da Nang Airport – Flight to Saigon – Half day city (B, L)

In the morning we drive to Da Nang airport for a short flight to Saigon.

In the afternoon, we visit the Reunification Palace. The war officially ended here on April 30th 1975 when tank 843 of the North Vietnamese Army crashed through the gates of the home of the President of the Republic of Vietnam. Then we visit the War Remnants Museum, a poignant display of the futility of war. We also stop at the Notre Dame Cathedral and Old Post Office. The post office, built between 1877 and 1883, is an excellent example of classic French colonial architecture.

Overnight in Saigon

Day 12: Saigon – Cai Be – Can Tho (B, L)

We leave Saigon and drive through the Mekong Delta to Cai Be town. Here we board our river boat for a cruise on the waterways of the mighty Mekong. We arrive at the lush orchards of Vinh Long where lunch awaits us at a family owned orchard. After lunch we drive to the city of Can Tho, considered the heart of the Mekong Delta.

Overnight in Can Tho.

Day 13: Can Tho – Chau Doc (B, L)

After breakfast, we board our private boat to visit Cai Rang floating market. There, hundreds of boats loaded with fruit, vegetable and fish jostle for trade, advertising their wares by crying out across the waters. You can even try



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crossing one of the fragile monkey bridges along the canals. Then we leave Can Tho for Chau Doc, stopping en route for lunch at a local restaurant. Our drive continues until we reach Chau Doc.

Overnight in Chau Doc

Day 14: Chau Doc – Speedboat to Phnom Penh (B, L)

After an early breakfast, we take a speedboat from Chau Doc and cross the border into Cambodia, arriving in central Phnom Penh. In the afternoon we visit the National Museum of Khmer art, featuring sculptures from different period of Cambodia history. We also visit the Royal Palace built in 1866 by King Norodom. The Silver Pagoda is named for its floor made of 5,000 silver tiles and located within the Royal Palace compound. The remainder of the day is at leisure. Overnight in Phnom Penh

Day 15: Phnom Penh – Flight to Siem Reap (B)

This morning, we take a short flight to Siem Reap. After checking in to the hotel you'll have free time to rest and relax. In the afternoon we'll visit the Roluos Temple Complex. The complex displays the remains of the first major capital of the Khmer empire and contains several significant monuments including Bakong, Preah Ko and Lolei. The evening is yours to enjoy at leisure. Overnight in Siem Riep

Day 16: Angkor Wat (B, L)

Today, we tour Angkor Thom City. We'll start at the South Gate and explore the centerpiece of the ancient city, The Bayon. The Bayon has fifty four towers decorated with more than two hundred enigmatic smiling faces. The tour also includes the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, the Terrace of Elephants and Terrace of Leper Kings, as well as The Ta Prohm Temple. After lunch we explore Angkor Wat, probably the most famous and best-preserved of the temples in the complex. After spending the afternoon here, we will go to Pre Rup to see the sunset.

Overnight in Siem Riep

Day 17: Angkor Wat – Tonle Sap Lake (B)

An early start will let us see the sun rise over Angkor Wat Temple. After breakfast, we head to the exquisite Banteay Srey ("Citadel of the women"). The temple displays fine examples of classical Khmer art. You will enjoy free time here until your transfer to the Tonle Sap for a boat trip on the lake. Overnight in Siem Reap

Day 18: Siem Reap – Flight to Luang Prabang (B)

In the morning we fly to Luang Prabang, the ancient first capital of Lane Xang kingdom. It is the centre of religious life in Laos and a World Heritage City. We tour the sacred city of temples by visiting the National Museum and the former Royal Palace. The latter houses a collection of valuables including the famous Prabang Buddha statue and gifts from foreign dignitaries. The tour continues to the Wat Visoun, entirely rebuilt in 1887 by the invading Black Flags from southern China. In the courtyard of Wat Visoun stands the Watermelon Stupa shaped like the fruit for which it is named. We also visit the Wat Aham where we will find the alter of Luang Prabang and finish with a visit to Wat that where the ashes of King Sisavang Vong are kept. Overnight in Luang Prabang

Day 19: Pak Ou Caves (B, L)

Traveling the Mekong on a long-tailed boat we visit the mysterious Pak Ou Caves in the side of a lime stone cliff opposite the mouth of the Mekong and Nam Ou rivers. We visit Ban Xanghai, well-known for its Laotian traditional rice. Lunch is in a local restaurant on the bank of the Mekong. Following our return to Luang Prabang we visit Ban Xangkhong, a village known for its wood paper making and naturally dyed silk weavings.

Overnight in Luang Prabang

Day 20: Kuang Si Waterfall (B, L)

In the morning we drive 30 kilometres south to the Kuangsi Waterfall. En route, we visit Na Oune, a small village where the Hmong people live, and Tha Pane village where the Khmu people live. For lunch, we will picnic near the Kuangsi waterfall. After returning to the hotel, the rest of the day is yours to enjoy, exploring or relaxing.

Overnight in Luang Prabang



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Day 21: Luang Prabang - Departure (B)

Pick up from your hotel to the airport for your departure flight. End of services.

Hotels to be used

Hotel Name	Location	Star Rating	Website
Sunway Hotel	Hanoi	4 Star	www.sunway-hotel.com
Mai Chau Homestay	Mai Chau	Basic	N/A
Bhaya Cruise	Halong	Luxury	www.bhayacruise.com
Camellia Hotel	Hue	4 Star	www.camellia-hotels.com.vn
Ancient House Resort	Hoi An	4 Star	www.hoianancienthouseressort.com
Grand Hotel	Saigon	4 Star	www.grandhotel.com
Golf Hotel Can Tho	Can Tho	4 Star	www.golfhotel.vnn.vn
Victoria Chau Doc	Chau Doc	4 Star	www.victoriahotels-asia.com
Cambodiana Hotel	Phnom Penh	4 Star	www.hotelcambodiana.com
Ree Hotel	Siem Reap	4 Star	www.reehotel.com
Villa Santi Hotel	Luang Prabang	4 Star	www.villasantihotel.com

Price

Policy Applied	Valid from now until 30 Sep 2010 Price per person in USD in party of					
Group Size	2	3 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	13 - 15	Sgl Sup
Price List	\$2.687	\$2.352	\$2.029	\$1.987	\$1.874	\$620

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.

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)



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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

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.



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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>

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.

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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

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