

## EXPLORE THE REAL VIETNAM – TRIP NOTES

TRIP CODE: TAAGVB114

Valid until 31 Dec 2025

### Overview

This tour offers you a great opportunity to discover Vietnam's best highlights from the mountains & bay of the North through amazing heritages in the Centre to hustle city and mesmerizing delta in the South. The tour is an unforgettable adventure of most contrasting cultures and scenes of Vietnam.

Start from chaotic yet colorful Hanoi's Old Quarter you then travel up to Sapa to enjoy trekking along spectacular mountains, terraces & hill tribe villages before getting down to Ha Long bay for a wonderful cruise amongst dramatic karst. A night train will bring you to Hue where you will walk thru the Purple Forbidden City and explore the country's fascinating history reflected on fading monuments. Wander through the ancient Hoi An before traveling further south to Nha Trang to enjoy white sand, blue water, and colorful reefs. Your last days are full of contrasts with the colors of the dynamic life of Saigon – Ho Chi Minh City and the rustic beauty of Mekong Delta's evergreen tropical land.

### Detailed itinerary

#### **Day 1: Hanoi - Arrival**

Xin Chao! Welcome to Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam!

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met and greeted by our representative with a board bearing your name on it. Take a short transfer to the Hotel in Hanoi.

If you arrive early today, why not spend some time wandering around and exploring the colorful Hanoi. With its vibrant Old Quarter dotted with ancient temples in a maze of little streets lined with colorful shops and stalls, French colonial buildings and tree-lined boulevards, tranquil lakes and graceful pagodas, elegant cafes, and hustling street life, Hanoi is one of the liveliest and most charming cities in Asia.

At 6.00 PM you will have a group meeting with your tour guide and fellow travelers. Later this evening, perhaps you may want to join your travel fellows for hanging around or having a chat over a glass of fresh "Bia Hoi", a kind of homebrew, at one of many busy street corners.

#### Accommodation:

- Hotel in Hanoi

#### Meals included

- No meal is included on this day

### Notes for today

The check-in time for the hotel room is from 14.00 so, if you arrive earlier and want to have a room before that time you can book a pre-trip accommodation when you make the trip booking or let us know in advance so that we can book it for you.

The group meeting today is important as you will be meeting up with your tour guide and fellow travelers as well as having any necessary documentation, instruction, and brief guidance for the trip.

### **Day 2: Hanoi - city sightseeing**

Rise up early if you wish to join with locals for morning exercise around Hoan Kiem Lake. After breakfast at the hotel, head out for a city tour of Hanoi. Enjoy sightseeing the city's diverse colors from the chaotic ancient town to the elegant French quarter, and reveal its unique charms which are reflected in a great blend of past and present.

Spend time visiting the Memorial Complex dedicated to the father of modern Vietnam - Ho Chi Minh, consisting of the Mausoleum, the Presidential Palace, Uncle Ho's humble house on stilts, and the Ho Chi Minh museum. Within the complex is the One Pillar Pagoda, an iconic symbol of Hanoi built nearly a thousand years ago. Also, visit the Temple of Literature, the first National University of Vietnam, built in 1076 and functioned until 1802, where you will see nearly a hundred huge stone stela standing on the back of turtles and recording names of national men who received Doctor Laureate through Royal examinations.

### Included activities

- Ho Chi Minh Memorial complex: Mausoleum, Uncle Ho's house, One Pillar Pagoda, Ho Chi Minh Museum
- Temple of Literature

### Meals included

- Breakfast

### Accommodation

- Hotel in Hanoi

### Optional activities

- Hanoi cooking class: 30 \$US
- Water puppet show: 5 \$US

### **Day 3: Sapa - village trekking**

Rise up early for breakfast and leave Hanoi at 7.00 AM on a bus ride to Sapa (approx 5 hours).

Located at an elevation of about 1500 meters above sea level, this summer resort town is known for its breathtaking mountain landscapes, terraced fields, and diversity of ethnic cultures. Arrive at noon time and this afternoon you will make a 7-kilometer trek from Sapa

town along the Muong Hoa River down to the valley where located beautiful Hmong, Dzao, and Dzay hill tribe villages. This trekking route provides you with chances to interact with the locals, perhaps joining them at work on their rice fields, and learn about their typical culture and working methods as well. Do not forget to get your camera ready for wonderful photos along the way.

Tonight you will stay in a local house with a delicious home dinner served by the fire or in the open air overlooking the terraced fields. This homestay basis is normally shared by the whole group on the second floor of the traditional house. It is neat and clean enough with private mattresses, pillows, blankets, and mosquito net provided for each person. There are also modern toilets and bathrooms with hot showers next to the house for your convenience.

#### Included activities

- Sapa village trekking

#### Meals included

- Breakfast, Homestay dinner

#### Accommodation

- Homestay

#### Notes for today

Since you stay only one night in Sapa, there will be not much need for changing clothes and other stuff so, please bring with you as little as possible. It is better a trekking bag with some of the really necessary belongings. The rest of your luggage can be left in the storage of the hotel in Hanoi.

The trek today is pretty mild with most of the length being rather flat and mainly going downhill. However, if you wish, you can discuss with other group members and the tour guide to take a more challenging path which will lead you to hidden villages with some hill climbs and offer more authentic scenes.

Please ensure that you have suitable footwear for the trek, especially for the next day when the trail is more steep and slippery. You can either wear steady-sole sandals or trekking boots if preferred.

### **Day 4: Sapa - village trekking**

Wake up in the mountain fresh air and the sounds of surrounding nature. After a home breakfast, say goodbye to your local hosts and start another half-day trekking following buffalo trails up and downhill, among terraced fields, through hidden villages and bamboo jungles to Giang Ta Chai, home of the Red Dzao people. The trek today though shorter but requires higher physical demand than that of yesterday as some parts of it are pretty steep and slippery, however, in return, the landscapes are more rewarding and you also have the opportunity to explore the land away from the crowd. At the ending point, you will be picked up by bus and transferred back to Sapa town. After a shower in a hotel, enjoy some free time for wandering and exploring this mountain town on your own and perhaps take a

chance to ease your muscles with a foot massage or full body massage. At 3.00 PM you will get picked up from the hotel for a bus ride back to Hanoi.

Included activities

- Sapa village trekking

Meals included

- Breakfast, Homestay dinner

Accommodation

- Hotel in Hanoi

Notes for today

For the trek today, especially if there have been rains, a trekking stick will come in handy. Your tour guide and local host can provide you with a simple, light, and strong bamboo stick if requested.

When you get back to Sapa town from the trek you will have a rented bathroom in a hotel for a shower and changing your clothes. After some free time on your own for lunch and wandering, at 3.00 PM, the bus will pick you up at this hotel to bring you back to Hanoi so, please get back to this hotel on time for the bus.

**Day 5: Halong Bay – Boat cruise – night train to Hue**

After breakfast, at 7.30 AM you will leave Hanoi on a 2 ½ hour bus ride along the highway to Ha Long city where you board a wooden boat for cruising and exploring the spectacular Halong Bay. Located in the northwest of the Tonkin Gulf, Halong Bay and its greater area including the Bai Tu Long Bay and Cat Ba Island consist of more than two thousand limestone islands that soar up from the mirror-like emerald water, in various forms created by wind and water through millions of years. There are also lots of breathtaking karst caves and lagoons that offer wonderful discoveries. The bay is one of the most scenic places in Vietnam and was recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site for its exceptional geological, archeological, and cultural values.

Lunch is served on board as you wind your way through dramatic landscapes. You will also have a chance to get up close to explore rock formations by kayak or perhaps enjoy swimming in emerald water at one of the beautiful island beaches here.

Get back to Hanoi and this evening, at 7.00 PM, you will take a short transfer to the train station for an overnight train ride to Hue.

Included activities

- Halong Bay boat cruise and sightseeing
- Halong Bay kayaking

Meals included

- Breakfast

- Lunch on cruise

#### Accommodation

- Overnight train

#### Notes for today

There are kayaking and swimming activities included in the Halong bay boat cruise today so, swimming or/and waterproof wear should be good. A waterproof bag/belt is also come in handy to bring with you your valuables when you do the activity away from the boat.

The overnight train will take about 13 hours to get from Hanoi to Hue and you will stay in a sharing cabin for 4 people. This type of cabin has 4 bunk beds with comfortable soft sleepers on two levels and is air-conditioned. It is locked from the inside and there are toilets on either side of the carriage. There is also a dining car usually at the end of the train that serves simple meals and drinks. The train is pretty slow (60 kilometers per hour) and can be a little noisy for those not used to train riding so, earplugs or a bottle of vodka would be great :))

### **Day 6: Hue – Imperial city**

Arrive in Hue at about 9.30 AM. You will meet your tour guide at the train station and then take a short transfer to the hotel. There are bathrooms for you to take a shower and, before the official check-in time, spend some time wandering around to get adapted to the new environment.

Located in very central Vietnam, Hue is the former imperial capital of Vietnam and the treasure of the country's royal past. The city is known for its both historical values and beautiful natural landscapes.

This afternoon you will have a guided tour to explore the Hue Imperial City (The entrance ticket is at your own expense). Constructed from 1804 to 1832, this was the political center, the symbol of royal power, and is now listed as part of the World Heritage. The enclosure is protected by fortified ramparts built in Vauban defensive style, with more than 10km in perimeter and ringed by a deep moat. Inside is the Royal City and then the Purple Forbidden City which was the living area of Kings and their families. More than elsewhere in the country, vestiges of the past and traditional values are obvious anywhere with royal buildings, pagodas, monuments, and so on still exist though many of them have been ruined by the past wars.

#### Included activities

- Hue - Guided tour to the Imperial City (entrance ticket is not included)

#### Meals included

- No meal included today

#### Accommodation

- Hotel in Hue

**Day 7: Hue free and easy**

Today you have a free day to explore the charming Hue city at your pace.

Near the Imperial City, right on the bank of the Perfume River is the bustling Dong Ba Market, the largest and most attractive local market in the city that offers a wide range of fresh local produces, local specialties, and souvenirs of many kinds. It is great to wander around to experience sights, sounds, and smells and take the chance to try “Banh Khoai” a specialty Hue is famous for. Hue countryside is stunning with peaceful rural life and tranquil setting and, scattered around are many relics including royal mausoleums, museums, temples, monuments, and so on. Perhaps cycle out to explore those relics, farming villages and the Thanh Toan ancient bridge would be great. Also, you may want to take a dragon boat cruise along the beautiful Perfume River then make a visit to the Thien Mu Pagoda which is the oldest pagoda and the symbol of Hue.

Meals included

- Breakfast

Accommodation

- Hotel in Hue

Optional Activities

- Perfume River cruise & Thien Mu Pagoda: US\$ 10
- Royal tomb (Emperor Tu Duc, Minh Mang, and so on): US\$ 6
- Country & back streets by motorbike (lunch included): US\$ 25

Notes for today

Since it is a free day, any optional activities you take are at your own risk and responsibility. A bicycle for rent is about 2 USD and small motorbike is 7 USD. Make sure that you are familiar with those activities and have a proper driving license and that your travel insurance covers such activities.

**Day 8: Hoi An ancient town**

Take a bus transfer along picturesque rural lands, mountains, and lagoons to the World Heritage city of Hoi An. Along the way, you will make stops at the Lang Co beach and Hai Van Pass which is the highest pass in central Vietnam where the view of surrounding landscapes is stunning.

Lying by the bank of the peaceful Thu Bon River, Hoi An once was the major trading port of Vietnam from the 15th to the 19th century and was the hub for merchant boats from both East and West. The prominent feature of the town is narrow bustle streets with yellow-painted ancient houses bearing architectural influences from Japan, China, and Europe. The well-preserved architecture, traditions, lifestyle along with beneficial tourist services making Hoi An today one of the most favorite destinations in Vietnam and the World.

This afternoon you will have an orientation walking tour of Hoi An ancient town and make visits to some of the city's main attractions such as the Hoi An market, Tan Ky ancient house, communal hall, Hoi An museum, and the Japanese covered bridge, and so on.

Meals included

- Breakfast

Accommodation

- Hotel in Hoi An

Included Activities

- Hoi an – Ancient town walking tour

**Day 9: Hoi An ancient town**

Enjoy a free day today to explore Hoi An at your own pace. There are lots of things to see and do around here. Just wander around the town and reveal timeless beauties that reflect on mossy roofs or simply take a seat at one of lanterns-hang balconies of any bar, sipping café au lait or a bottle of cold beer. Hoi An for sure is a paradise for shopping lovers with its market and lots of street shops offering a wide range of stuff from woodworks, leather, paintings, and ceramics to lanterns and so on. It's also known for great tailor shops that can make wonderful items to order within a day, so do not hesitate to check it out and get the latest style dresses to be made. Why not take a chance to try a bowl of Cao Lau noodles or a plate of White Rose that Hoi An is famous for.

You also may like to take a bicycle ride around the surrounding countryside, enjoying the rural atmosphere and landscapes, take the option of boat cruise on the Thu Bon river or perhaps take part in a cooking class to learn the receipt of some wonderful Vietnamese dishes.

Meals included

- Breakfast

Accommodation

- Hotel in Hoi An

Optional Activities

- Hoi An county cycling & Thu Bon sunset cruise with BBQ: US\$ 35
- Hoi An Cooking class: US\$ 35

**Day 10: Hoi An – Train to Nha Trang**

Leave Hoi An for a day train ride to Nha Trang. This train ride is a kind of experience for travelers with the chance to view the stunning landscapes when you travel past beautiful rural lands and green paddies dotted with peaceful villages, spectacular lagoons verdant hills, and mesmerizing beaches along the coast of Vietnam.

Nha Trang is a famous seaside resort in south-central Vietnam. The beach city is known for its pristine beaches, consistently good weather, and green islands that rise up amongst the beautiful bay of emerald water that houses the marine life protected areas and boasted one of the best places in the country for snorkeling and scuba diving.

Meals included

- Breakfast

Accommodation

- Hotel in Nha Trang

Note for today

The train ride today is a bit long but interesting. For food, there is usually a dining car that serves simple Vietnamese foods but you may like to pack some foods from Hoi An for lunch and fresh dinner can be taken when you arrive in Nha Trang. There are trolleys that sell drinks or snacks around but if you like a cold beer or a fresh coffee, just come to the dining car to take a seat and get it.

The cabin on the train is air-conditioned and accommodates 4 people with 4 soft sleeper bunks on two levels. It is convenient for you to sit while viewing the scenery through the window and rest whenever you wish also. Depending on group size, you may have to share the cabin with other passengers who are not part of the group. It is advisable when traveling on public trains like this that you have a small bag or belt to bring valuables with you always.

**Day 11: Nha Trang boat cruise & islands visit**

Today you will take a boat tour to explore some islands and enjoy swimming, and snorkeling to explore coral reefs. The bay of Nha Trang is known for its blue emerald water and is home to some of the most colorful reefs in the country. You will have a chance to visit floating villages and some islands and then spend time discovering marine life with a snorkel mask. After a delicious seafood lunch on board or at a floating house, enjoy your time to relax and get suntan at one of the island beaches here.

Get back to the hotel in the late afternoon and the remainder of the day is free at your own pace.

Nha Trang becomes more hustling when the night falls. There are many busy restaurants serving different kinds of foods, neon light bars with some live music, and for night owls, there are also some discotheques around.



Meals included

- Breakfast
- Lunch

Accommodation

- Hotel in Nha Trang

Included activities

- Boat cruise Nha Trang bay & Islands visit

Notes for today

Nha Trang is known for fresh, good, and cheap sea foods. And, apart from restaurants in the town center, you may like to venture into local-style restaurants on the northern side of the city where you will sit on a colorful plastic chair and try lobster, snails, and some of the specific stuff like locals. There may be some taxi touts who will try to take you to an expensive place to take commission so, please check the information well with the hotel receptionist and remember to bargain before you order.

If you plan to wander around the town at night and get to crowded bars or discotheques, please remember to leave your valuables and passport in the safe or at the hotel reception and bring with you just enough to spend.

**Day 12: Nha Trang free & easy – Night train to Ho Chi Minh City**

Enjoy a day free for relaxing on the beach and exploring Nha Trang on your own. The main beach of Nha Trang has a length of about 5 kilometers with full of sunlight, white sand, and blue water will be a great place to relax and get suntan. During this day, you may also want to spend some time to explore around the city and visiting some of its attractions such as the Ponaga Towers, Long Son Pagoda, Nha Trang Stone Church, and so on or perhaps take a cable car ride over the bay to explore the Vinpearl Lands and enjoy time at the water park.

Meals included

- Breakfast

Accommodation

- Overnight train

Optional activities

- Nha Trang motorbike ride & River boat cruise: US\$ 45
- Nha Trang country village cycling: US\$ 40

Notes for today

The train to Ho Chi Minh City will depart in the evening so, after checking out the hotel room, you can store your luggage in the hotel storage. In case you spend the whole day out and about, please check out the room before you leave for the activity and it is

advisable you should leave your valuables at the hotel reception. There is a public bathroom in the hotel for you to take shower before you take the train.

The cabin on the train is the same standard as what you took from Hanoi to Hue. Upon arrival in Ho Chi Minh City in the early morning, you will be picked up by bus to the hotel for a shower and leave your luggage there then go for the morning tour.

### **Day 13: Ho Chi Minh City sightseeing**

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City! Also known as Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in the country that is characterized by a vast array of sights and sounds with currents of people rushing about from early morning until midnight. The city contains in it a fascinating blend of old and new, East and West with new skyscrapers rising from amongst colonial vestiges and very hustle, dynamic street life.

You will arrive at Saigon station in the morning where your bus is waiting to transfer you to the hotel. Check in the day room for a shower then you may want to go out to join with locals for morning exercise at one of many city's green parks.

After that, you will take a city tour by cyclo, a three-wheel pedicab, to explore some main attractions of the city including the War Remnant Museum, and Reunification Palace which is the former Presidential Palace of South Vietnam before the country reunited in 1975, the famous Saigon Notre Dame Cathedral, Saigon Post Office, the Theatre Hall, and the Ben Thanh Market. The remainder of the day is for you to relax.

For those interested in the war history of Vietnam, the option of Cu Chi Tunnels visit is recommended. And for those who like food adventure, Saigon nightlife and food tasting tour by motorbike is a great choice.

#### Meals included

- No meal included today

#### Accommodation

- Hotel in Saigon – Ho Chi Minh City

#### Optional activities

- Cu Chi Tunnels tour: US\$ 30
- Saigon nightlife & food adventure on motorbike: US\$ 45

### **Day 14: Mekong Delta explore**

This morning you will leave Saigon for a day tour to explore the Mekong Delta. Known as the rice basket of Vietnam, the Mekong delta has been built up by alluvial soil deposited along the run of the Mekong River for thousands of years. This is home to evergreen scenery of rice paddies, tropical orchards, and mangroves along stunning waterways.

Board a wooden boat for your leisure cruise on the river and explore local activities along the river such as fishing, water transferring, etc. Following, visit green orchards and taste some tropical fruits freshly picked from trees then visit to local workshops to learn about coconut candy processing, pop rice making, sleeping mat weaving and so on, and take the chance to try some local specialties. Afterward, you will continue with an exciting ride on a motor cart along shady paths, pass by coconut forests, green rice fields, and vegetable plains to be able to touch on real life and find out about this fascinating tropical land.

Enjoy a local lunch with some of Mekong's specialties including elephant ear fish, prawn, crispy banana flower cake, etc., and later, take little sampan rowing on a meandering canal along lush water coconut mangroves to the pier then drive back to Ho Chi Minh City.

Tonight is your last night in Ho Chi Minh City so why not join your fellow travelers for the last supper and have fun together.

#### Meals included

- Breakfast
- Lunch

#### Included activities

- Mekong Delta explore day trip

#### Accommodation

- Hotel in Saigon – Ho Chi Minh City

### **Day 15: Ho Chi Minh City - Departure**

Today is departure day so there are no activities organized. Just relax and enjoy time at your own pace until check-out time then get transferred to the airport for your departure flight. Safe travel and see you again!

#### Meals included

- Breakfast

#### Notes for today

The hotel check-out time is 11.00 AM so, if your departure flight is later and you wish to keep the room longer, please let us know so that we can book the room for you, otherwise, you can store your luggage in the hotel storage and use the public bathroom there. In case you have an extra stay in Ho Chi Minh City we can arrange post-trip accommodation and activities for you.

If you wish to explore other countries in the region, you can have a look at our tour list and find a suitable set departure date to combine this with.

### **Trip Style:** Standard

This style is designed with great flexibility to ensure that you can enjoy your experience most with a reasonable budget. Whilst it is built for adventure-minded people, this tour style focuses on active exploration, uncommon landscapes, and local cultures. Accommodations in these trips are normally tourist standard 2 or 3 stars. Guest houses and homestay with a local family are also used in these trips to enhance your local experience. Apart from included activities, you also have some free time to explore the place on your own way. Transports used on these trips are normally by buses and trains with public buses also sometimes used.

### **Joining & group size**

Group tours are where you meet and join with others on the tour to get more fun and enhance your local experiences. During the trip and at certain locations, there will be times you may join different people for certain activities. To ensure the quality, the group size is never greater than 16 people, except on large cruisers and public transport. Most day tours and excursions are organized and run directly by Travel Authentic Asia but sometimes by our local partners at our agreed standard. For those cases, Travel Authentic Asia ensures your trip quality and will take responsibility to deal with our local service providers on the behalf of our own customers and responsible for any complaints that may happen.

### **Physical Grading:** 3

It is suitable for most fitness levels. There are some active activities but nothing is too challenging.

### **Price inclusions**

Meals included: 11 breakfast, 3 lunches, 1 dinner

Accommodation: Hotels (11 nights), Homestay (1 night), Overnight train (2 nights)

Activities included: Hanoi: City sightseeing tour; Sapa: village trekking, Hill tribe homestay; Ha long Bay: Boat cruise, Ha long Bay kayaking; Hue: Royal Citadel & Forbidden city visit; Hoi An: ancient town walking tour; Nha Trang: boat cruise, island visit, and snorkeling; Ho Chi Minh: City tour; Mekong delta: Boat cruise & delta discovery tour

### **Price exclusions**

Visa, International flights in and out of the country, Laundry, Personal expenditures, Travel Insurance, and Tips, Other than those mentioned in the trip notes & itinerary.

### **Optional activities**

Apart from a list of included activities listed in day to day itinerary, you can also seek your own tastes and adventures during your free time by taking optional activities where it is available.

Optional activities aren't necessarily endorsed or recommended by Travel Authentic Asia nor included in the price of this trip. If you do take any optional activities, you do so at your own risk and it must be clearly understood that your participation is your own decision and doesn't form part of your contract with Travel Authentic Asia. You may be required to sign/complete a waiver form or a receipt for some optional activities.

## **Dossier & Itinerary Disclaimer**

These trip notes have been compiled with the itinerary and are updated regularly with the most reliable info on local travel facts. For the itinerary, though trying very much to adhere to the route, we cannot say that the local travel conditions stay unchanged so, a certain level of flexibility is requested in case of any alteration need to be made to fit with local circumstances.

Please ensure that you read well and have a copy of these trip notes before your departure in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## **Meals on tour**

When traveling with Travel Authentic Asia you will have chances to experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available in each country you travel to. Apart from some meals included in the trip price, you will have your own choice of eating options at your own budget and taste. This is to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where what and with whom to eat.

Your tour guide will give you suggestions of restaurants during the trip and group members are free to join together or to find their own tastes and privacy.

## **Transportation**

Most of the buses used on the trip are air-conditioned tourist buses. In some cases, for short distances or on some specific tour activities, to enhance your local experiences, we also sometimes use taxis, tuk-tuk, cyclo and so on. Overnight trains we use are local trains with air conditioners and 4 berth compartments that have lockable doors. On the train, you will share the cabin with other fellow travelers or maybe someone that is not part of the group. On occasion, for example, in high season when it is difficult to book, the 6 berth compartments are the alternation.

## **Accommodations**

Our accommodation on this trip is comfortable tourist standard of 2 and 3 stars.

Throughout the trip, we try our best to have rooms prepared for the group at our arrivals if we're arriving before the normal check-in time. However, this isn't always possible which means we won't be able to check in immediately on arrival at some hotels.

In big and populated cities, hotel rooms tend to be smaller than they are in small cities and towns and some rooms may have no window. This is due to the high population density. Though put on the same standard but facilities in hotels may be slightly different from place to place.

## Single Travelers

Theoretically, on our joined group trips, you will share the room with another group member of the same gender. However, in case you travel alone and, depending on group configuration, if there is no one else to share the room with, you are subject to pay for a single supplement. There is also the option to pay a single supplement in advance to ensure that you have your own room during the trip. Please note that single supplements are not available on overnight trains or at local homestays.

## Start-Ending-points

### Starting point:

Classic Street Hotel

41 Hang Be Street – Hoan Kiem District

Hanoi – Vietnam

Phone: (+84) 4 38252421 - 39260516

The hotel is located in the Old Quarter of Hanoi, very close to the Hoan Kiem Lake and within walking distance of Hanoi's interesting sights. Rooms are air-conditioned and have an en suite bathroom.

### Arrival complication

If for any reason you are unable to commence your group trip as scheduled, please contact your starting point hotel and speak to or leave a message for your tour guide.

Upon arrival at the airport, you will be met by our representative who is waiting for you in the hall with our company sign that bears your name on it. Please note that neither the driver nor any representative should ask you for additional payment.

If you cannot find our representative, or you have any concerns about your transfer, please call our hotline at +842466894949 or +84 903432999 or +84 912221442.

Please give us your flight details at least 14 days prior to your departure for either the included (if it is included in the tour price) or extra airport transfer service. In case the transfer or any portion of your trip is missed because of changing flight schedule without prior notice then no refund is applied and any additional cost incurred in order to meet up with your group is at your own expense.

If you have to take a taxi from the airport to starting point hotel on your own then metered taxis are available at the airport exit gates on the ground floor or come to airport taxi service counters with men in uniform and ask for detail. To make sure that you get the right taxi, ask airport security men or airport staff. Avoid taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport.

### Ending point

Prague Hotel Saigon

175/10-12 Pham Ngu Lao Str, Dist 1, Ho Chi Minh City

Tel: +842839259925

Centrally located in the tourist hub of Saigon – Ho Chi Minh City, from the Prague hotel it is convenient to find restaurants, bars, and other tourist venues. It is within walking distance of many of the area's main attractions such as Ben Thanh Market, Reunification Palace, Post office, and so on.

### Money

The official currency of Vietnam is Dong (VND).

According to government regulation, all prices for services and commodities must be quoted in VND; foreign currencies can be only dealt through authorized exchange bureaus or with special permission.

In fact, USD is considered the second currency in tourist places, and the commonness of EUR, AUD, BP... goes on respectively.

Places like restaurants, bars, travel agencies, or souvenir shops in tourist places sometimes accept both USD and VND and the price might be quoted in both types of currency so, the best solution is to carry both of them. Out of tourist sites or in remote areas, only Vietnam dong is accepted. It's a good idea to check that any bills you take do not have any tears or look too tatty, as shops and restaurants will not accept them.

You can easily draw the Dong from ATMs that are available at many street corners.

### Tipping

Tipping is not compulsory though it is enormously appreciated.

If you're happy with the services provided then some tip is appropriate. It's of great significance to the people who take care of you during your travels, inspires excellent service, and is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry. If you are happy with the service provided, tipping should be given directly to the recipient.

The following amounts are per-person suggestions based on local considerations and feedback from our past travellers:

In local restaurants, if you are a single diner, then a tip of around US\$1 is appropriated. It is from 10% to 15% of your bill in the more up-market restaurants. If you are in a group then depending on the group size, a gather of US\$ 4 or 5 is good.

For drivers, we suggest US\$5 if you are a single traveler and an amount of US\$10-15 from the whole group per day can be used.

For your tour guides, tipping is much dependent on their services. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however, US\$2-4 per person per day on a group tour is appropriate.

Of course, you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length of your trip. Remember, a tip is not compulsory and should only be given when you receive excellent service.

## Visas

Visas are the responsibility of the individual traveler. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. As a general rule, most countries expect that you will have at least 6 months' validity on your passport. On arrival, you may be asked to present return tickets and evidence of means to cover your intended stay.

You can also have visa-on-arrival services provided by Travel Authentic Asia by booking extra service when you make your tour booking or request by email.

For more detail please check on website at: <https://travellauthenticasia.com/travel-guides/vietnam/how-to-get-a-visa-for-vietnam.aspx>

## What to bring

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking, you should pack as lightly as possible. On excursions during the trip, you are expected to carry your own luggage and although you won't be required to walk long distances with your luggage, we recommend keeping the weight under 20kg/44lbs.

Some carry their luggage in a backpack, some use suitcase. It is advisable to have your backpack or suitcase with wheels. An overnight bag with a shoulder strap or a little backpack is convenient to carry water and a camera etc for day trips.

Depending on the season and activities on the trip you need to prepare and bring appropriate clothes and belongings. In the wintertime, (from November to February) weather in North Vietnam can be cold so warm clothes are needed while the other time of the year, comfort and loose-fitting wear should be good. If the trip involves some trekking, trekking shoes or trekking sandals will be useful. Please note that you can buy most of the things here at reasonable prices so do not try to bring the whole wardrobe with you except for something really necessary.

## Health

There are no specific health requirements for this trip. However, you should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements.

## Safety and Security

Before departure, please seek advice from any source on safety for international travel and learn about the situations you might confront during your travel.



Traffic can be a little more chaotic than you are used to at home. Slow down a bit at the beginning to adapt yourself to the new environment. Ask your tour guide and learn from the locals how to deal with local traffic.

We recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while traveling for your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash, and other valuable items. Do not bring more than you need when you go out and about. Just enough money for day use and the rest of your money and other valuables should be left in the hotel safety box. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during nighttime excursions.

In certain circumstances, please note that your tour guide has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

Take care when taking part in any activities in the ocean, river, or open water where waves and currents can be unpredictable. It is expected that anyone taking part in water activities is able to swim and have experience in open water. All swimmers should seek local advice before entering the water.

For more information please, check on our website's travel guides.

## **Travel Insurance**

It is your responsibility to get your own international travel insurance before your trip. The requisite level of cover should at least be including personal accident, medical expenses, baggage loss, cancellation or curtailment of vacation, etc. In some cases, travelers may have pre-existing medical conditions that their travel insurance company will not cover. Other than local travel insurance(s) included in sightseeing tickets at sites, Travel Authentic Asia does not provide any kind of travel insurance on the trip except required and paid separately from the tour price.

## **Responsible travel**

TAA operates our business with a strong impression of Responsible Travel. We believe that it is us, tour operator and travelers who somehow play an important role in building this world better. By traveling responsibly, we not only contribute to the progress of tourism in general but also improve our traveling experience.

Responsible travel is not something a strange, abstract concept but is just our actions, behavior, and appearance we conduct every day during our traveling. With a little effort, you will make a great difference.

## **Issues on your trip**

While we always try our best to bring you the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the local conditions sometimes things can and do go wrong. In those cases, a discussion with your tour guide or our travel consultant is the best way to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognize that there may be times when our guides or our local partners may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please chat or email directly to our travel consultant or management board.

### **Trip review & feedback**

After you travel with us, your feedback means a lot to help us to improve our service to serve you better next time as well as the others. You are the one who knows what we should and have to do to match your expectation. So, your comments are highly appreciated.