

SmallGroup Travel tour of Vietnam February 2014

To live is to travel.....share the experience

Day 1 [Thurs 20 Feb 14]: Arrival Hanoi (with guide)

Upon arrival, a guide is waiting to transfer guests to the hotel.

Hotel: Authentic Hanoi Hotel
Room type: Deluxe
Website: www.authentichanoi.com.vn
Address: 13 Ly Thai To, Hoan Kiem, Ha Noi, Viet nam
Phone Number: (+84) 043.9615 999

Day 2 [Fri 21 Feb 14]: Hanoi – Lao Cai

Sapa is a former French hill station set in a high valley near the Vietnam-China border and is surrounded by picturesque mountains. At 1600m, its cool climate inspired the French to build villas here as their summer retreat from Hanoi. Today, Sapa attracts visitors from around the world due to its stunning scenery, crisp climate, colourful markets and ethnic hill tribes living in nearby villages.



Board an overnight train from Hanoi to the border town of Lao Cai. Catch some sleep along the way in soft sleeper berths on the express train (4 berth shared cabins). The train departs around 21:00pm and arrives into Lao Cai the following day at around 06:00am.

Day 3 Sat 22 Feb 14]: Lao Cai - Sapa (B, L)

Early arrive at Lao Cai, transfer to Sapa for breakfast. Today you start by getting some exercise with trek to the hill tribe villages of Cat Cat, Ta Van and Cau May. As you walk to the villages nestled in the valley below Sapa, you will meet some of the local ethnic minority people on their way to and from Sapa. These minority people, including the Red Zao, Hmong and Tay people, walk to Sapa to trade at the markets. Tonight you spend the night at the hotel in Sapa town.

Hotel: Chau Long Sapa Hotel
Room type: New Wing ROH Dbl/Twn
Website: www.chaulonghotel.com
Address: 024 Dong Loi
Phone Number: 84203871245

Day 4 [Sun 23 Feb 14]: Sapa – Ta Phin – Lao Cai (B)

This morning our exercise involves climbing up Ham Rong Mountain for a panoramic view of Sapa and its environs. After lunch time we drive out of town and commence an hour-long walk to Ta Phin, home to the distinctive Dao (pronounced Zao) community. From here we drive to Lao Cai station for the overnight train journey to Hanoi.

Catch some sleep along the way in soft sleeper berths on the express train (4 berth shared cabins). The train departs around 20:00pm and arrives into Hanoi the following day at around 05:00am.

Day 5 [Mon 24 Feb 14]: Train back to Hanoi (B)

Upon arrival in Hanoi, transfer directly to the hotel for breakfast and a freshen up before heading to Halong Bay.

In the morning, drive to Halong Bay (3.5 hours), with a refreshment break en route. Board 'Paradise' junk on Tuan Chau Island and meet the crew. Enjoy a welcome cocktail and Asian buffet lunch while admiring the beautiful bay scenery. Spend the day cruising around the UNESCO heritage-listed bay.

Go kayaking or swimming (weather permitting) or relax on the sundeck and enjoy the sunset over the islands as the boat arrives at its anchorage for the evening. Discover the secrets of Vietnamese cuisine with the cooking demonstration. Dinner is a freshly prepared seafood feast and the evening entertainment includes movies, board games or spa treatments.

Hotel: Paradise Luxury (Paradise Cruises Halong)
Room type: Deluxe Balcony 2d1n Dbl/Twn
Website: www.paradisecruises.org
Address: Tuan Chau Island
Phone Number: 84333842368

Day 6 [Tues 25 Feb 14]: Halong Bay – Hanoi (Paradise Cruise) (B)

Awake to morning tai chi and a buffet breakfast and cruise to Ti Top - one of the most beautiful beaches of the bay. Climb 400 steps up to the top of the island and capture a breathtaking panoramic view of the bay before cruising back to Tuan Chau Island, arriving at 10.30am. Meet up with the vehicle for the drive back to Hanoi, arriving at 14:30pm.



Hotel: Authentic Hanoi Hotel
Room type: Deluxe
Website: www.authentichanoi.com.vn
Address: 13 Ly Thai To, Hoan Kiem, Ha Noi, Viet nam
Phone Number: (+84) 043.9615 999

Day 7 [Wed 26 Feb 14]: Hanoi - flight to Hoi An (B)

This morning, we visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (open in the morning only and closed Mondays and Fridays), his Former Residence and Temple of Literature - the first University and the capital of Vietnam about 1000 years ago.

Then we visit the Vietnam History Museum (closed on Monday/Friday) before you have the rest of the afternoon free at leisure

This afternoon, transfer to the airport in Hanoi. Take a flight to Danang. Upon arrival, transfers are provided to the hotel. Balance of the day at leisure, for own arrangements.

Hotel: Life Heritage Resort Hoi An
Room type: Superior Garden View
Website: www.life-resorts.com
Address: 1 Pham Hong Thai St.,
Phone Number: 845103914555



Day 8 [Thurs 27 Feb 14]: Hoi An cooking class at Red Bridge (B, L)

Hoi An food is markedly different to that of the north and south and has a number of very popular specialities. Interact with local sellers at the outdoor markets and purchase ingredients for the cooking class, before cruising down the Thu Bon River to the cooking school for an engaging hands-on lesson with the chef. At the completion of the class sit and enjoy a delicious lunch, including what you have just prepared.

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Day 9 [Fir 28 Feb 14]: Hoi An Farmer and Fisherman (B, L)

This exciting full day tour gives you an insight into the lives of the farming and fishing communities in this beautiful region of Vietnam. Begin your adventure by cycling out into the countryside through emerald green rice paddies. After a short ride you will arrive at the village of Tra Que. This charming little settlement, on the edge of Hoi An, is famous for its sweet scented green vegetables that spice up Hoi An's famous delicacies such Cao Lau and Mi Quang. On arrival you will be introduced to the history of the village and the cultivation of the vegetables. Continue with a walk around the vegetable garden and join the farmers in preparing the land and planting some crops. Finish off your village experience with a fun cooking demonstration. Later, return to Hoi An and board the Eco Tour boat for a river cruise to meet and engage with local fisherman. You are sure to enjoy the hands on experience of river net fishing with the locals. Next, you have the opportunity to paddle a unique bamboo basket boat, known as a coracle, as you explore the area's coconut palmed waterways.

**Option to drive instead of cycle is included

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Day 10 Sat 01 Mar 14]: Hoi An - Danang – Fly to Ho Chi Minh City (B)

Transfer to the airport in Danang. Take a morning flight to Ho Chi Minh City. Upon arrival, you are met by your guide and transferred to your hotel.

This afternoon take a half day city tour of Ho Chi Minh City.

Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as the city is still frequently referred to, is Vietnam's largest city. It is a fast-paced metropolis full of contrasts, with street vendors selling fruit and vegetables next to glitzy western-style bars and boutiques. Amazingly, the city's history dates back only 300 years. In 1859 the city was captured by the French and became the capital of Cochinchina.

From 1956 until April 1975 it was the capital of the US-backed Republic of Vietnam. Today, Ho Chi Minh City is very much the heart of Vietnamese business and entrepreneurial activity. The French left their mark with some fine colonial-era buildings such as the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office.



- **The Notre Dame Cathedral and Old Post Office:** Built between 1877 and 1883 this is one of the best examples of classical French colonial architecture. Remarkably every stone used in its creation was shipped from France to Vietnam. Her two forty metre towers, topped with iron spires, still dominate the city's skyline. The Old Post Office is another example of French colonial architecture and is also the country's largest post office.
- **Dong Khoi Street, the Opera House and the Peoples' Committee Building:** built in 1897 by French architect Ferret Eugene, the 800 seat Opera House was used as the home of the Lower House Assembly of South Vietnam after 1956. It was not until 1975 that it was again used for performances. The structure was restored in 1995. The Opera House is located on the historical Dong Khoi Street which is home to many boutiques and fine restaurants. Just around the corner are the iconic Rex hotel and the beautiful Peoples' Committee Building.

TravelManagers Australia Pty Ltd trading as SMALLGROUP TRAVEL
Mobile 0414598157

Email: suek@travelmanagers.com.au

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- **The Reunification Palace:** This is one of the most important buildings in the city. Here on April 30th 1975 the 'American War' officially ended when tank number 843 of the North Vietnamese Army crashed through the gates of what was, at the time the residence of the President of the Republic of Vietnam.



- **The War Remnants Museum:** Formerly known as the Museum of American War Crimes, this is a poignant display of the futility of war. Some of the black and white photography in the 'Requiem' exhibit is particularly touching, dedicated to both foreign and Vietnamese journalists and photographers who perished during the conflict. The courtyard outside contains the spoils of war, namely rusting jets, tanks and cannons captured from the American military machine.

Please note: Some of the images on display at the War Remnants Museum can be confronting and may not be suitable for small children.

Hotel: Liberty Central Hotel
Room type: Deluxe
Website: www.libertycentralhotel.com
Address: 175 - 177 - 179 Le Thanh Ton, District 1
Phone Number: 08 3823 9269

Day 11 [Sun 02 Mar 14]: Ho Chi Minh City – Vinh Long Homestay (B, L, D)

Depart at 08:00am from the hotel. The morning begins with a drive through the Mekong Delta to the town of Cai Be, famous for its floating markets. After touring the markets, board a private boat and cruise along the maze of waterways and canals to Vinh Long. Here, feast at the home of a Bonsai gardener for a sumptuous Delta lunch, including the popular 'Elephant ear fish', before continuing to explore the tributaries and canals of the Delta. Towards the end of the day, arrive at the home of a local family. The evening is spent with the family, learning about life in the Delta.

Day 12 [Mon 03 Mar 14]: Vinh Long – Ho Chi Minh City (B, L)

Rising to the sounds of life on the Delta, have an early breakfast before boarding a riverboat to cruise to Vinh Long town, stopping along the way to visit local cottage industries. Then, transfer by vehicle to the town of My Tho to visit the Vinh Trang pagoda, before returning to Ho Chi Minh City.

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Day 13 [Tues 04 Mar 14]: Ho Chi Minh City – Cu Chi Tunnels by Saigon River Group Tours (River - Road) Itinerary day by day - full descriptions

Be picked up from your hotel at around 7.30am.

Transfer by vehicle to Ho Chi Minh Pier where you will start your journey by speedboat to Cu Chi Tunnels. Cruise the Saigon River, taking in the scenery and river life as you leave the bustling city behind.

Upon arrival, at around 9.30am, you'll watch a short introductory video on the construction of the tunnels and life there during the Vietnam War (known locally as the 'American War').

This immense network of tunnels was the location of several military campaigns during the war and served as a base for operations for the Tet Offensive in 1968. The tunnels served as communication and supply routes, living quarters, hospitals and food and weapon stores for numerous guerilla fighters, and were crucial to the resistance to American forces, ultimately helping the Vietnamese forces to achieve

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military success.

More than just a historical site, the Cu Chi tunnels are testimony to the resilience of the Vietnamese people through the Vietnam War.

After your visit to the tunnels, drive through the countryside to visit a cricket farm. Crickets are considered a delicacy by many Vietnamese and it's believed that hungry soldiers in the area during wartime discovered the edible value of crickets when they ran out of more conventional foodstuffs.

At the farm you'll see crickets in various stages of growth and can see them being prepared as food should you wish to. There's also the opportunity to sample a cricket-based dish either on at the onsite restaurant or as a takeaway.

Returning to Ho Chi Minh City, stop for a traditional Vietnamese lunch (not including cricket).

You'll arrive back at your hotel between 2.20pm and 3pm.

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Room type: Deluxe
Website: www.libertycentralhotel.com
Address: 175 - 177 - 179 Le Thanh Ton, District 1
Phone Number: 08 3823 9269

Day 14 [Tue 05 Mar 13]: Ho Chi Minh - Depart (with guide)

You are transferred from the hotel to the airport for your flight.

TOUR PRICE per person based on twin share. A single supplement will apply if you do not wish to share a room.

No. Of Guest:	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Price per person (AUD)	2200	2050	2000	1950	1880	1850	1850	1850

Tour includes:

- Accommodation based on shared at above selected hotels with daily breakfast
 - Check-in time at all hotels is 2.00PM and check-out time at all hotels is 12.00PM.
 - Early check-in and late check-out is subject to availability with surcharge.
- All transfers as mentioned by air-conditioned vehicle
- All airport transfers with English speaking guide
- All meals: B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner as mentioned in the program.
- All entrance fees
- English speaking guide
- Train tickets
- Domestic flights

Tour excludes:

- Travel Insurance (Compulsory). I would be happy to help you with your travel insurance. All SmallGroup Travel clients will receive a 15% discount on insurance
- **International flights**
- Visas
- All flight tickets

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- Services and meals if not mentioned in itinerary
- All drinks, including water, soft drink and alcohol on all included or optional excursion
- Laundry, telephone calls and expenditure of a personal nature
- Tips and gratuities

Please note that none of the services have been booked and this proposal is subject to availability.
N/B: Prices may be subject to currency fluctuation until full payment is made

HOW DO I JOIN THE TOUR ?

Please contact Sue Kuti for a booking form. A non refundable deposit of \$300 will be required to secure your place on the tour.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Please be aware that flight times, hotels and all other logistics, services and days of travel are subject to availability. Where flights are cancelled or delayed Buffalo Tours will endeavour to secure alternative arrangements of similar value as noted in our booking conditions.
- This quotation is valid for above travel date. Any bookings made after this date are subject to change, as local economic conditions require.
- The travelling times mentioned within this dossier are approximations only. These times will vary according to weather, road, traffic or any other prevailing conditions.
- This itinerary and supplementary information has been compiled in good faith and was accurate at time of writing. However it DOES NOT form part of a contract between the client and Buffalo Tours.
- Please ensure you have the correct visas for travel. Buffalo Tours is not responsible if you enter a country and do not have the correct visa.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Cancellations

In addition to the cancellation fees below, an administration fee of \$70 per booking will apply if changes are made to an itinerary after confirmation is received.

Cancellations fees will be charged as follows:

- Once a booking status is confirmed all deposits are **non refundable**
- 14-60 days before arrival: 35% of the price
- 13 days before arrival: 100% of the price

The above excludes certain classes of domestic air tickets (i.e.: M class). These must be paid by Buffalo Tours at time of booking and are thus non-refundable.

Claims and Refunds of Unused Services

- No refunds or exchanges can be made in respect of accommodation, meals, sightseeing tours, transport or any other services which are included in the tour prices but not utilized by the tour member.
- For claims to be considered, they must be received in writing within 30 days of the termination of the program and be accompanied by supporting documentation. Any adjustment considered will be based on the actual price of the services involved and not on a per diem basis. SmallGroup Travel will not accept any liability for any claims that are not received within 30 days of the termination of your travel program. All claims for days missed while travelling should be made in writing within 30 days of the termination of the program.

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Children and infants

For all tours children (from 6 to 11 years of age at the time of travelling) are charged at 75% of the adult price. Children from two to six years are charged 50% of the adult price. Infants (under 2 years of age at time of booking) are charged 10% of the adult price unless otherwise stated in the tour programs. 12 yrs and over is adult price according to airlines and hotels.

Itineraries

Accommodations (hotel or vessel) and pre-arranged sightseeing are subject to change at any time due to unforeseen circumstances or circumstances beyond SmallGroup Travel's control. Every effort will be made to operate tours as planned.

Halong Bay

Local authorities have the right to delay or cancel the Halong Bay cruise at any time, even after the tour has departed if they feel the current or forecasted weather conditions are not suitable. The decision reinforces that client safety is the main priority of the local authorities.

Please note that SmallGroup Travel has no control over the decision or when it is announced

Early Check-in

Early check-in has not been included in the tour prices. Most hotels allow check-in to take place during the mid afternoon. If you require your room ready for immediate check-in upon your arrival, Buffalo Tours can arrange this for an additional charge. Please ask for details and prices.

Liability & Insurance

- In addition and without limitation, SmallGroup Travel is not responsible for any injury, loss, death, inconvenience, delay or damage to personal property in connection with the provision of any goods or services whether resulting from but not limited to acts of God or force majeure, illness, disease, acts of war, civil unrest, insurrection or revolt, animals, strikes or other labour activities, criminal or terrorist activities of any kind, overbooking or downgrading of services, food poisoning, mechanical or other failure of aircraft or other means of transportation or for failure of any transportation mechanism to arrive or depart on time. Additional expenses incurred due to delays, accidents, natural disaster, political actions and unrest must be covered by the tour members.
- There are certain inherent risks in adventure travel of the type involved here. These include, but are not limited to, risks of kayaking and rafting (for example dangers of rapidly moving water, rocks and other submerged objects, hypothermia, etc), hiking, trekking or climbing (for example, equipment failures, or other trail obstructions) and in all trips dangers of animals, inaccessibility to medical attention and difficulty in evacuation from remote locations in the case of a medical emergency. Passenger assumes all such risks with regard to these possibilities.
- Airline schedules and local conditions may affect accommodation and itineraries. If this should occur SmallGroup will endeavour to substitute a suitable arrangement of similar value.
- Participation on any tours implies full agreement to the above conditions by all parties involved.
- The Consumer is required to have full travel insurance. It is the responsibility of the Consumer to read their insurance policy before they travel and ensure that the insurance scheme provides the Consumer with the requisite level of cover.

Participation on any tour implies full acceptance of the above conditions by the Consumer.

I look forward to welcoming you on your SmallGroup Travel Tour of Vietnam.

Sue Kuti



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