



# North-Central Vietnam

7 days

## Tour Description

*One of the most exotic countries on earth, this is one place that is still an adventure. Vietnam can boast about its great diversity such as dense forests, gleaming coastlines, picturesque mountains, seaside caves, green rice paddy fields and bustling cities. Its rich cultural heritage features many UNESCO World Heritage Sites, some highlighting their rich history, others feature amazing natural wonders. The culture here is compelling, in one of the last Asian countries to embrace international visitors.*

## Highlights

- ❖ Pay a visit to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum
- ❖ Take a 2 night Ha Long Bay Cruise
- ❖ Kayak through caves and grottoes
- ❖ Sunset experience on Titov Mountain or bamboo rowboat adventure
- ❖ Learn the history of the classic Cham monuments at My Son
- ❖ Enjoy China Beach, the subject of a hit TV show near Da Nang

## Sample Tour Itinerary

### Hanoi – 2 nights

#### Day 1: Arrival Hanoi

Vietnam's capital city welcomes you with a French flair that harkens back to its colonial days. Take the balance of the day to explore the area around Hoan Kiem Lake on your own, where locals do their exercises. Maybe hop on the back of a cyclo for a tour around town by a local. This evening enjoy a unique water puppet show that demonstrates their cultural background.

#### Day 2: Half Day City Tour

In the morning we'll tour the city's the Old Quarter, enjoy the lovely tree-lined boulevards, passing by colonial villas. Visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum where the leader's body lies in state. Next, stop at the One Pillar Pagoda perched atop a single stone pillar. It was designed after a lotus blossom, the symbol of purity. This afternoon you are free to meander through the shops or watch the city's energy from the vantage point of a side-walk cafe.

### Ha Long Bay Cruise – 2 nights

#### Day 3: Arrival in Ha Long Bay – Board your Cruise

Today we'll take a 4-hr drive to the coast, where the natural landscape is dotted with amazing limestone outcroppings, making this a photographer's dream come true. Designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1994, this area is the crown jewel of Vietnam. There are thousands of islands standing high above the emerald waters of the Gulf of Tonkin, giving visitors a glimpse of the awesome creativity of Mother Nature. We'll take a cruise through the magical islets where you can explore the many beaches, caves and grottos. Lunch and dinner are served on board.



#### **Day 4: Cruise**

Enjoy breakfast onboard. While the junk is passing many islets, rocks, caves, floating villages and beaches on Ha Long bay, your lunch of fresh seafood will be served on board. After lunch, we'll cruise to the magical landscapes of Dinh Huong island, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island, Binh Phong Mountain, Sung Sot Cave, and Round over Titov Beach. Enjoy sunset on top of Titov Mountain or you can take a bamboo rowboat to discover water tunnels with many coral reefs in a scenic lagoon. Continue cruising to a secluded lagoon to anchor overnight. Dinner is served onboard. After the included dinner, relax on deck - drink service is available onboard (at your own expense).

### **Hoi An – 2 nights**

#### **Day 5: Disembark – Fly to Da Nang / Hoi An**

After breakfast on board, we'll drive to the airport for a flight to Hoi An, just south of Da Nang. The old town is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and was once known as Faifo, a major international port in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries; to this day you'll feel those international influences. The balance of the day you can wander and shop to your heart's content maybe purchasing some made-to-order clothing.

#### **Day 6: My Son Morning Tour / Da Nang Afternoon Tour**

We begin with an early morning drive passing through small towns with markets in full swing, often traveling alongside the Han River. We will make our way to My Son, which translates literally as 'Beautiful Mountain'. On arrival you will walk a third of a mile through lush hillsides, trees and brush, before emerging into the main site. There were over 70 classic Cham monuments at My Son, dating from the 7th - 13th Centuries until 1968 when B52 bombers destroyed most of the towers during the Vietnam War. Your guide will offer full commentary on the Cham heritage of My Son while you wander at will around this most historic site.

Return to Da Nang for lunch at local restaurant followed by a city tour around Da Nang.

Visit the Cham Museum in Da Nang, once center of the ancient Cham civilization. The Cham people left a legacy of excellent sculptures, now housed in the only museum of its kind in Da Nang, as they were pushed south by the advancing Vietnamese invaders. Close by Da Nang is China Beach, immortalized for many from the U.S. TV show and still one of the most spectacular beaches in Asia. Continue to the Marble Mountains for a photo stop en-route to Hoi An. These five rocky outcrops are said to represent five natural elements, and are the source of many intriguing legends. They house temples and once even an army hospital! You will see skilled artisans carving all manner of statues from marble sourced locally at the mountains' base.

#### **Day 7: Departure**

Transfer to the airport for your flight home.



## **INCLUSIONS**

- Accommodations: Hanoi 2 nights, Ha Long Cruise 2 nights, Hoi An 2 nights
- Ha Long Bay Cruise – full board meals
- Meals: Continental breakfast daily, lunch and dinner as noted in itinerary
- Ground transportation via air conditioned luxury coach
- English speaking assistants and guides
- Admission tickets as outlined in the itinerary