



Vietnam Family Holiday for Teenagers

Duration: 9 days

Highlights: Visit the dramatic UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hoi An ancient town. Discover the colonial city of Hanoi and contrast it with the dynamic city of Danang, the ancient capital Hue and bustling commercial city of Ho Chi Minh.

An ideal escape for families visiting Vietnam with teenage children.

Itinerary

Day 1 - Arrive Hanoi

Upon arrival at Noi Bai airport, you will be welcomed by a guide and driver who will transfer you to your hand-picked hotel (approximately 45-minutes' drive).

Option for consideration:

The Fast Track service will assist you with airport visa, immigration & luggage formalities. You will be met by an Airport Representative at the arrivals gate (or aerobridge) and ushered to the Visa Landing counter to obtain a Vietnam visa stamp and express clearance through immigration. You will then follow the Airport Representative, who will assist you with collection of your luggage before leading you out of the terminal to meet with your guide.

One of the most popular things to do on a beautiful evening in Hanoi is to take a food tour around the city's scenic Old Quarter.

In the evening your guide will collect you from your hotel and take you on a quest to find the best local snacks and treats along the hidden alleyways and bustling street markets of the most charming parts of the city.

During your two-and-a-half-hour investigation you will have the chance to sample delicious Vietnamese favorites such as banh cuon and watch as the skilled vendors demonstrate how the tasty dish is assembled.

Next, make a stop at an outdoor barbecue stall and sample a delightful selection of meats, vegetables, and breads that are flame-grilled over hot charcoals for extra flavor. If you wish, you can wash down your treats with the local draught beer known as "bia hoi".

As well as introducing you to the authentic local delicacies, your expert guide will be happy to share the history of Hanoi as you continue deep into the atmospheric heart of the Old Quarter, passing street stalls and quiet residential lanes.

Your tour will conclude at a hidden café with stunning views over the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake where you can sample an egg coffee, a delicacy only found in Hanoi.

Please note: the café (final stop) offers a variety of soft drinks as well the egg coffee (e.g. egg cocoa).

Hanoi offers a huge array of food and dining options so please let your guide know your dietary requirements or preferences, and they will adjust the tour accordingly.

Meal Plan: D

Day 2 - Hanoi

Your day of intriguing sightseeing will begin outside at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. The vast tomb stands just over 70 feet tall and 135 wide and contains the embalmed body of the revolutionary leader who played a key role in the foundation of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and with the Viet Cong during the war with anti-communist forces.

Your first stop will be at Ho Chi Minh's stilted house. Built using the finest wooden materials in 1958, the simple two-story wooden house is where legendary leader Ho Chi Minh once lived. The stilted house is surrounded by banyan, frangipani, Poinciana and milkweed trees and sits next to an elegant carp-filled pond.

Next you will move to One Pillar Pagoda. Built in the 11th century by King Ly Thai To, the pagoda known to locals as "Chua Mot Cot" is one of Vietnam's most iconic temples. The king built the temple to offer thanks to the deity he believed helped his wife give birth to his son.

You will then proceed to Quoc Tu Giam, a Confucian temple otherwise known as Temple of Literature. Recognized as Hanoi's first university, the temple was also built in the 11th century during the reign of King Ly Nhan Tong and is featured on the back of the 100,000 dong banknote. The temple, which hosts the Imperial Academy, has educated Vietnam's royalty and members of elite society for nearly 700 years.

Your guide will then take you for lunch at a local restaurant.

Following lunch, your guide will escort you to West Lake for a half day cycling tour. The largest freshwater lake in Hanoi, West Lake is surrounded by stunning architecture. Your journey will take approximately two and a half hours, stopping en route at Thu Sach, Phu Tay Ho and the Golden Lotus Temple (Kim Lien Pagoda), originally built in the 13th century and dedicated to Princess Tu Hoa who founded a sanctuary on the shores of lake.

Total cycling approx. 17 km

Cycling time: 2 hours (moderate)

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Please note: Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed on Monday and Friday and daily each afternoon, as well as between mid-September and mid-December.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 3 - Hanoi - Hue

Breakfast at your hotel.

Free at leisure until your private transfer with your guide to Noi Bai airport for your flight to Hue

Upon arrival at Phu Bai airport, a guide awaits to escort you back to hotel.

Your guide will take you to the Hue family home. After meeting the family, enjoy a light-hearted informal chat to learn about traditional customs. Next, take a short walk to visit the family temple to learn about the customs associated with ancestral worship before returning to enjoy a cooking demonstration of traditional dishes and help to set the table for dinner if you wish. Then, sit down to enjoy your homemade lunch with your host family.

This afternoon you will be met at your hotel (at 14.00) by a tour guide who will take you to an artist's house to learn the skill of kite making. At the house, you will have time to chat with the artist and learn how to make a basic kite using a variety of materials.

Once you have finished your handmade kite, your guide will transfer you to the Imperial Citadel, an ideal place to take your kite on its inaugural flight.

Continue your tour for a visit to Thien Mu Pagoda, one of the oldest ancient architectural structures for religious worship in Huế. The seven storey pagoda is the subject of many folk songs about Huế and is regarded as the unofficial symbol of the former Imperial capital. Take a boat trip along the romantic Perfume River returning to your hotel and offering the flower candle to the river for praying a good luck and health.

You will then return to your hotel by private air-conditioned vehicle around 18.00.

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 4 - Hue - Hoi An

Breakfast at your hotel.

Today you will be met at your hotel by a tour guide who will take you on an exploration of Huế.

You will take cyclo (three-wheeled bicycle rickshaw) from hotel to the Imperial Citadel, the seat from which the Nguyen Dynasty ruled between 1802 and 1945. Like most of the historic sites in Vietnam, the citadel sustained extensive damage during various wars and conflicts.

Thankfully, there still remains over 100 fascinating buildings and structures within the grounds of the Imperial Citadel to explore. One of the most fascinating is The Imperial Enclosure, a citadel-within-a-citadel which contains the Forbidden Purple City, the former living quarters of the ruling emperor. Also of interest are the four main gates along the citadel's 2.5km perimeter.

After leaving the citadel you will take a short drive (in an air-conditioned vehicle) through the rolling hills that encircle Huế, arriving at the serene tomb of Tu Duc, the 'poet Emperor.' The tomb is set in an elegant garden of pine trees and frangipanis, with a magnificent lake and pavilions surrounded by a stone wall. Built between 1864 and 1867, the tomb was designed by the Emperor himself, an expert in eastern philosophy and literature, to be a romantic dedication to poetry and the perfect setting for his resting place. Next, you will enjoy a demonstration of martial arts at Vo Kinh Van An, a special school founded in the 1970s. The school teaches ancient martial arts of the Nguyen Dynasty, maintaining Vietnam's cultural heritage. Performances of the art form are visually stunning, and you will have the chance to watch a special show during your visit.

Have lunch at a local restaurant before taking the overland transfer from Hue to Hoi An via Hai Van Pass. The transfer will take 3.5 hours driving.

Balance of the day is free at leisure in hotel in Hoi An.

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 5 - Hoi An

Breakfast at your hotel.

The Farming and Fishing Life Tour provides you with a close-up and intimate exposure to both the local farming and fishing communities. Accompanied by your tour guide, commence the day with a leisurely cycling trip along country roads, witnessing local Vietnamese rural life first hand and discovering all manner of photo opportunities.

Along your ride, visit a beautiful organic vegetable village where you can water and plant vegetables, hoe the soil with local farmers and perhaps even witness a water buffalo plough a rice paddy field. You may see ducks swimming across the rice paddies, or farmers tending their crops.

Later, board a boat for a river cruise to meet and engage with local fishermen, and enjoy a hands-on experience of traditional net fishing. You will also take a paddleboat trip in an unique Vietnamese bamboo basket boat to float down the waterways of this coconut palm paradise before returning to Hoi An at approximately 15.00.

Continue a walking tour of Hoi An, one of Southeast Asia's major international ports during the 17th – 19th centuries.

Located about 15 miles (25 km) southeast of Danang, the ancient town of Hoi An nestles on the banks of the Thu Bon River 3 miles (5 km) inland from the coast. This charming old town was once a flourishing port and meeting place of eastern and western cultures in central Dai Viet under the Nguyen lords.

Next you will travel by foot to visit the Old House of Tan Ky, Fukien Assembly Hall and the 400-year-old Japanese covered bridge. You can also visit a lantern workshop and learn how to make your own beautiful lantern under instruction of the workshop staff. Your guide will escort you back to your hotel where the remainder of the day is free at leisure.

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 6 - Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh City

Breakfast at your hotel.

Free at leisure until you are taken on 30-minute transfer to Danang airport for flight to Saigon.

Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhat airport, your guide awaits to accompany you to Cu Chi Tunnels. On arrival you will enjoy a short introductory film to demonstrate how the tunnels were built and gain a better understanding of the perseverance, intelligence and fortitude the Vietnamese people showed in their resistance against a much stronger power.

The Cu Chi Tunnels are an incredible network of hundreds of miles of narrow tunnels that were built during resistance to the French colonisation and utilised extensively during the Vietnam War. The (sometimes claustrophobic) tunnels give an amazing insight into life during the war. You will have the opportunity to explore the complex network, discovering underground storage rooms, make-shift hospitals and sleeping quarters used to evade enemy bombings.

Return transfer to Ho Chi Minh City by private air-conditioned vehicle.

Lunch and dinner are under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B

Day 7 - Ho Chi Minh City

Breakfast at your hotel.

At 08.30 your guide will collect you from your hotel and whisk you away to the first market by scooter. After stopping for a morning coffee, next you will enjoy a local-style breakfast before stretching your legs with a walk around the market.

Along your stroll you see how local people shop for their daily groceries, meats and other exotic items; an awakening for your senses. Your guide will introduce you to a variety of produce, selecting the tastiest treats to spoil your taste buds. Once through the first market, your path will take you onto another street where you will discover a variety of musical instruments for sale.

Hop on your scooter once more to take a drive to the efflorescent wholesale flower market. Locals flock here to buy bright and colorful flower arrangements for their retail shops, hotels and restaurants. Next, your guide will take you to visit a local stadium to enjoy a rock climbing activity. A fun activity for all the family, you will learn how to climb and conquer the climbing wall with peace of mind provided by the safety equipment.

After the rock climbing, your guide will then whisk you off to a local restaurant where you will enjoy a delicious local lunch before a half-day guided tour of Ho Chi Minh City (with an air-conditioned vehicle).

Your first stop in the afternoon will be at the Reunification Hall, one of the most historic landmarks in Ho Chi Minh City built on the site of the former Norodom Palace. Designed as the Presidential Palace during the Vietnam War, it was where the official handover of power took place during the Fall of Saigon in 1975. The building is preserved almost as it was under the old regime with elegant interiors decorated with fine Vietnamese arts and crafts. One of the many attractions within the building is the underground Command Post of the now-exiled president.

Make a brief photo stop at the Notre Dame Cathedral in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City. It has a neo-Romanesque façade and two bell towers tipped with iron spires that reach a height of 190 feet, dominating the skyline. Your next stop will be to visit the classic 19th century French Colonial Post Office. The largest post office in Vietnam, it is an important communications hub for most of the city's inhabitants. Inside, the building has huge vaulted ceilings with vast maps of Vietnam on both sides of the main hall.

Return to your hotel and balance of the day is at leisure.

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 8 - Ho Chi Minh City

After breakfast at your hotel, transfer two and a half hours by private vehicle to Vinh Long, then embark on a scenic cruise along the Mekong River.

Your tour then begins with a visit to the brick kilns where you can see how the local people create pottery from clay. Next, cruise to another stop at one of the local workshops where you can see how rice paper, coconut candy and popcorn are made.

Cruise to a local home for an unforgettable experience of catching fish the way locals do. Draining ditches to catch fish is a long-standing practice in several Mekong Delta provinces in Vietnam. First you will don your “bà ba;”, a traditional piece of clothing in the South. Then, under the guidance of locals, learn the local technique to catching fish. Then join a local family to cook lunch and learn some Vietnamese cookery techniques, before enjoying your authentic lunch.

After eating, take a walk around the local area and enjoy tasting a variety of freshly picked fruits while listening to traditional music, before the rowing boat takes you deeper into the countryside via smaller canals to see interesting traditional houses made of wood and palm tree leaves.

Get back into your boat and cruise back to the pier where your air-conditioned vehicle waits, for your return to Ho Chi Minh City in the afternoon.

Dinner is under your own arrangement.

Meal Plan: B,L

Day 9 - Depart Ho Chi Minh City

Breakfast at your hotel.

Free at leisure until your private transfer with your guide and driver to Tan Son Nhat airport for your onward flight.

Meal Plan: B