

BIKE & BOAT CYCLING CRUISES - VIETNAM

15-days / 14-night discover Ha Long Bay, Hội An, Hanoi, Saigon and the Mekong Delta



Vietnam is a vibrant and unique country full of splendid natural beauty and of ancient and modern history. It is a country of contrasts with bustling cities, fascinating towns and villages, places where time seems to have stood still. It is also growing in popularity as an interesting and exciting cycling destination.

On this tour we cycle between lush green rice paddies, past water buffalo, temples and pagodas. We explore the fascinating scenery of Ha Long Bay sailing aboard a traditional yet comfortable sailing junk. We explore by bike a place where the emerald-green waters of the South China Sea and the incredible cave formations are beautiful and overwhelming. In Central Vietnam we discover impressive monuments of Vietnamese emperors, the historic World Heritage listed town of Hội An and in South Vietnam the labyrinth that is the Mekong Delta.

2024 Departures: 10 March, 24 March, 20 October, 3 November, 17 November

Cost from, per person twin share: **\$5950** (March departures)
\$6320 (October, November departures)
\$2490 Single room supplement, may only be available in hotels

Includes: 14 nights' accommodation with 4 nights on comfortable junk/ship in spacious, air-conditioned double/twin cabins and 10 nights in selected 3 or 4-star hotels, domestic flights (as mentioned), meals as specified in the itinerary (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner), guided bicycle tours, walks and sea-kayaking tours with English speaking guides, all city tours and entrance charges to National Parks, museums as shown in the itinerary, bike hire (bike styles may vary depending on destination), airport transfers on the official arrival and departure days.

Not included: Travel to Hanoi and from Hồ Chi Minh City; Vietnamese visa; meals not listed in the itinerary, drinks on board and in hotels, gratuities, and personal expenses.

Angkor Wat extension: A 4-day, 3-night post-tour extension cycling in Siem Reap and Angkor Wat in Cambodia is available, please ask about cost and itinerary.



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Carved dragon heads decorate the prow of the junks in the Ha Long and Bai Tu Bay. Dragons belong to the circle of four sacred animals of Vietnam. Proudly they guide the traditional wooden boats through the islands and rocky cliffs and outcrops of the South China Sea. The spacious saloon with its upholstered wicker furniture and colourful carpets feels like a homely living room. For each meal the tables are lovingly set and the folded cloth napkins are a work of art. Hospitality is rated very highly in Vietnam and onboard our crew in their brilliant white uniforms greet you warmly with a welcome drink.

The junk offers up to 11 comfortable cabins furnished in Far Eastern style for that Asian atmosphere. Cabins have individually regulated air-conditioning and are located between decks, with doors opening to the outside. The large cabin windows guarantee good views at all times. Each cabin has its own tiled bathroom with shower and toilet. On the large sundeck there are comfortable deckchairs where you can relax while the boat cruises through a fascinating island world, with Vietnam's red flag with a yellow star fluttering above your head....



In the Mekong Delta we sail on one of the larger, modern but traditional styled ships in the region. Its shape is reminiscent of the travelling barques of southern Vietnam. This 27m long and 6.5m wide, wooden boat is protected by the watchful dark painted eyes of the dragon on the prow. The generously proportioned saloon is a comfortable place to relax; it is also the dining room with beautifully set tables serving local and regional cuisine. This comfortable ship has 10 wood-panelled cabins with one double bed or two single beds. Each cabin has a tiled bathroom with a shower and toilet. There is again a large sundeck with padded deckchairs - probably the best place to watch life along the river and the activities of the fishermen along the Mekong Delta.



Suggested itinerary – subject to change:

Day 1 Sunday Arrival in Hanoi

Arrive at Hanoi airport and transfer to your hotel in the heart of the old city centre. Hanoi appears provincial and traditional and the historical Old Town quarter is considered one of the best preserved in all of Southeast Asia. That night visit the famous water puppet theatre and enjoy dinner together. Overnight at the hotel. (D = Dinner)

Day 2 Monday Hanoi – Hoa Lu – Tam Coc

Cycling @ 32km

After breakfast a bus takes us to the rural province of Ninh Binh, where we begin our first cycling tour alongside vast tiers of vibrant green rice paddies. We cycle to Hoa Lu, the former capital of Vietnam. We have time to explore this fascinating historical site with its well-preserved relics of past dynasties, then continue on through spectacular landscapes dotted with traditional pagodas. We complete the day with a traditional rowboat trip on the Tam Coc River and a visit to a bird sanctuary. (BLD = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

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Day 3 Tuesday Tam Coc – Ha Long Bay

After breakfast we visit a Buddhist temple nestled in a dramatic rocky valley. Then our shuttle bus takes us to Ha Long Bay, where we enjoy a delicious lunch aboard our boat. We set off on our first boat trip through the impressive island world of Ha Long Bay with its spectacular limestone islands towering above the water. In the afternoon we visit one of the numerous caves formed over millennia. Set your creativity free – imagination provides life and shape to the stalagmites, stalactites and cavern walls. In the afternoon we have a guided kayak tour of a lagoon where we hope to see wild monkeys frolicking. We spend the night at anchor. (BLD)

Day 4 Wednesday Cát Bà Island – Việt Hải Village

Cycling @ 18km

We transfer via launch to Cát Bà Island. We cycle through the national park to a tribal village of the Việt Hải minority. Parking the bikes here, we have a guided walk through protected old-growth forest. The aim is to reach the highest peak of the island which, on a good day, offers breath-taking views of Ha Long Bay and the rest of Cát Bà Island. Upon our return to our junk, we cruise to Trinh Nu Cave (the 'Virgin Cave') where we learn more of the folklore and legends of Ha Long Bay. Overnight at anchor onboard the ship. (BLD)

Day 5 Thursday Ha Long Bay and Lan Ha Bay

Sea kayaking

After breakfast we farewell our junk and the friendly crew and transfer by boat to Lan Ha bay. Here we climb into kayaks and paddle to a magnificent beach where lunch awaits us. After our meal and perhaps a relaxing swim in the emerald green waters, we kayak from the beach to Cát Bà Island. Transfer to our resort hotel where we have time in the afternoon to unpack, relax at the pool side or at the beach. (BLD)

Day 6 Friday Cát Bà Island – Hải Phòng – Hội An

In the morning we visit the bustling, colourful Cát Bà market. Then we have free time to relax by the beach until our transfer to Hải Phòng airport for our late afternoon flight to Da Nang (on occasion this flight may be from Hanoi airport). Upon arrival in Da Nang we transfer to our Hội An hotel. (BLD)

Day 7 Saturday Hội An

Cycling @ 17km

Today we get a closer look into the lives of local farmers by cycling to Tra Que 'vegetable village' – a small village near Hội An, where our hosts will prepare a meal using traditional ingredients including the unique sweet and spicy vegetables grown in the area. The afternoon is free to relax or to explore the white beach of Cửa Đại. Dinner is at your own arrangements. (BL)

Day 8 Sunday Hội An

We have the full day to explore the sights and sounds of Hội An by foot. Its narrow streets, lantern-lit storefronts and fusion of various styles of traditional Asian architecture give it a charming feel. Hội An is well-known for textiles and tailoring; perhaps have a local tailor whip up a new outfit. You may also like to visit the Japanese Bridge and Quan Cong Temple. In the afternoon enjoy the palm-fringed pool at our resort hotel. Dinner at own arrangements this evening. (BL)

Day 9 Monday Hội An – Huế

Cycling @ 20-30km

We leave Hội An this morning and head towards Huế. We start off on our bikes and a transfer bus picks us up en route to take us over Cloud Pass, the weather line between North and South Vietnam. We stop for lunch and perhaps a swim at Lăng Cô Beach before we continue to Thuan An beach by bicycle or bus, your choice. The afternoon is yours at leisure before dinner in Huế. (BLD)

Day 10 Tuesday Huế

Cycling @ 16km

The entire day is devoted to exploring the old imperial city of Huế located between hills and rice fields at a bend of the Perfume River. The spiritual heart of Vietnam beats here in more than 300 temples and pagodas. We cycle past rice paddies, bamboo groves and temples to Thanh Thuy village, notable for its unique architecture including its tile-roofed bridge. We return by bike to Huế for lunch in a typical restaurant then tour the Imperial Citadel with the "Forbidden Purple City" (once exclusively reserved for the Nguyen royalty). The evening is free, with dinner at your own arrangements. (BL)



Day 11 Wednesday Huế – Hồ Chí Minh City – Mekong Delta

Cycling @ 20km

A morning transfer to Da Nang and flight to Hồ Chí Minh City, formerly Saigon, then a transfer to Ben Tre, where we join our ship and cruise along the Mekong in the direction of Cái Bè. In the afternoon we cycle along the various arms of the river to the scattered islands at the river mouth, with perhaps a chance to try some unusual tropical fruits and to see local handicrafts. At sunset we sail towards Cái Bè and spend the night at anchor. (BLD)

Day 12 Thursday Mekong Delta: Cái Bè – Islands of Vĩnh Long and Tra On

Cycling @ 30km

In the morning we cross to Vĩnh Long Island and under palm-tree shaded paths we cycle around the island. We rejoin the boat to Tra On Island where we have more time to explore. Later we can enjoy the excellent cuisine on board our boat and the wonderful atmosphere in the water labyrinth of the Mekong Delta at sunset. (BLD)

Day 13 Friday Cần Thơ - Hồ Chí Minh City

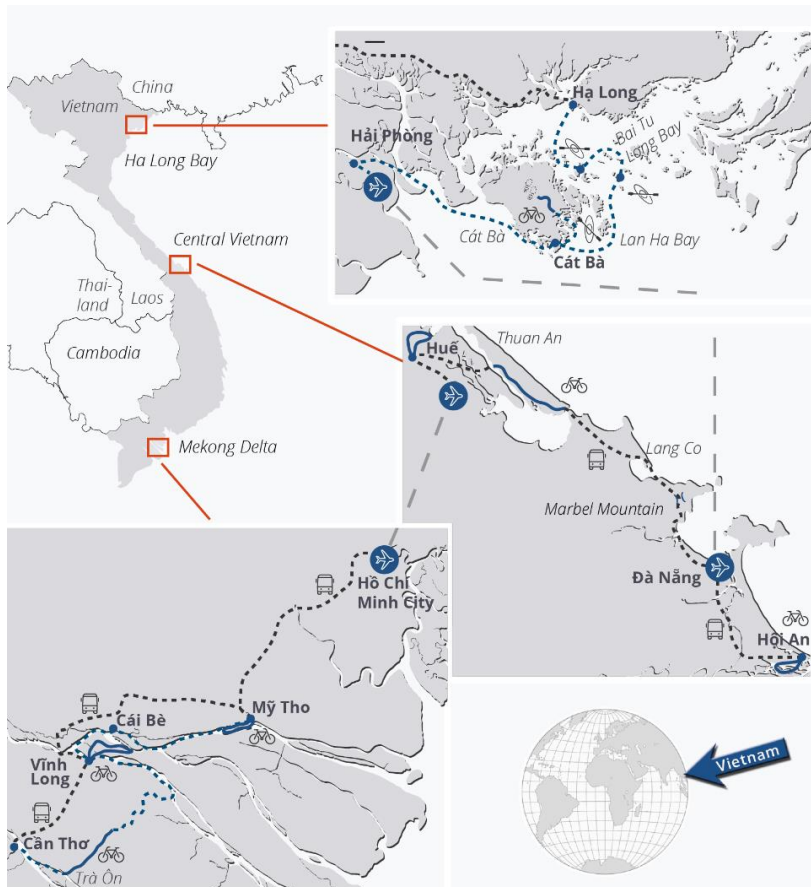
Whilst we breakfast, the boat cruises to Cần Thơ where we visit a floating market, followed by a tour of the colourful farmers' market. After an early lunch on board our ship we transfer back to Hồ Chí Minh City. (BL)

Day 14 Saturday Hồ Chí Minh City

Hồ Chí Minh City is the modern centre of Vietnam. We take a guided tour of the megacity, exploring the town hall, the Notre Dame cathedral and other historical sites. The afternoon offers a chance to join the madding crowd of the Bến Thành Market. Enjoy a farewell dinner and your last night stay. (BLD)

Day 15 Sunday Departure - Hồ Chí Minh City

After breakfast, transfer to Hồ Chí Minh City airport for your departure flight. Or ask about additional nights in Hồ Chí Minh City, or about the post-tour extension, cycling in Siem Reap and Angkor Wat in Cambodia. (B)



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- Call Toll free 1800 331 582 or (03) 57551743 or Fax (03) 57501020
- Email: info@outdoortravel.com.au
- Web: <http://www.outdoortravel.com.au>
- Mail: Outdoor Travel Pty Ltd, PO Box 286, Bright, VIC 3741, Australia