

**Day 1: Arrive into Hanoi**

We depart today for our flight to Hanoi. We will be met by our guide and transferred to the hotel.

**Day 2: Hanoi - Halong Bay**

Today we set off to the 'Jewel in the Crown of Vietnam'; Halong Bay. With two well-defined ecosystems and spectacular scenery formed over millions of years of geological activity, it is easy to see why Halong Bay was voted one of 'The New 7 Wonders of Nature' in 2011. Beauty aside, Halong Bay was also one of the cradles of the ancient Vietnamese peoples and the area maintains many cultural and historical values which are unique to this region. Arriving before lunch we will board our private boat and then set sail, cruising amongst thousands of extraordinary limestone karst formations.

After dinner, we can try our hand at catching some squid with the friendly crew or entertaining our friends with a spot of karaoke before retiring to our room onboard for the night.

**Day 3: Halong Bay - Eco Adventure – Hanoi**

This morning we watch the sun rise over the bay before we disembark and transfer back to Hanoi. Along the way we stop at a local village to partake in Vietnam Eco Adventure. Our time at this quaint little village will allow us to experience a farmer's traditional way of life as well as gaining insight into how this traditional community is responding to environmental change. Today we will explore the village on the back of a bike before getting our hands dirty and having a go at farming using methods utilized by northern farmers' for centuries. Our group will also have an opportunity to enjoy fishing and crabbing using traditional Vietnamese nets, boats and equipment.

After lunch we will have the unique opportunity to speak with former soldier Mr Vu. Born in 1948 Mr Vu was a part of the best division of 'Northern Liberation Force 308'; a group of smart and well trained soldiers who successfully fought and survived 3 of the biggest operations (1967, 1968 and 1972) during the war. A wonderful man Mr Vu holds some amazing primary insight into Vietnam's tumultuous past.

**Day 4: Hanoi City Tour – Fly to Hue**

Today we will venture out to explore Hanoi. First stop will be the Ho Chi Minh complex where we will spend time at Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum, his former stilt-house, the Presidential Palace, the Ho Chi Minh Museum and One Pillar Pagoda. Next we visit the Museum of Ethnology, one of the largest and most interesting museums in Vietnam it is dedicated to 'showcasing the lives, cultural activities, and identities of Vietnam's 54 ethnic communities.'

Following this we will visit the infamous Hoa Loa Prison Museum which is also known as the "Hanoi Hilton" and was where former US presidential candidate John McCain was incarcerated for over 5 years. Later this afternoon we enjoy an early dinner before we make our way to the airport for our short flight to Hue.

**Day 5: Hue City Tour**

After breakfast today we set off for the Ancient Imperial Citadel. Built as a walled fortress and palace, the citadel was, in the old days, closed to outsiders and posed many mysteries. In the innermost Forbidden Purple City lived the ancient kings and queens of Vietnam. Visiting the Imperial Citadel, you will be astonished by the impressive architecture and the luxurious lifestyle of its former residents.

Mid-morning we transfer to Thien Mu Pagoda, the oldest of its kind in the region and one that holds significant status in Hue's history and culture. From here we travel to visit the Ancient Royal tomb of Minh Mang.

Following lunch today we will enjoy a scenic boat trip along Hue's Perfume River. Dinner tonight will put an exclamation mark on an outstanding day.

#### **Day 6: Hue – My Son – Hoi An**

Today we make our way to My Son Sanctuary, one of the most famous Champa architectural and sculptural monuments in Vietnam. Later this afternoon we make our way to Hoi An, visiting Marble Mountain and My Khe Beach (nicknamed China Beach by American GIs during the war) along the way.

This evening we have the opportunity to explore the UNESCO World Heritage listed town of Hoi An.

#### **Day 7: Hoi An – Cooking Class – Saigon**

We commence our private cooking class at one of the most amazing locations in Hoi An. Included in the class is a brief introduction to Vietnamese food carving and plate decoration. After the lesson we will sit down and enjoy what we have just prepared for lunch.

After lunch we will spend a little more time exploring Hoi An before we transfer to the airport for our flight to Saigon.

#### **Day 8: Long Tan - Saigon**

Today we head off to Vung Tau and the former site of the 1st Australian Logistic Support (1ALSG) Group. Upon arrival we will enjoy a tour of this town including the former 1 ALSG base area, the War Memorial at Back Beach, the former Peter Badcoe Club site and the 'Flags' area. Early afternoon we make our way around the South China Sea coast to visit the former Minh Dam Secret Zone where we have the opportunity to meet a former Viet Cong officer.

Following our visit we travel to the former Phuoc Tuy Province an area of operations for the 1st Australian Task Force (1 ATF) via Ba Ria and visit the former Nui Dat Task Force Base followed by a visit to the Long Phuoc Tunnels. Our final stop of the day is at the Long Tan Cross memorial, which will include a Commemorative Service to pay tribute to the men who fought and died in Vietnam.

#### **Day 9: Race Around Saigon – K.O.T.O Restaurant**

Today we begin our sightseeing around Vietnam's largest and busiest city - but we do it 'Amazing Race' style. Teams will each be given a guide and will need to join forces in a team challenge of map reading, negotiating and interacting with locals and displaying creative communication skills whilst appreciating Saigon's attractive sights like the Presidential Palace, The Central Post Office, Notre Dame Cathedral, and Ben Thanh Markets. Today we will explore Saigon, its society, unique culture and famous landmarks whilst engaging with one another and the locals at the same time. The final check in point will be at a local Vietnamese restaurant for lunch where a unique trophy will be awarded to the winning team!

Later this afternoon we spend time at the War Remnants Museum where we will see countless artifacts, photographs and pictures documenting the tragic Vietnam War before making our way back to the hotel.

Dinner tonight will be at K.O.T.O restaurant. K.O.T.O, founded by Vietnamese Australian Jimmy Pham, is a non-profit organisation which is run by local children who Jimmy recruited from the streets.

#### **Day 10: Cu Chi Tunnels – Saigon River Cruise**

Today we will set off for the Cu Chi tunnel system; a complex maze once home to Communist guerrillas in their wars against the Japanese, French, Americans (and Australians). Before entering the tunnels, we will watch a short



introductory video (a great example of propaganda and one which History students could analyse particularly with respect to perspective, reliability and usefulness) and then explore Cu Chi. Also on display are various mantraps, the remains of an American tank as well as numerous bomb craters created by 500lb bombs dropped by B52 bombers.

Our farewell dinner this evening will be onboard a boat as we cruise along the Saigon River.

**Day 11: Saigon – Depart for home**

This morning we spend some time doing last minute shopping before we make our way to the airport for our journey home.

Meals included: Breakfast.

**Day 12: Arrive home**

We arrive home today.

