

TOGETHER WE TRAVEL!



solo

connections





Vibrant Vietnam
15 Days
Fully Escorted
20 November – 04 December 2024

ITINERARY HIGHLIGHTS:

- Saigon
- Mekong Delta
- Cu Chi Tunnels
- Hoi An
- Cooking Class
- Hue
- Imperial Citadel
- Hanoi
- Lan Ha Bay
- 2 Night Halong Bay Cruise

INCLUDES:

- Return **Economy Class International flights*** ex Brisbane/ Sydney/ Melbourne/ Adelaide/ Perth
- Domestic Economy Class flights within Vietnam
- **Private single rooms** in quality accommodation
- **Meals** as per itinerary - 13 Breakfasts, 1, Brunch, 7 Lunches, 7 Dinners
- **Sightseeing** tours and transfers by private vehicle
- **Tour Host** – Departs from Brisbane
- English speaking **Tour Leader**
- Tipping (Guide & Drivers)

EXCLUDES:

- Any meals other than mentioned above
- Items of a personal nature i.e. laundry, drinks, phone calls, etc
- Travel Insurance
- Visa

From \$6,930* per person

Terms and Conditions apply. Price is per person Sole Use and subject to availability. Price is correct as at 28 May 2024. Based on Economy Class Singapore Airlines airfare. Business Class upgrade available on request. Tour requires minimum number of passengers to depart. Prices may fluctuate if surcharges, fees, taxes or currencies change. Solo Connections is constantly striving to improve our itineraries and inclusions. If such improvements can be made, or unforeseen circumstances beyond our control make changes necessary, we reserve the right at any time to vary itineraries and to substitute inclusions of equal value. Beverages, additional meals, hotel mini bars, laundry, phone calls, any items of personal nature not included. Further booking conditions apply, please check all prices, availability and other information with your travel agent at time of or before booking. Package cancellation fees apply. Denise Marie Falsay trading as Solo Connections. ATAS Accredited A11424. ABN 92 582 582 996



Day 1 – Wednesday, 20 November 2024
Depart Brisbane – Arrive Saigon (via Singapore)

D

This morning meet with your Tour Host at Brisbane International Airport for our flight to Singapore and ongoing to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon). Interstate passenger will meet our tour host and their fellow passengers in Singapore.

Welcome to **Vietnam**. This country is full of contrasts. From huge modern cities to hill-tribe villages anything seems possible in this fascinating country.

When we arrive at Tan Son Nhat international airport, our local Tour Leader will be waiting and transfer us to our hotel for a light dinner before settling in for the night

Accommodation: Kim Do Hotel or similar (3 nights)

Day 2 – Thursday, 21 November 2024
Cu Chi Tunnels – Ho Chi Minh City

B-L

This morning after breakfast we visit **Cu Chi Tunnels**. Synonymous with the Vietnam War and a testament to the determined spirit of the Vietnamese, the underground network of passages at Cu Chi is a fascinating trip out of the city.

On the way back to Saigon, we will have a green immersion at a unique **organic farm** located in Cu Chi region. This is the perfect opportunity to learn about and taste healthy food - homemade of course. Located in the middle of the farm, enjoy fresh ingredients from the garden and products freshly bought at the nearby local market. We will see how oyster mushrooms are grown and then served delicately on your plate. We stay on here at the vegetable farm for lunch.

Once back in the city, we will visit the unforgettable **Jade Emperor Pagoda**. With the pungent smell of incense hanging heavy in the air and an interior packed full of ornate carvings and fierce-looking statues, this Taoist temple is one of the most atmospheric places of worship in the city.

Later, we will have a stop at **Reunification Palace**. Formerly named the Presidential Palace, this important city landmark was assured its place in history on 30th April 1975, when the first North Vietnamese tanks rumbled past, signalling the Fall of Saigon and ultimately the end of the Vietnam War. Across the street from the cathedral is the city's striking French colonial-era post office. The **Museum of Vietnamese History** is housed in yet another fine example of Sino-French architecture. Dating back to the 1920s, it contains an excellent series of exhibits dating from the Bronze Age to the Nguyen dynasty, the last ruling family of Vietnam.

The final stop today is **Ben Thanh market** for personal exploration and a spot of souvenir hunting.

Dinner is at leisure this evening.



Day 3 – Friday, 22 November 2024
Mekong Rural Life - Ho Chi Minh City

B-L

Setting off from Ho Chi Minh City today we are taken to the charming **delta town of Cai Be**, famous for its rustic floating communities. In Cai Be, travelling by boat, we float past a mass of rickety river vessels where water-bound locals spend much of their time between fishing and selling their wares on land. Though the floating market here is not nearly as busy as day's past, you might still spot locals tossing watermelons or pineapples between their boats!

Along the way we will visit **cottage workshops**, making pop rice and coconut candy, and stop at an old house to admire its beautiful architecture and well-preserved interiors. Continuing on we then **visit a family who weave intricate hyacinth products**.

Later, we take a **rowing sampan** to enjoy the charming Mekong scenery through a maze of narrow canals before enjoying a late lunch in a local house. For a special twist, **watch a demonstration** of how to make a favorite Vietnamese specialty - banh xeo, or a Vietnamese savory pancake before sitting down for a delicious lunch with local delicacies.

Your tour ends with a **gentle ride aboard the boat** back to Cai Be and your onward drive back to Ho Chi Minh City.

This evening will be at leisure.

Day 4 – Saturday, 23 November 2024
Ho Chi Minh City – Da Nang – Hoi An

B-D

This morning, after breakfast and check out, we will be transferred to Ho Chi Minh Airport for the short flight to **Da Nang**.

Once we arrive in Da Nang we'll be met by our local tour leader who will assist to our coach and the transfer to our hotel in Hoi An.

Upon arrival at our hotel, we will check in and have time to refresh before meeting for dinner.

Accommodation: Ahoy Hoi An Resort & Spa or similar (3 nights)

Day 5 – Sunday, 24 November 2024
Hoi An

B-L

This morning we learn the story of Hoi An, a former port that welcomed Chinese, Dutch, French, Japanese, Portuguese and Arab merchants between the 16th to 18th centuries.

Today it is renowned for its old quarter lined with two-storey Chinese shops that have elaborate carved wooden facades and terracotta tile roofs. And not forgetting expert tailor shops and delicious food! The tour also includes stops at several famous landmarks.



The first is **Chua Ong Pagoda**, dating back to 1653 and built in honor of the Chinese general Quan Cong, who is worshipped by many as a symbol of loyalty and justice. Next, we pop into **Phuc Kien Assembly Hall**, to see the Jinshang Temple which is dedicated to the goddess of the sea and the protector of sailors.

From there it's a short walk to **Tam Ky House**, a 200-year-old ancestral house and finally, stroll across the often photographed 17th century **covered bridge built** by Japanese craftsmen. The beautifully built bridge doubles as a temple and is a major landmark of Hoi An.

After a Vietnamese lunch, we'll take a **short boat trip** down the river and visit a craft village where local artisans make ceramics. We end the afternoon with a visit to the docks and see traditional fishing boats and the unusual round basket boats that ply the water.

Returning to the hotel we have this evening at leisure.

Day 6 – Monday, 25 December 2024 Hoi An

B-L

This morning, we will visit **My Son Holy Land** to discover the old Cham towers and shrines built 2000 years ago.

Take the chance to wander through crumbling towers and listen to the culture and history of might the **Champa Kingdom** once upon a time.

We will be back to Hoi An in time for lunch and then the rest of the afternoon is at leisure to explore the alleyways and wonderful shops in Hoi An.

Enjoy the evening at leisure.

Day 7 – Tuesday, 26 November 2024 Hoi An - Hue

B-D

This morning, after breakfast, we leave Hoi An and travel via the scenic **Hai Van pass**, (about 3.5 hours) to Hue.

Once we arrive in the capital of Mandarins, have lunch (*at your own expense*) and freshen up before we visit the **Imperial Citadel**. Built between 1804 and 1833, this heavily fortified structure is still very much the heart of modern-day Hue and despite a chequered history, the fortress remains superbly intact. There will be time for exploration before moving on to **Long An Palace**.

Later we take a boat ride along the **Perfume River** to the **Thien Mu Pagoda**. Consisting of seven stories, the pagoda is the tallest religious building in Vietnam.

Tonight dinner will be at a local restaurant with typical food from Hue.

Accommodation: EMM Hotel or similar (1 night)



Day 8 – Wednesday, 27 November 2024
Hue – Hanoi City Tour

B-D

This morning, we will be transferred to Hue airport for our flight to Hanoi.

On arrival in Hanoi we will be met by our local tour leader who will assist us to our coach. We'll drop our luggage at the hotel and then have lunch (*at your expense*).

This afternoon, we travel through **Hoan Kiem Lake**, also known as the 'Lake of the Restored Sword' after the legend that surrounds it, en-route to one of the city's many fascinating museums. We will enjoy an orientation of **Hanoi**, with its tree-lined streets resplendent with French colonial architecture, including the exquisite, recently restored Opera House.

Then, have explore the **Museum of Ethnology**, which give an overview of 54 ethnic groups in Vietnam. Here we learn about the fascinating cultural diversity of this ancient land.

Today we will also visit the **Temple of Literature**, a serene retreat from the busy streets outside. Built in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius, it became Vietnam's first university.

We finish our first day in the capital with dinner in a local restaurant.

Accommodation: Sunway Hotel or similar (2 nights)

Day 9 – Thursday, 28 November 2024
Hanoi Cooking Class with a Host Family

B-L

This morning, we go to nearby central Hanoi, to meet a lovely host and chef. Madam Quyen and her family will receive us in their familial property in a neighbourhood totally away from touristic spots.

Madam Quyen will meet us and take us to the **Thanh Tri Market**. With the chef, we visit the local market which is only operated in the morning. She will give an introduction about the local life, the food and daily life of locals. She will then will instruct us on how to choose the freshest food of the day and assist us to pick some more food before starting a short walk of 2 km to the local family home

Note: - for passengers who do not want to walk, there will be the option to be dropped at the host house directly and await the groups arrival.

Mid-morning we arrive and are given an introduction to the house, its architecture and tradition and get a brief overview of what to expect during our **private cooking class**.

We will enjoy the lunch we have prepared and of course, some delicious fruits and tea will be served for dessert.

Say goodbye to the host family in early afternoon and then we will be driven back to the hotel.

The remainder of the day and evening is at leisure.



Day 10 – Friday, 29 November 2024
Hanoi

B

After breakfast, we discover the old district in an old fashion way.

Taking a **cyclo** (rickshaw) ride through Hanoi's Old Quarter, we venture through a network of narrow alleys and shop houses also known as "The 36 Streets." This is a wonderful place to watch the local life and peruse items from fabrics to crafts to exotic medicines.

Finally, we will go to a secret eco-friendly coffee shop for a demonstration of the preparation of an iconic drink: Vietnamese egg coffee (with a twist).

The remainder of the day and evening is at leisure.

Day 11 – Saturday, 30 November 2024
Hanoi – Halong Bay & Lan Ha Bay

B-L-D

You might like to wake up early this morning and join an exciting scene of hundreds of locals as they do their morning exercises of **Tai Chi Quan**, jogging, martial arts, classical dance and so on, on the lake's edge.

After breakfast, we check out and travel to Halong to board the vessel which will be our home for the next two nights. Lunch will be served as we sail out through **Lan Ha Bay**. During the afternoon we'll stop and explore the **Dark and Bright Cave**, travelling by sampan.

Back on board enjoy happy hour as the sun sets, then a cooking demonstration before dinner is served. You might like to try your luck **squid fishing** over the back of the boat this evening!

Accommodation: Amanda Luxury Lan Ha Cruise or similar (2 nights)

Day 12 – Sunday, 01 December 2024
Halong Bay

B-L-D

You might like to start the day with some **Tai Chi** on the sundeck early this morning before breakfast is served.

Today enjoy the views of the bay as we cruise around. You might like **to cycle to Viet Hai Village** (5 km) a small rustic village in the midst of the jungle, surrounded by the high mountain ranges of Cat Ba National Park. For those who are not keen on cycling, travel by electric car can be arranged. Alternatively, grab your camera and a deck chair and enjoy the passing scenery.

After lunch onboard, we will stop in **Tai Quéo Cave** area for kayaking if you wish and on **Ba Trai Dao (Three Peaches) Beaches**.

Enjoy another happy hour and our final dinner together.



Day 13 – Monday, 02 December 2024
Halong Bay – Hanoi

B-BR-D

Tai Chi anyone? Or early light breakfast?

This morning our vessel makes a stop at **Tra Bau area** which is quite magnificent for kayaking, swimming.

We'll then check out of our cabins and enjoy brunch as we sail back into the pier. Our coach will be waiting for us and then will transfer us to Hanoi.

The remainder of our day is at leisure. In the evening, enjoy a farewell dinner together!

Accommodation: Sunway Hotel or similar (1 night)

Day 14 & 15– Tuesday, 03 December – Wednesday, 04 December 2024
Hanoi – Brisbane (via Singapore)

B (Day 14 only)

Your guide will meet you at your hotel and transfer you to the airport for your flight.

On arrival to Singapore, our Tour Host will continue on to Brisbane with those passengers also travelling on the same flight. We bid our interstate passengers farewell as they board their flights to their home destinations.

We all return home with newfound friends and wonderful memories of a vibrant country and its charismatic people.