

Vietnam: Hanoi, Hue, Hoi An & Saigon

Bike Vacation + Air Package

Stays in the capitals of the former North and South Vietnam frame this journey into modern Vietnam—and its centuries-old past. Generous included tours reveal a rich imperial history, while scenic cycling along the Perfume River and the Mekong Delta carries you into a lifestyle that marries the present with the traditions of old. You'll also meet warmly welcoming people as you browse a local market, embark on a delightful river cruise, visit local villages, and enjoy a cooking class. There's no better way to experience this bicycle-loving culture!

Cultural Highlights

Explore in Hanoi's bustling Old Quarter on a cyclo (rickshaw) ride
Visit One Pillar Pagoda, one of Vietnam's iconic temples, on a guided walking tour
Delight in uniquely Vietnamese entertainment: a water puppet show
Hear your footsteps echoing through the Imperial Citadel, a vast walled fortress, on a guided tour
Cycle past centuries of history, including Emperor Khai Dinh's tomb
Embark on a luncheon cruise on the Perfume River, with views of dragon boats, sampans and traditional houseboats
Experience a slice of daily life at a local village and market
Behold stunning views of pristine coast and towering mountains as you cycle one of the most spectacular stretches of landscape in the country
Cycle through a water-coconut palm forest and past fish farms and local artisans around Hoi An
Join a guided walking tour of Hoi An, a historic trading center
Fill your senses at Hoi An's central market accompanied by a chef and learn about Vietnamese cuisine
Tour the herb garden and enjoy hands-on cooking class at a local culinary school
Delve into the orchards and rice paddies of the agrarian heartland of Vietnam on a scenic roll along the Mekong Delta
Interact with a local Vietcong before entering the notorious Cu Chi tunnels

What to Expect

This tour offers easy terrain throughout the trip and is suitable for beginning cyclists and ideal for regular recreational cyclists. Roads are carefully selected but in general are not of the same standard as in Europe or the U.S. Road surfaces can be a mix of pavement and packed soil. Potholes are not uncommon, and defined lanes are not a given. A mix of vehicles, animals, and pop-up enterprises can be

found along urban roadways.

Tour Duration: 13 Days

Average Daily Mileage: 15 - 37

Average Cycling Time: 00:45 - 03:00

Climate Information

Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

Jan 66°/58°, Feb 67°/60°, Mar 72°/65°, Oct 82°/73°, Nov 76°/66°, Dec 71°/60°

Average Rainfall (in.)

Jan 0.7, Feb 1.1, Mar 1.5, Oct 3.9, Nov 1.7, Dec 0.8

DAY 1: Depart from home

Depart from home and travel to Vietnam. The particulars of your arrival are detailed with your flight itinerary.

DAY 2: Arrive in Hanoi

Upon arrival in Hanoi, claim your luggage and clear customs. Your VBT representative will be holding a VBT sign and will help you transfer to your Hanoi hotel. If you have any problem locating the representative, please go to the Information Counter in the Arrivals Hall and call our representative's hotline number, 0-913-237-040.

Please note: Unless you have been significantly delayed, your transfer has been pre-arranged by VBT and does not require direct payment. Please confirm with the driver that this transfer has been pre-paid. If the driver requests funds from you, this is not your scheduled transfer, and you should not take it. If you have been delayed by 12 hours or more, your transfer should still be pre-arranged, but you may be asked to pay. In this instance, please keep your receipt.

VBT provides you with City Information that includes recommendations on what to see and do during your stay.

Hotel: Melia Hanoi Hotel

DAY 3: VBT Bicycle Vacation begins / Hanoi / Orientation tour

VBT Air Package and Pre-extension guests: Your morning is free to do as you please.

At 2:00 p.m., all guests meet in the lobby, where you will meet your trip leaders for an eye-opening walk through the Old Quarter. The shops in the Old Quarter sell everything from therapeutic herbs and prayer flags to shoes and hardware, as you'll see.

The last stop is the Tang Long Theater, where you watch a mesmerizing water puppet performance. Then, return to your hotel to relax and rest before meeting with your VBT Trip Leaders, who provide a briefing of the week ahead. Enjoy a welcome reception and dine with the group at the hotel.

Hotel: Melia Hanoi Hotel

Meals: B (for Air Package guests only), D

DAY 4: Explore Hanoi / Cyclo ride

Sleep in today or join an early-morning walk to Hoan Kiem Lake to experience the city as it shakes off its slumber. You may see locals practicing tai chi by the lake, families out for a stroll and street vendors setting out their wares. Return to the hotel for breakfast.

Later this morning, rejoin your Trip Leaders for a guided excursion that includes visits to the exterior of Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, One Pillar Pagoda, and the Temple of Literature. Visit the oldest Buddhist temple in Hanoi, Tran Quoc Pagoda, located on an island east of the West Lake District. Face a sobering reminder of the impact of war and catch a glimpse into what life was like at the notorious Hanoi Hilton during a visit the site of the Hoa Lo Prison and the current-day museum occupying its former gatehouse.

Linger over lunch at a local restaurant before picking up the pace with a cyclo (rickshaw) ride through the French quarter. The ride ends at the hotel, where there is time for a rest or a swim.

Tonight, you'll dine at a local restaurant.

Hotel: Melia Hanoi Hotel

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5: Fly to Hue / Imperial Citadel and Forbidden Purple City / Warm-up ride

After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight to Hue. From 1802 to 1945, this was Vietnam's Imperial City; it boasts a vast citadel and the tombs of its emperors. On arrival in Hue, transfer to the Imperial Citadel, situated along the Perfume River. Your walking tour here takes you inside this walled fortress: within the citadel, just past Hien Nhan Gate, lie the Imperial City and the Forbidden Purple City. You'll enjoy a walking tour of this massive enclosure.

After you check into your Hue hotel, enjoy a lunch on your own, in the resort's fine restaurant or a light lunch by the pool. At 2:30 p.m., attend a safety and bike-fitting session with your Trip Leaders. Then, participate in a warm-up ride that includes a visit to the Mausoleum of Khai Dinh. At dinner, feast on local specialties in the hotel's dining room.

Please note: In order to operate this trip, VBT keeps two fleets of bikes in the country, one in central Vietnam and another in southern Vietnam. Your Trip Leaders will ensure that both bikes are tuned to your liking.

Hotel: Pilgrimage Village Hue

Meals: B, D

Daily Options: 12 miles (20.0 km)

DAY 6: Cycle country villages / Dragon Boat ride on the Perfume River

This morning, shuttle from the hotel to your ride's starting point, then cycle along the banks of the Perfume River, where you may see dragon boats, sampans and traditional houseboats with their rooftop shrines. You pedal on quiet country roads through villages to Thien Mu Pagoda.

Enjoy an included lunch while cruising along the Perfume River (30-45 minutes), then continue cycling southeast of the city, through rice fields and past duck and fish farms. In the village of Cau Ngoi Thanh Toan, look for a small covered bridge. Built over two centuries ago, it has weathered many storms, floods and wars, and it has been the soul of the Thanh Toan villagers for generations. While in the village, stop at the market for a truly authentic local experience.

You'll return by bike to the resort in plenty of time to enjoy a luxurious treatment, a swim in the spectacular pool, or a nap before dinner.

Tonight you get another view of the city's splendid past. Your dinner venue is a garden restaurant comprising five authentic 19th- and early-20th-century Hue houses.

Hotel: Pilgrimage Village Hue

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 13 or 24 miles (22.1 or 39.5 km)

DAY 7: Cycle coastal roads / Shuttle to Hoi An

The coastline between Hue and Hoi An is one of the most spectacular stretches of landscape in the country. It is here that the mountain range running through central Vietnam reaches down toward the South China Sea, affording stunning views of pristine coast on one side and towering mountains on the other. The Lang Co peninsula and the nearby Hai Van (Ocean Cloud) Pass form a natural border between the city of Da Nang and Thua Thien Hue province. If the weather allows, excellent views can be taken in from the top of the pass all the way to Hoi An.

Starting from the outskirts of Hue, pedal through local communities where you see small children being driven to school on the backs of motorbikes and older children cycling along next to you.

Pause for lunch in the village of Lang Co. Then, transfer up the Hai Van Pass (Pass of the Ocean Clouds), stopping at the top to take photos of the breathtaking views of both sides of the 1,600-foot mountain ridge. Those who like a challenge may choose to climb the pass by bike. Those who prefer more leisurely riding may cycle along Tam Giang Lagoon for a close-up look at the oyster fishing community and the water buffalo common to the area before shuttling to the top of Hai Van Pass.

You arrive in Hoi An by van and check into your hotel on Hoi An Beach. Dinner is at your resort this evening.

Hotel: Boutique Hoi An Resort

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 20 or 29 miles (33.0 or 47.2 km)

DAY 8: Cycle through rural Vietnam / Walking tour of Hoi An

This morning's cycling route crosses the Thu Bon River, passing many fishing boats and small houses. As you bike, stop to observe family temples and Areca-nut gardens. You continue cycling through a water-coconut palm forest and past fish farms, mat weavers and any number of examples of local livelihood. You'll stop at a shady and scenic point along the way to enjoy a picnic lunch.

There is a second ride option in the countryside after lunch, or you may shuttle back to the seaside resort for some well-deserved rest and relaxation.

Later, take part in a walking tour of Hoi An's Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. What makes Hoi An remarkable today is that its Old Town has been beautifully preserved, the streets still lined with old tile-roofed shop houses, shady pagodas and colorful communal halls. Discover the local market, Tan Ky House, Japanese Bridge and a Chinese temple.

Tonight, you are free to enjoy dinner on your own at one of the many open-air restaurants on Bach Dang, the waterfront road in Hoi An.

Hotel: Boutique Hoi An Resort

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 18 or 28 miles (30.7 or 46.7 km)

DAY 9: Hoi An / Red Bridge Cooking School

Board your bike and head into Hoi An, where you'll meet up with the chef at Hai Café for a brief introduction and a welcome drink. Then, meander through Hoi An's central market with your chef to enjoy the sights, sounds and aromas. This is your chance to learn how to select fresh produce and ingredients essential for Vietnamese cuisine. Embark on a 20-minute boat trip to the school. Get your camera ready, as the cruise offers glimpses of local river life. You visit the school's herb garden before enjoying a join-in, hands-on cooking class. Then, sit down and enjoy what you have created in the lovely restaurant overlooking the river.

Hotel: Boutique Hoi An Resort

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 6 miles (10.4 km)

DAY 10: Fly to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City) / Independent exploration

Enjoy breakfast and a leisurely start to the day at your resort. In the late morning, transfer to Da Nang and the airport for your flight to Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City). Upon arrival, transfer to the centrally located Hotel Majestic, a comfortable home base for exploring Vietnam's liveliest city. The rest of the day and evening are yours to explore at your leisure.

Hotel: Hotel Majestic

Meals: B

Daily Options: Non-Biking Day

DAY 11: Explore the Cu Chi tunnels / Cycle to Hoc Mon

After breakfast, shuttle (about one hour) north of Ho Chi Minh City to Cu Chi, the site of the infamous military tunnels. You arrive by bicycle and talk with a local Vietcong before visiting the passageways themselves. The Cu Chi tunnels are a 75-mile-long underground maze where the Vietcong quite literally dug themselves out of harm's way. You will also explore a rice-paper workshop before getting down and dirty in the tunnels.

After your visit, you continue to cycle to Ben Duoc for an included lunch, after which the van waits to shuttle you back to the hotel.

Try another of the city's wonderful restaurants on your own tonight. Hotel: Hotel Majestic

Hotel: Hotel Majestic

Meals: B, L

Daily Options: 18 miles (29.4 km)

DAY 12: Cycle the Mekong Delta

This morning, shuttle (about one hour) to the town of Tan An in the Mekong Delta area. Then, start cycling through the lush land, rich with orange, papaya, grapefruit, and mango trees. As you ride, note motorists resourcefully transporting pigs and coconuts on their mopeds. Your ride today ends when you stop for lunch in My Tho City.

In the afternoon, transfer back to Saigon (about two hours). This evening, visit the former home of a U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam and meet the current owners during a special farewell dinner.

Hotel: Hotel Majestic

Meals: B, L, D

Daily Options: 23 miles (37.9 km)

DAY 13: VBT Bicycle Vacation ends / Depart for home, or begin your optional Post-trip Extension to Cambodia

Enjoy a last breakfast overlooking the river this morning. Today is a free, unstructured day with time for last-minute shopping, a spa visit or more exploring (depending on the timing of your flights home). Your Trip Leaders are available to assist you with plans, and a hospitality room has been organized for those with later flights to have a place to wash and change.

VBT Air Package guests: Your day is at your leisure. Meet in the hotel lobby 3 hours prior to your flight departure (subject to change, depending on your required check-in time at the airport) for transfer (about 30 minutes) to the Ho Chi Minh City airport for your flight home. Flights may depart in the morning or late evening, and typically arrive in the U.S. the following day.

VBT Post-Trip Extension guests: Meet in the hotel lobby 3 hours prior to your flight departure (subject to change, depending on your required check-in time at the airport) for your transfer (about 30 minutes) to the Ho Chi Minh City airport. Upon arrival in Siem Reap, claim your luggage and clear customs. Then, meet your VBT representative, who will be holding a VBT sign. He or she will help you transfer (about 20 minutes) to your Siem Reap hotel. VBT provides you with City Information that includes recommendations on what to see and do during your stay.

Please note: VBT transfer times and departure points are finalized in advance and cannot be modified for individual guests. If you extend your stay beyond the scheduled program dates, return transportation to the airport will be at your own expense.

Hotel: Sofitel Phokeethra Royal Angkor Resort

Meals: B

Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

Boutique Hoi An Resort (Days: 7,8,9)

Boutique Hoi An Resort is ideally located on Hoi An Beach, just five minutes (3 miles / 4.8 km) by complimentary hotel shuttle from Hoi An town center. Guests may choose to unwind by the pool surrounded by tropical gardens, grab a beverage at the poolside bar, and enjoy the hotel spa and private beach. Each room offers views of the sea and a private balcony. Rooms are air conditioned, generous in size, and offer clean, contemporary furnishings. Free WiFi is offered in all guest rooms and public areas.

Melia Hanoi Hotel (Days: 2,3,4)

A 5-star hotel ideally situated in Hanoi's city center, Melia Hanoi Hotel is within walking distance of all of the city's major attractions. It features two restaurants, a swimming pool, and a fitness center. The lobby lounge is spacious yet cozy. Located on the ground floor, the Cava Lounge is the perfect place to relax with a cocktail. The hotel's El Patio Restaurant is a spacious modern dining area with a Mediterranean feel. And the elegant El Oriental Restaurant specializes in Vietnamese and Thai cuisine, with an emphasis on fine seafood. You can also pick up a deli snack or a pastry treat at the Melia Deli. Air conditioning and WiFi are available throughout.

Hotel Majestic (Days: 10,11,12)

Established in 1925 as Saigon's finest hotel, the Majestic has gone through several incarnations over the years. In World War II, the Japanese Imperial Army used this French Colonial structure as a military barracks, and it was frequented by foreign correspondents during the Vietnam War. Today, it remains a hotel of tradition, hospitality, and elegance. Hotel Majestic is located within walking distance of the beautiful Opera House, Reunification Palace, Notre Dame Cathedral, Ben Thanh Markets, and reflexology and other therapy boutiques, as well as most major commercial office buildings. Air conditioning and WiFi are available throughout.

Pilgrimage Village (Days: 5,6)

The Pilgrimage Village in Hue is a boutique resort constructed of natural materials and set amid a lush green forest of palms. Its thatched-roof villas evoke a historic jungle village in a tranquil setting. The Vedana spa offers various massages and other bodywork to relax your muscles. In its Junrei Restaurant—a large traditional house supported by indigenous laterite-clay columns—dine on artfully prepared fusion cuisine. The Candle Bar offers a quiet space to unwind with fellow travelers. Each guest room features two private terraces, air conditioning, satellite television, minibar, daily flowers, and a fruit basket. WiFi is available throughout.