

# Self-Guided Holiday in Vietnam

Trip Code: SGVN

Version: SGVN Self-Guided Holiday in Vietnam



CULTURE



SELF-GUIDED



LEISURELY



## HIGHLIGHTS

- Pedal through idyllic villages in the Mekong delta
- Explore the historic UNESCO World Heritage Listed cities of Hoi An & Hue
- Experience the Reunification Express linking north and south Vietnam
- Immerse yourself into the bustling capital city, Hanoi
- Relax on a 3 day, 2 night Halong Bay cruise

## AT A GLANCE

- 2 days self-guided cycle sightseeing
- 1 day guided tour and cycling in Ben Tre
- 5 days self-guided/independent sightseeing
- 3 day/2 night guided Halong Bay cruise
- Bike hire included for cycling days
- Daily departures available
- GPS Travel App
- Join at Ho Chi Minh City / End in Hanoi

## ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 11 Breakfasts
- 4 Lunches
- 2 Dinners
- 8 nights Hotel
- 2 nights Sleeper Train
- 2 nights Junk

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

# Introduction

Cupped around the south-eastern corner of the Asian continent, Vietnam is home to a veritable smorgasbord of stunning coastline, lush emerald peaks, buzzing cities, enticing flavours, and a fascinating melting pot of cultures and historical legacies. This two week self-guided holiday packs in the unmissable highlights that stretch along the notable length of the country; from the juxtaposition of traditions with modern internationalism in Saigon and the languid countryside of the Mekong delta, the imperial city of Hue and historic port town of Hoi An in central Vietnam, to the captivating capital city of Hanoi in the north and of course, the awe-inspiring natural wonder that is Halong Bay.

Travelling independently with the guidance of a self-guided app, you decide on the pace of your explorations on your holiday in Vietnam. With a carefully balanced itinerary combining guided experiences with self-guided discovery, you will benefit from valuable cultural insights with your local guide, and also have the flexibility to take your time and delve into the sights and history of the places visited with the freedom of your self-guided travel app.

Journeying from the south to the north of Vietnam on the Reunification Line that links the previously divided halves of the country, you can enjoy a slow pace of travel and experience authentic and incomparable interactions with friendly locals that you will meet along your shared journey.

Staying in a carefully curated selection of modern, boutique 3\* hotels, ideally located for your discovery of the highlights of Vietnam, you can be sure of a warm welcome each day. Some have pool and spa facilities for a cool off and relax after your day of exploration. You will also spend two nights on board a modern, comfortable junk boat for the must-do of any visit to Vietnam: cruising around Halong Bay.

## Is this holiday for you?

This holiday is perfect for you if you enjoy the freedom of travelling independently from a group, while having the ease of holiday logistics and arrangements taken care of for you. With your self-guided app, you will have a local guide in your pocket to help you along your way as you explore the sights, tastes and culture of Vietnam at your own pace. The sightseeing cycle rides on this holiday are of a leisurely nature and you are free to decide when to stop for photos and refreshment breaks. The distances cycled are

short to moderate on flat terrain, no more than around 28km in a day and typically on paved or concrete roads.

This holiday involves two overnight journeys on the sleeper train, with journey times averaging around 15 hours. You will be accommodated in simple, shared 4-berth cabins. While facilities on the train are basic, on these rail journeys you will have the opportunity to interact with local travellers, experience the culture of Vietnam and watch the changing scenery as you journey the length of the country.

You will also spend two nights on board a modern junk boat which will have other guests on board. You will have a private double/twin cabin with en-suite facilities. This is a great way to meet some fellow travellers from around the world and exchange tales of your adventures, rounding off your holiday on a high as you discover the spectacular Halong Bay.

# Itinerary

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## DAY 1

### Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City and settle in to your hotel.

Arriving to Ho Chi Minh City, also known by its old name of Saigon, you are met at the airport and transferred to your hotel in the heart of old Saigon. Now an upmarket and bustling part of the city, there are modern high rises and glitzy designer stores juxtaposed with captivating buildings of colonial French architecture. Settle in to your comfortable city hotel; perhaps you might like to stretch your legs with a stroll along the bank of the Saigon River, or orientate yourself to the nearby sights including the Opera House, the Notre Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office, the Ho Chi Minh City Museum, and the Reunification Palace. To gain an elevated view over the city, head to the 262m-high Bitexco Financial Tower where you can purchase a ticket to access the Saigon Skydeck observation deck.

This afternoon you will have a welcome meeting at 17:00 with your self-guided assistant, who can answer any questions you have about your days ahead in Ho Chi Minh City. This evening, you are free to take your pick from the abundance of roadside stalls and restaurants serving up Vietnamese classics. Follow your senses, excite your taste buds and immerse yourself into the flavours of the country. A good starting point is the Vietnamese classic pho bo - a delicious and fragrant bowl of rice noodles in a steaming beef broth.



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

## DAY 2

### Discover the Mekong delta with a guided tour around Ben Tre.

This morning, you will meet with your local guide and head to the Mekong delta, where you will explore the picturesque province of Ben Tre, also known as the "Green Venice" of Vietnam. The Mekong delta is one of the world's largest, encompassing an area of over 40,000 km<sup>2</sup>. The mighty river's numerous branches that empty into the South China Sea give the Mekong its Vietnamese name: Song Cuu Long (River of Nine Dragons).

Reaching Phong Nam, you will have the opportunity to visit a small factory where bricks are still made by hand, before boarding a boat for a cruise along the Chet Say river, one of the arms of the Mekong. The boat will make several stops along the way to discover different local workshops, allowing you an insight into the specialties of the local economy. Crossing a small canal, the boat will stop at a small village where you will visit a carpet-weaving workshop and even try your hand at this traditional method of weaving. Hopping on a bike, you can enjoy a leisurely ride to continue your exploration of the languid

village, pedalling past traditional farms producing abundant fruits and vegetables. If you prefer, as both options are included in your tour today, you could take a short tour on a xe loi (a kind of motorised rickshaw). Stopping at a local restaurant, you will enjoy a delicious lunch made of specialties of the Mekong region, such as elephant-ear fish (a type of gourami) and freshwater shrimp. Feeling sated, you will board a sampan (a flat-bottomed wooden boat) to leisurely explore the network of narrow canals and groves of water coconut, gliding silently on the water. In the afternoon, you will return to Ho Chi Minh City by car (approx. 2 hours) and enjoy a final evening in the lively city at your leisure.

Meals: **B L**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Distance**  
5KM

### DAY 3

## Explore the city at your own pace before boarding the overnight train on the Reunification Line, heading north to Danang.

Your day is free to further explore the city at your own pace before taking the night train to Danang this evening; you will find loaded into your self-guided app details of all the most significant historical sights in the city.

You also have the option today to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels. This is a full day excursion (the Cu Chi Tunnels are located around 2 hours from Ho Chi Minh City) and return transfers can be booked in advance through KE - contact our sales team for a quote. Originally dug by hand by the Viet Minh (Resistance Force) during the French-Indochina War of the late 1940s, this network of tunnels was expanded during the Vietnam War. This incredible feat of ingenuity included at its peak over 250km of underground tunnels, parts of which were several storeys deep, and included meeting rooms, living areas, field hospitals and kitchens. Beginning your tour with a video documentary of the tunnels and the Vietnam War, you will then be able to squeeze through the narrow underground passageways to have a glimpse into the tenacity of the Viet Cong guerrilla fighters living for prolonged periods of time in these difficult conditions. Please note the close nature of the tunnels makes this visit unsuitable for those with claustrophobia.

In the evening, you will be collected by your driver and transferred with your luggage to the train station, to catch the sleeper train heading north. The journey takes around 17 hours, arriving to Danang the following day around mid-day.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Sleeper Train

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**DAY 4**

## Arrive to Hoi An and enjoy a day at leisure, soaking in the atmosphere of this beguiling riverside town.

Waking this morning on the gently rocking train, sit back and enjoy the passing scenery as you trundle through ever-changing rural, urban and coastal landscapes. Travelling by train is a great way to experience the authentic side of a destination - you will get to see the "real" Vietnam. The interactions and experiences of sharing the journey with your fellow travellers could make for some of the most memorable moments of your holiday, perhaps with the exchanging of stories, photos and other unscripted moments!

Arriving to Danang Train Station, you will be met by your driver and transferred to your hotel in Hoi An (45 minutes). The rest of the day is free for you to enjoy as you wish; you may like to relax by the hotel pool or perhaps head out on foot to explore the charming town of Hoi An. To understand more about the UNESCO-listed town and its history, you can purchase the Hoi An Old Town Ticket that gives you access to the protected ancient town and its distinctive old Vietnamese houses, communal houses, Chinese assembly halls and the beautiful Japanese covered bridge. Within your self-guided app you will find details of all the most significant places along with their historical information.



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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**DAY 5**

## Embark on your self-guided cycle tour into the picturesque countryside around Hoi An.

Your bicycle will be delivered to your hotel this morning, ready for your self-guided cycling excursion into the scenic countryside around Hoi An. Take your time and enjoy the leisurely ride today; venturing afield into the lesser-trodden surrounds on two wheels, you can experience an insight into rural Vietnamese life that is not afforded to those that stay within the main tourist hub. Pedalling initially through the old town, you will soon pass through impressive rice fields, rarely-visited villages, and see fishermen working on the river along with their colourful boats and large fishing nets. Your self-guided app includes recommendations for coffee stops along the way - a perfect opportunity to enjoy the sugary buzz of a cafe sua da, the traditional Vietnamese iced coffee drink of strong drip coffee combined with condensed milk.

Returning to Hoi An, you will have the rest of the day free to soak in the peaceful atmosphere of this ancient port town as you wish.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Distance**  
28KM

**DAY 6****Relax with a morning at leisure before transferring to Hue, driving over the spectacular Hai Van Pass.**

Enjoy a relaxed morning and a final stroll around the atmospheric streetscapes of old Hoi An. You will be picked up by your driver in the early afternoon for your private transfer to the UNESCO World Heritage city of Hue, a journey of around 3 hours. The scenic drive will cross the spectacular Hai Van Pass, offering up stunning panoramic views and majestic vistas of the bay. Arriving to the city positioned on the romantic-sounding Perfume River, check in to your hotel and settle in; the rest of the day is free for you to enjoy at your leisure. You might like to stretch your legs and discover the atmospheric ramparts of the Citadel, positioned on the north bank of the river - most of Hue's historical sights are located within the Citadel's 2m-thick, 10km-long walls. There are a number of restaurants, cafes and stalls in and around the Citadel for you to tuck into your choice of dinner tonight. Perhaps you'd like to sample a specialty of central Vietnam called bun bo hue, a dish of rice noodle soup packed with fiery spices and fragrant herbs.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

**DAY 7****Set out on your self-guided cycle tour around Hue and explore the UNESCO citadel city.**

This morning your bicycle will be delivered to your hotel for your self-guided cycling tour of Hue and its surrounds. Leaving behind the city centre, your cycle journey will first take you through the ubiquitous rice fields of rural Vietnam to reach the village of Thanh Toan, where you can admire the covered Japanese Bridge constructed in 1776. From here, your ride continues along a peaceful canal lined with impressive family temples and large fishing nets, before arriving to the idyllic Chuon lagoon. Pedalling along the edge of this peaceful spot, you will find picturesque scenes of small fishing villages, endless fishing nets, and colourful graveyards paying homage to ancestors passed. Also dotted along the shores and canals are markets where the freshly-caught fish and local produce are sold - a perfect little snippet of authentic everyday life. Your return to the Imperial city follows scenic canals accompanied by far reaching views.

The rest of the day is yours to enjoy as you desire; you will still have use of your bike before it is collected from the hotel at 18:00 so you may wish to explore some of the additional sights as detailed in your self-guided app, including the numerous tombs of former emperors that can be found around the city.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel



**Distance**  
24KM

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**DAY 8****Enjoy a final morning in Hue before boarding the night train to Hanoi.**

If you have not done so already, a walk around the Imperial Enclosure of the Citadel is well worth doing. This citadel-within-a-citadel is comprised of several sections, including a collection of palaces, temples and residences of the Nguyen royal dynasty of the early 19th century. You will find in your self-guided app details of the most important places within the site to help you uncover its history. It is a tranquil place to spend the morning, drinking in the incredible monuments and beautiful architecture, the pleasingly geometrical courtyards, pockets of shady groves and ponds teeming with golden koi carp.

In the early afternoon, you will be transferred to Hue station to catch the overnight train to Hanoi; departing Hue in the mid-afternoon and arriving to the bustling city of Hanoi bright and early in the morning after a journey of around 14 hours. This is your final journey on the Reunification Express linking towns and cities along the spine of Vietnam. Sit back and enjoy the changing scenery as you journey on this historic railway line, a symbol of Vietnamese unity.

Meals: **B**



**Accommodation**  
Sleeper Train

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**DAY 9****Arrive to Hanoi and explore its famous old quarter on a self-guided walking tour.**

Arriving to the capital city of Vietnam early in the morning, your driver will be waiting to meet you at the train station to transfer you to your hotel in the centrally-located Hoan Kiem district. The famous lake that gives the district its name is a peaceful oasis in the midst of the city's buzzing commercial hub, and early in the morning you will find local residents practicing tai chi on its tranquil shore. Your hotel room will be available for you on arrival, you can catch some quick winks before refuelling on breakfast at the hotel and embarking on your self-guided walking tour of the city today.

Following the route in your self-guided app, you will wander through the maze of different markets, hidden pagodas and small alleys, discovering iconic colonial buildings such as the St Joseph Cathedral and the Hanoi Opera House. The self-guided app also recommends several restaurants where you can sample some local specialties for lunch, for example bun cha, a delicious dish of grilled pork and noodles, heaped with fresh herbs and green vegetables. Yum! Feeling sated, you can continue your self-guided walking tour, with many more sights to discover such as the Temple of Literature, the beautiful Tran Quoc pagoda near West Lake, or the lesser-known Women's Museum. In the evening, you might like to follow the street food tour in your app to take your taste buds on a journey, through some of the signature dishes of Hanoi such as banh cuon (steamed filled rice rolls), bun bo nam bo (stir fried beef noodles), banh mi (Vietnamese sandwich, a legacy of French and Chinese colonialism), and bia hoi (fresh brewed beer). Go with an open mind and an empty stomach, and be prepared to eat like a king!

Meals: **B**





**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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## DAY 10

### **Transfer to the coast and board your junk boat for your three day, two night cruise around the spectacular limestone pinnacles of Halong Bay.**

Your driver will pick you up from your hotel this morning to transfer you to the coast (3 hours), where you will board your comfortable modern junk boat. This will be your floating home for the next two nights as you cruise around the spectacular natural formations of Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Welcomed aboard by your friendly crew and your English-speaking guide, you can settle into your beautiful private cabin and explore your surroundings, meeting your fellow guests and discovering the sun deck with its 360-degree views, comfortable lounge areas, and on board restaurant where you will be served delicious meals including plenty of seafood, freshly caught right from the bay. Perhaps you might even like to pamper yourself with a spa treatment on board!

This world-famous natural wonder consists of some 3000 limestone islands and islets, most of which are uninhabited. The stunning seascapes of jagged green limestone pillars jutting out from the emerald sea inspired legends of giant dragons that shaped the earth. Over the next couple of days you will have a perfectly balanced program of off-junk excursions and free time to enjoy swimming, kayaking or simply sunbathing and relaxing on board.

Please note the order of activities is not fixed and can be subject to change.

Meals: **B L D**

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**Accommodation**  
Junk

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## DAY 11

### **Awaken your senses with morning tai chi, discover more of the bay with a full day excursion, and enjoy a traditional cooking class in the evening.**

Your day will be filled with activities and excursions to really immerse you into this stunning landscape. Starting the morning with an early tai chi session on the sun deck, you will feel energized and full of beans for the exciting day of sightseeing ahead. Depending on weather conditions, your day's excursion off the junk will typically include exploration on a smaller day-boat around the smaller islands and islets, discovering hidden beaches, isolated villages, and surprising caves and grottoes with fascinating rock formations. You will also have free time to enjoy swimming, snorkelling or kayaking, before freshening up for dinner and perhaps joining a traditional cooking class with the chef on board.

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Meals: **B L D**



**Accommodation**  
Junk

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### DAY 12

## Enjoy a stunning sunrise over the bay and bask in the last hours of your leisurely cruise before disembarking and transferring back to Hanoi.

You might like to wake early to catch an unforgettable sunrise over the bay from the comfort of your cabin or from the sundeck. Enjoy a leisurely morning and drink in your peaceful surroundings as the junk makes its way languidly through the bay, back to the port where you will disembark and say goodbye to new friends made on board and to your delightful crew. You will be picked up by your driver and transferred back to your hotel in Hanoi; the rest of the day will be at your leisure, perhaps this would be a good opportunity to gather some souvenirs of your time in Vietnam!

Meals: **B L**



**Accommodation**  
Hotel

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### DAY 13

## Depart from Hanoi.

Enjoy a leisurely breakfast. Depending on your time of departure, you might like to have a final wander around the old quarter before picking up a taxi to the airport for your onward flight. Your hotel can assist with arranging a taxi, or you can also pre-book a taxi through KE if you prefer, just ask our sales team for a quote. We can also assist with arranging additional nights in Hanoi if you'd like to stay a little longer in this atmospheric city.

Meals: **B**

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# Holiday Information

## What's Included

- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Self-guided travel app
- Bike hire for self-guided cycling tours as described
- Airport transfer on arrival
- Guided tour of Ben Tre in the Mekong delta
- Transfer from Ho Chi Minh City to Hoi An with overnight train
- Transfer from Hoi An to Hue
- Transfer from Hue to Hanoi with overnight train
- Guided two night Halong Bay cruise including transfers from Hanoi

## What's not Included

- Travel insurance
- Travel to Ho Chi Minh City
- Travel from Hanoi
- Visas (if applicable)
- Some meals as described in the Meal Plan
- Personal equipment
- Entrance tickets
- Any additional activities/excursions indicated as optional

## GPS Travel App

This holiday is led by a self-guided travel app, which contains the personalised details of your complete holiday itinerary. This includes the GPS-led routes for you to follow on your self-guided cycling and walking tours, as well as attractions, coffee stops and points of interest in the towns and cities along the way. The app does not need to have Wi-Fi connection to work, you simply follow the instructions we provide you to download the app to your phone before you leave home and you are ready to go.

Alongside the self-guided app, you will also have support from our local self-guided assistants with a welcome briefing on arrival in Ho Chi Minh City, where you will be provided with a local SIM card. Our local partners can easily be reached by phone, text or on WhatsApp at any point during your holiday and they will be happy to assist you.

Each mobile comes with a different expected battery life so we suggest you pack a spare battery pack with you just in case you require it.

## Self-Guided Families

Our Self-Guided Holidays are perfect for your next family holiday and are suitable for children of all ages.

Our partner hotels and accommodations are able to provide cots for young children, and some offer family rooms. We can also arrange hire of children's bikes and tag along bikes for our self-guided cycling trips and with trips such as Lake Constance and the Danube offering routes on designated cycle paths you can rest assured in keeping your family safe.

As a parent we trust that you know your own child's capabilities, please read the itinerary details to ensure the distances covered each day are suitable for your family. If this is a first time walking holiday for your family, a centre based trip is a fantastic option as it allows you to easily opt out of a days walking if a day of building sand castles, swimming in the pool or visiting museums is calling.

Please discuss this further with our sales team who will be happy to assist in picking the best trip for your family.

## Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The trip starts in Ho Chi Minh City and ends in Hanoi. All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you.

The nearest airport for this trip is Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) International Airport with many departures from regional UK airports.

For this trip we have included a pick up transfer from Ho Chi Minh Tan Son Nhat International Airport to take you to your hotel in Ho Chi Minh City on Day 1 of the itinerary. A driver will be waiting to meet you upon exiting Ho Chi Minh International Airport. Please ensure you inform our customer sales and support team as early as possible of your flight time so that we can arrange your transfer for you.

The holiday ends in Hanoi city on Day 13. Taxis are readily available to Hanoi Noi Bai International Airport; your hotel in Hanoi can assist with this. A private transfer can also be pre-booked through KE at additional cost. Please contact our sales team for a quote.

## Meal Plan

At hotels, your stay is arranged on a bed & breakfast basis to offer you the most flexibility in the towns and cities where there are a wealth of options available.

Meals are not included on the sleeper train; Vietnamese options are available to order on board, or you might like to buy some food and drink from the various hawkers on the station platforms. You can also bring food on board if you prefer. The train has hot and cold water dispensers on board. When you arrive to Hanoi early in the morning of Day 9, early check in is included for you to have direct access to your hotel room on arrival, and breakfast is also available at the hotel this morning.

All meals are included when you are cruising Halong Bay on board the Calypso Cruise, from lunch on the day of boarding (Day 10), to brunch on the day of disembarkation (Day 12).

## Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. You should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a [Water-To-Go bottle](#)) to treat your water. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

Vietnamese cuisine is a delightful and diverse gastronomic experience with varied regional specialties, rooted in local geography, history and cultural influences, but with a common theme of fresh herbs, fragrant flavours that dance on the tongue, seafood (unsurprisingly, with its long coastline) and plenty of noodles.

In the southern region, produce is abundant with heaps of fresh fish, lush herbs, and ripe and juicy sweet fruit. In addition to the fresh and light noodle broths, you can find creamy coconut curries and refreshing salads with local fruit such as papaya and pomelo.

Specialties of central Vietnam include banh beo, delicate steamed cakes made from rice and tapioca flour, with savoury toppings such as shrimp, pork, or mushrooms; and com hen, a rice dish with tiny clams or river mussels, peanuts, pork rind, shrimp paste, sesame seeds, all delightfully married by a shellfish broth and the ever-present herbs and fresh vegetables. You will also find baguettes a familiar sight in central Vietnam - a remnant of French colonialism.

In the north, the cuisine bears influence from its Chinese neighbour, with soy sauce, vinegar and black pepper used more commonly than in other parts of the country.

## Special Diets

Whilst we can cater for vegetarians, albeit sometimes with a more limited choice, we cannot always provide special diets. Due to the nature of some of the trips that we operate and the countries in which we operate them, it can be very hard (and sometimes impossible) to cater for a wide range of dietary choices and you may have to supplement your diet with food/snacks from home. If you have specific dietary requirements please do speak to our sales team and they will be able to advise you whether or not we will be able to offer your specific choice. Please note that we are unable to provide separate menus and cannot accept liability for any problems arising from special dietary requirements or intolerances.

## Accommodation

For this holiday we have hand-picked a lovely selection of 3\* modern, boutique hotels in Ho Chi Minh City, Hoi An, Hue and Hanoi; carefully chosen for their great locations and wonderful hospitality. All hotels offer twin/double rooms with air conditioning and are stylishly decorated, offering a comfortable home away from home each night. Hotels offer a wide range of options at breakfast, including Vietnamese and Asian dishes alongside international options; the buffet spread includes bread, pastry, eggs and fruit, with plenty of tea, coffee and juices available. All hotels have Wi-Fi connectivity and some offer spa and pool facilities, ideal for a cool down and relax after your day of exploration.

Your holiday includes travelling on the overnight sleeper train from Ho Chi Minh City to Danang (Day 3), and from Hue to Hanoi (Day 8). Travelling on the sleeper train is certainly a part of the experience and provides an inimitable taste of Vietnam. These two journeys on the Reunification Line will be in "soft-sleeper" air conditioned, 4-berth sharing cabins. Each berth has a reading light and is supplied with a pillow, sheet and duvet. You keep all your luggage with you; luggage space is available for each cabin. The air conditioning can be effective, so it would be a good idea to have a warm layer and extra socks to hand on these journeys. There are basic shared washroom facilities at the end of each carriage, with both squat toilets and sit down toilets. Private cabins can be arranged at a supplementary cost, subject to availability. Please contact our sales team for a quote.

You will also spend 2 nights in Halong Bay on board a modern junk boat with typically 20 double/twin cabins. You will have a private cabin, with en-suite bathroom, air conditioning, and large windows for you to enjoy the tranquil scenery. The boat is staffed by friendly crew and an English-speaking guide, and includes sightseeing excursions from the junk, snorkelling, kayaking, and a wonderful sundeck where you can enjoy some morning tai chi, or simply lie back and drink in the stunning 360 degree vistas of the world-famous bay.

## Bike Hire

Bike hire is included for the days that you will be exploring on two wheels.

On your guided tour of Ben Tre in the Mekong Delta, a city bike and a helmet is provided for the very easy and short cycling tour around the village.

For your self-guided cycle tours around Hoi An and Hue, you will have use of a mountain bike and helmet, which will be delivered to your hotel in the morning and collected in the early evening. The mountain bikes have flat pedals, front suspension forks and disc brakes. A puncture repair kit and pump is supplied with the bikes. We would recommend you bring a handlebar mount that is compatible with your smartphone; and a day pack to carry your essential items with you.

We recommend that you should take your own EN1078 compliant cycling helmet, as the locally available helmets do not necessarily meet this standard.

## **Baggage Allowance**

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a day pack for your daily essentials. Keeping your luggage limited to one piece in a soft, lockable bag such as a duffle bag would be most practical when travelling by train. You may also like a second fold away bag for your two night Halong Bay cruise, while leaving your main luggage at your hotel in Hanoi for safekeeping.

For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

# General Information

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## Passport & Visas

The information that we provide is for UK passport holders. A passport with 6 months remaining validity at the end of your stay is generally required, and you should have at least 2 blank pages for each country that you visit.

**It is your responsibility to ensure that you have the correct travel documents and visas for your holiday.** Please ensure that you check for the latest advice before travel. For the most up to date information on entry requirements, please visit the [UK Government website](#).

## Visa Vietnam

British Citizen passport holders do not need a visa for durations of stay up to and including 45 days for tourism and transit.

For information about multiple entry visas, longer stays or different nationalities please contact the relevant embassy. The Vietnamese Embassy in the UK is in London.



## Health & Vaccinations

Dengue fever is a known risk in places visited. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you [take precautions to avoid mosquito bites](#).

Zika virus has been confirmed as active in this country. It is a tropical viral disease spread by daytime biting mosquitoes. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites. The mosquitoes that transmit ZIKV are unlikely to be found above 2,000m altitude. For more information, visit the website of the National Travel Network and Centre (NaTHNaC) at <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk>

## Severe Allergies

Please inform our KE Sales and support team of any severe allergies you may have before travel. We will always do our best to help but we are unable to guarantee an allergy free environment on our KE trips. We advise that you always carry your own treatment for the allergy with you such as 'adrenaline auto-injectors' if required. We also recommend that you discuss this with your accommodation on arrival so that they can better assist you.

## VACCINATIONS

You should contact your doctor or travel clinic to check whether you specific require any vaccinations or other preventive measures. You should be up to date with routine courses and boosters as recommended in the UK e.g. diphtheria-tetanus-polio and measles-mumps-rubella), along with hepatitis A and typhoid. There is a very low risk of malaria, and you should contact your doctor to confirm if Malarial prophylaxis are required. A certificate of yellow fever vaccination is required if travelling from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission and for travellers having transited for more than 12 hrs through an airport of a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. On holidays to more remote areas you should also have a dentist check up. A good online resource is [Travel Health Pro](#).

## Currency

The unit of currency in Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong.

## Preparing for your Holiday

The advantage of a self-guided holiday is that you decide the pace, however getting some additional exercise before coming on an active holiday would be a good idea. The sightseeing cycle rides on this holiday are of a leisurely nature and you are free to decide when to stop for photos and refreshment breaks. The distances cycled are short to moderate on flat terrain, no more than around 28km in a day and typically on paved or concrete roads. We would recommend you dust off your bike and head off on a few rides before your holiday.

## Climate

Vietnam has a tropical climate with two distinct monsoon seasons. From May to September the country is dominated by the south monsoon winds and from October to April, the north monsoon is dominant with northerly to northeasterly winds affecting the country. There is a transition period between each monsoon season when winds are light and variable. Vietnam's single rainy season occurs during the south monsoon with June, July and August the wettest months. At this time daytime temperatures are typically in the range of 25 - 30 degrees Celsius. During the north monsoon, northern Vietnam has cloudy days with occasional light rain, while southern Vietnam tends to be dry and sunny. Temperatures during this period are in the range of 25 - 30 degrees Celsius in the south and 15 - 20 degrees Celsius in the north with the occasional chilly night. During September to January coastal areas can be affected by typhoons in the South China Sea bringing short-lived tropical storms.

## Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's '[Travel Aware](#)' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at [travelaware.campaign.gov.uk](http://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk) and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov) for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

## Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

## Books

The Tunnels of Cu Chi - Tom Mangold and John Penycate

A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain - Robert Olen Butler

## Travel Insurance

It is an essential condition of joining a holiday with KE Adventure Travel that you have a valid travel insurance policy to cover the cost of medical treatment and to protect the value of your holiday in the event of cancellation. When taking out insurance please ensure the policy you choose covers you for the activities and altitude included in your itinerary.

For appropriate insurance cover we recommend Campbell Irvine Direct. Please go to our [Travel Insurance](#) page for further information and to get a quote.

Please note that a paper copy of your travel insurance is required if you are travelling to Huaraz and the Huayhuash region.

# Equipment Information

## Equipment List

- Comfortable walking shoes
- Cycling shorts
- Cycle helmet - helmets are provided locally but you may wish to bring your own for the best comfort
- Functional base layer
- T-shirts
- Lightweight travel trousers/shorts
- Scarf / neck buff
- Hat
- Windproof jacket
- Fleece / extra layer
- Rain protection

- Rucksack (approx. 20 l)
- Small first aid kit for your rucksack
- Sunscreen
- Water bottle or hydration pack (we encourage re-filling water bottles rather than single use plastic)
- Camera (batteries/memory card)
- Mobile Phone (unlocked to accept an additional SIM card)
- Handlebar mount that is compatible with your smartphone
- Power bank
- Sun glasses
- Personal wash kit
- Reusable cloth bag for shopping to avoid the use of plastic bags
- Tupperware for picnics
- Ear plugs
- Swimsuit
- Small travel towel
- Sandals
- Insect repellent
- Hand sanitiser
- Toilet paper (for the train journeys)

## Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.

[>> Find out more](#)

## Land Only Information

Please note our 'from price' listed is based on 4 persons in double or twin occupancy, however we can quote for any number of travellers, including solo travellers, contact our sales team for a quote.

All of our self-guided holidays are sold on a Land Only basis allowing you the flexibility to choose the travel method which best suits you. You may even wish to make this holiday part of a bigger adventure or pair it with one of our other holidays. We can arrange additional nights accommodation before or after your self-guided trip, ask our sales team to find out more about this.

Our sales team will also be happy to provide you a quote for scheduled flights from your nearest regional airport (where possible). Flight prices are subject to change depending on availability and seasonality. Flight prices will only be confirmed to you when all services have been arranged and confirmed for your requested dates.

Please DO NOT book your flights before you have received your booking confirmation and your deposit has been taken.

# Why Choose KE

## Why KE

This self-guided holiday ticks off the unmissable highlights of north, central and south Vietnam with a blend of independent self-guided exploration and guided experiences for an added cultural insight. Travelling the length of the country on the Reunification Line, you will be able to partake in a more sustainable approach to travel while experiencing an inimitable taste of Vietnam.

**Please Note** This document was downloaded on 16/06/2024 and the trip is subject to change