

Southern Highlights of Vietnam

12-day itinerary covering the best of Southern Vietnam, including Saigon, Da Lat and the Mekong Delta.



Day 1 – Arrive Ho Chi Minh City

You'll be met on arrival in **Ho Chi Minh City** and transferred to your hotel in the city centre. The rest of the day is at leisure.

Day 2 – Ho Chi Minh City tour; Cu Chi Tunnels

This morning visit the **Cu Chi Tunnels**, situated just outside of Ho Chi Minh City. A labyrinthine network of passages and hideouts, the tunnels are a testament to the ingenuity of the guerrilla fighters who built and lived in them during the Vietnam War. You can enter some of the tunnels (mercifully, they have been widened to make the experience a bit more comfortable!)

Return to Ho Chi Minh City in the afternoon for a tour of the city highlights, including the major temples, Thien Hau and Quan Am, the Reunification Palace, Binh Tay market, and Chinatown.

Day 3 – Ho Chi Minh City to Cat Tien National Park

Depart Ho Chi Minh City for **Cat Tien National Park** (3-4 hours drive), where you spend the next two nights in a forest lodge.

Your Financial Protection

All monies paid by you for the air holiday package shown [or flights if appropriate] are ATOL protected by the Civil Aviation Authority. Our ATOL number is ATOL 3145.

For more information see our booking terms and conditions.

UNESCO-protected Cat Tien is undoubtedly the best nature reserve in Southern Vietnam, comprising 70,000ha+ of untrammelled lowland rainforest. It's not big game viewing territory (leopard, tiger and bear are thought to occur in the park, but you're highly unlikely to see them; though you may see elephant or wild gibbon), but it offers beautiful forest trails and excellent birding.

This afternoon, enjoy a relaxed trek into the rainforest followed by a night game drive to track nocturnal species. Overnight in the forest.



Day 4 – Trekking in Cat Tien

After an early breakfast, set off on a 15km circuit trek through the forest (allow 4 hours), followed by a short boat cruise in the **Bau Sau wetlands**.

After a late lunch at the lodge, drive to **Nui Tuong Forest** for a guided birding tour, returning to the lodge in the evening.



Day 5 –Cat Tien to Da Lat

This morning you'll have the opportunity to visit a primate rehabilitation centre, **Dao Tien**, a short boat ride away on the Dong Nai River. The Dao Tien centre houses a small number of gibbon and slow loris at any given time, all rescued from the illegal wildlife trade, which it aims to reintegrate into the wild. You can visit with the gibbons and lorises, and learn more about the work the centre carries out, before heading back to the lodge.

In the afternoon, bid farewell to Cat Tien and set off for Da Lat (4 hours) in the central highlands. Arrive late afternoon.

Da Lat is a former French colonial town situated amid some of the most beautiful countryside and hill country in all of Vietnam. You'll quickly appreciate the cooler climate here, a marked contrast from the heat of the lowlands.

Day 6 – Da Lat

Embark on a morning tour of Da Lat and its surrounds, taking in **Xuan Huong Lake**, the **Summer Palace**, and the **Da Lat Crémallère Railway**, with its wonderful art deco station.

This afternoon is free for you to explore Da Lat at leisure. There's so much to do: shop at the market, take the cable car, or follow one of the walking trails out of town. Ask your guide in advance if you'd like to arrange any additional activities; otherwise, take the afternoon at your own pace.



Day 7 – Da Lat to Ho Chi Minh City

Explore the flower market in Da Lat before visiting the **Truc Lam Zen Buddhist temple** and tranquil **Tuyen Lam Lake** on the outskirts of town. Around noon, depart Da Lat for **Ho Chi Minh City** (5-6 hours), stopping along the way to visit a tea and coffee plantation.

Arrive Ho Chi Minh City late afternoon.

Evening at leisure.



Day 8 – Ho Chi Minh to Can Tho, the Mekong Delta

Depart Ho Chi Minh City in the morning for **Tien Giang** province (1 hour).

On reaching **Cai Thia Village**, ditch the car in favour of two wheels and follow a marvellous cycling route through paddy fields and village trails, stopping along the way to visit a local Buddhist temple, fruit orchard, and rice paper workshop.

In the afternoon, take a boat ride on the Tien River to a local homestay for a delicious, home-cooked lunch. Afterwards, explore the winding canals and narrow creeks of the Delta in a traditional Vietnamese pole-driven boat, or sampan, before cruising to Vinh Long, where you re-join your driver. From Vinh Long, transfer 1 hour to **Can Tho**, the capital of the Mekong Delta.



Arrive late afternoon and check in at your hotel.



Day 9 – Can Tho to Chau Doc

This morning, take a boat trip to the floating market at **Cai Rang**, where vessels from throughout the Mekong Delta come to trade their goods. Cai Rang is always lively, but don't expect to do any souvenir shopping – it's very much a local market! Instead, take the time to watch life go by on the water.

Continue down the Ba Long canal, stopping to visit a fruit orchard and nearby village, which you can explore on foot or by bicycle. For lunch, visit a local homestay for another home-cooked meal.

Continue by car to **Chau Doc**, a lively town on the border with Cambodia. Chau Doc is a hugely diverse place, where mosques sit alongside Buddhist monasteries and Christian churches, and where Khmer, Cham and Vietnamese trade with another in the bustling market.

Day 10 – Chau Doc

This morning, visit a local fish farm, in which the fish are raised below floating homes, as well as a nearby **Cham village**. The Cham previously ruled much of Vietnam, before being expelled from the central Vietnamese heartlands in the 18th-century and pushed to the southern coast and further into Cambodia. Traditionally Hindu (though many are converts to Islam), their culture is far removed from that of most Vietnamese, and today you'll have the chance to learn a bit more about their way of life.

In the afternoon, visit **Tra Su Cajuput**, a beautiful submerged forest just off the border with Cambodia. It's a small reserve of 850ha, notable for its dramatic mangrove forests. Enjoy lunch within the reserve before returning to your hotel in Chau Doc.





Day 11 – Chau Doc to Ho Chi Minh City

Depart early for Ho Chi Minh, arriving late afternoon. Evening at leisure. Make the most of your last night in Saigon—the city has a busy nightlife, lots of great places to eat out, and a lively night market.

Day 12 – Departure

At leisure until your included transfer to the airport for your onward transfer/homeward flight.



Price Guide:

The cost of this itinerary is from **£1,487 per person**, based on two persons in shared twin/double accommodation. For more information, or if you would like to enquire about a tailor-made holiday combining part or all of the above itinerary, please [contact us](#).

Includes:

- Twin/double accommodation on B&B basis
- Lunch on days 8, 9, 10 (Mekong Delta)
- Private transportation throughout
- All entrance fees
- Experienced regional guides

Excludes:

- International flights – please ask us for a quote
- Visas
- Personal travel insurance
- Personal expenses and tips
- Lunch and dinner to own account unless stated otherwise in itinerary