

# THE LONG WAY UP



16 days - 15 nights from 793\$

Saigon | Tayninh | Cu Chi | Da Lat | Nha Trang | Quang Ngai | Hoi An | Hue | Hanoi | Sapa | Halong Bay | Hanoi

## OVERVIEW

Tour code	<b>VNH02-S</b>
Duration	16 days / 15 nights
Features	Saigon, as the most hectic hub, welcomes much more international arrivals than any other cities of Vietnam so you may find it much easier searching good airfare to Saigon before starting a Vietnam trip. Driving along the seashore, then discover step by step historical sites, hill resorts, sunlight beaches, ancient palaces to tribal market and unique Halong by all means of transport will make the trip unforgettable.
Extension	Easy to connect with Bangkok, Yunnan, Luang Prabang, Phnompenh and Siemreap

## ITINERARY IN BRIEF

- Day 1 : Arrive In Saigon (D)
- Day 2 : Saigon - Tayninh - Cuchi Tunnels - Saigon (B/L)
- Day 3 : Saigon – Dalat (B/D)
- Day 4 : Dalat – Nha Trang (B/L)
- Day 5 : Nha Trang (B/L)
- Day 6 : At Leisure In Nha Trang (B)
- Day 7 : Nha Trang – Quang Ngai (B/L/D)
- Day 8 : Quang Ngai – My Lai – My Son - Hoi An (B/L/D)
- Day 9 : Hoi An (B/L)
- Day 10 : Hoi An – Hue (B/L)
- Day 11 : Hue – Hanoi – Train To Laocai (B/D)
- Day 12 : Lao Cai - Sapa (B/L)
- Day 13 : Sapa – Hill Tribal Market – Lao Cai (B/L/D)
- Day 14 : Hanoi – Halong – Overnight Onboard (B/L/D)
- Day 15 : Halong – Hanoi (B/L)
- Day 16 : Hanoi Departure (B/-)

## ITINERARY IN DETAIL

### DAY 1: ARRIVE in SAIGON (D)

Welcome to Vietnam! Upon arrival at Tan Son Nhat Airport, you will be welcomed by THREELAND tour guide and transferred to your hotel for check-in. Lunch will be at your own arrangement for more flexibility before we start the city tour at the Reunification Palace, the witness of the fierce Vietnam War ended in 1975. The grand building today is a Museum and Hall of official receptions. Nearby the Palace are the colonial-styled Post Office and the Notre Dame Cathedral, built between 1877 and 1883 and one of the city's major landmarks. Our visits will end at the China Town, which makes Saigon differ from other cities of Vietnam, with Thien Hau pagoda and Binh Tay market hereby. Dinner with delicious local food of Saigon. Overnight in Saigon.

**Please note!** Check-in and check-out time is usually 12.00 noon.

### DAY 2: SAIGON – TAYNINH – CU CHI TUNNELS - SAIGON (B/L)

Our day will begin with a visit to Tayninh, the centre of Cao daism, a local sect of Buddhism founded by a Vietnamese countryman in early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Arriving at noontime, you will have the chance to join the daily solemn ceremony at the temple of Cao Dai called Tayninh Holysee. On the way back to Saigon, we can stop to visit Cu Chi Tunnels, one of the few remaining monuments to the fierce Vietnam War. We can even crawl a part of the tunnel to experience the real life of the Vietnamese guerrillas, who used to use and live inside this system during the wartime. Return to Saigon late afternoon. Lunch in Tayninh or en route. Dinner by your own arrangement. Overnight in Saigon.

### DAY 3: SAIGON – DALAT (B/D)

Morning at your leisure in Saigon. Being the centre of industry and new flows of modern culture, whilst attracting people from all over the country with very different local cultures and habits, Saigon attracts every visitor for its' amazing contrary. You will have your own time this morning to wander around this city for your own discovery. After lunchtime (lunch by your own account for flexibility), we will board afternoon flight to Dalat, the jewel of Vietnam's Central Highlands. This city is featured by a park-like environment, with lovely temperature 15°-24°C and sunlight all year round which make the city a haunt of honeymoon couples. Picked up at Dalat Airport and have a horse cart trip round the city. Dinner overnight in Dalat.

Optional tour: Transfer by landway from Saigon to Dalat, around 6 hours.

#### **DAY 4: DALAT VISIT – NHA TRANG (B/L)**

Morning visit Dalat including the Summer Palace of Bao Dai - the last King of Vietnam, Tuyen Lam Reservoir, Truc Lam grandiose temple and Dalat Flower Garden (or the Crazy House of architect Hang Nga). After lunch head to Nha Trang. The landway from Dalat to Nha Trang (more than 200km) is very sight worthy and photogenic with pinewoods, waterfalls; farms of tea and coffee, and "Picturesque" mountain pass ("Bellevue Pass" as named by the French early 20<sup>th</sup> century!). We can have a break overlooking the magnificent Danhim Reservoir and spectacular view of the ancient tower Po Klong Garai built by the Cham nation in Phan Rang - Thap Cham, 101km from Dalat. After visiting all these wonders, we will reach the long sandy beach of Nha Trang late afternoon. At leisure for relax with crystal plages of Nha Trang. Overnight in Nha Trang.

#### **DAY 5: NHA TRANG (B/L)**

We will visit in the morning the Nha Trang's Po Nagar Cham Tower, which had been built between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries and remains a significantly religious centre for both Vietnamese and Chinese today. Beside the Cham tower and marvelous beach, Long Son Pagoda built in late 19<sup>th</sup> century is also impressive not just by its decoration with traditional motifs in modern materials, but by a huge white statue of Buddha meditating on a lotus blossom – the symbol of Buddhism | and visible from all over Nha Trang. After a stop at a fishing village, we will have lunch with Nha Trang seafood, and then relax in the rest of the day to enjoy the beach and sunlight. Overnight in Nha Trang.

#### **DAY 6: AT LEISURE IN NHA TRANG (B)**

It is your own time today, just to relax and enjoy sunshine beach of Nha Trang. (No services provided). Overnight in Nha Trang.

**Please note:** Many beach activities available in Nha Trang, including snorkeling, diving, parachuting, sailing to the islands and remote places.

#### **DAY 7: NHA TRANG – QUANG NGAI (B/L/D)**

The South of Central Vietnam, with Highway 1 as a backbone, suffers warm and dry weather, arid and sandy land, though, has so many treats for our eyes: the ruins of Cham Nation visible from the roads, coastline with blue lagoons and odd-shaped rocks, places with crystal water and boundless sand-dunes, farms of tasty fruits and industrial crops for domestic use and export (dragon fruit and grape, coffee, tea, and pepper), and historical sites from the American War.

From Nha Trang we drive to Quang Ngai via Quy Nhon, visiting fishing villages with colorful boats and hospitable fishermen, passing high mountain passes with nice-looking scenery and stop for a rest at Dai Lanh beach. Lunch in Quy Nhon. Lots of Cham ruins are in the neighborhood of this city and are easily reachable. After visiting Binh Dinh Museum and a Cham Tower in Quy Nhon, we will arrive in Quang Ngai, a convenient stopover on our long Southern Central Vietnam ride. At dinnertime, we will have a chance to taste the famous *com ga* (chicken rice), a local delicacy of Quang Ngai. Overnight in Quang Ngai.

#### **DAY 8: QUANG NGAI – MY LAI – MY SON | HOI AN (B/L/D)**

After breakfast, we will continue our way northward from Quang Ngai to Hoi An ancient town. 14km from Quang Ngai, we can have a memorable visit at Son My Memorial, where the painful "My Lai Massacre" occurred in 1968 and five hundreds of locals had been killed by the American

army. Remarkable international demonstrations had been ridden after this event, contributing to the end of the American War. Afternoon we will stop at the most concentrative and impressive combination of Cham Towers at My Son, 45km from Hoi An town, where we can learn much about the Cham culture that once brightly developed in the location of present Central Vietnam. Arrive in Hoi An late afternoon for dinner and overnight.

#### **DAY 9: HOI AN (B/L)**

Let's spend our full day visiting the town of Hoi An today. Together with our guide in Hoi An, we'll walk over the tile-roofed Japanese Bridge, visit taciturn Chinese Assembly Halls, visit ancient houses and Trading Houses, pagodas and stroll into the market located by Thu Bon river, where we may find out the same feelings of the artists, who see the rooftops of Hoi An a magical old world of Oriental feel and source of inspiration. This is also a wonderful town to shop for lanterns, soft silk, raw silk, or get your clothes tailored within a day. Late afternoon is open for our optional tour by boat to a small ceramic village in Thu Bon River. Dinner at your own arrangement. Overnight in Hoi An.

**Optional tour:** Cycling with our guide 4km from the ancient town to Cua Dai (the "Big Beach") to relax.



#### **DAY 10: HOI AN – HUE (B/L)**

On the way from Hoi An to Hue via the magnificent "Ocean Cloudy" Pass today, we can stop to visit the China Beach and Marble Mt., and contemplate wonderful seascape from the mountaintop halfway thru the Pass. Arrive at our hotel in Hue at midday. After lunch, let's go to discover the Royal Citadel, Forbidden City and Hue Royal Museum – where traces of the last Vietnam feudal dynasty are well-preserved, and intermingle with Hue people at their Dong Ba bustling market. Lunch in a garden restaurant in Hue; Dinner at your own arrangement for more leisure time; overnight in Hue.

#### **DAY 11: HUE – HANOI – TRAIN TO LAOCAI (B/D)**

With a boat ridden along the poetic Perfume River, you can reach Thien Mu Pagoda, the centre of Buddhism of the city, whose 90% are Buddhists, and the extensive Tomb of King Minh Mang, which is reachable from a river pier. Lunch at your own account for more flexibility. Afternoon visit the joss-tick making village and Thanh Toan Bridge before transfer to the airport for the flight to Hanoi. Welcomed and transferred to Hanoi. Have Dinner in Hanoi before taking the night train at 21.30 to Lao Cai.

#### **DAY 12: LAO CAI | SAPA (B/L)**



Arrive at Lao Cai Station at 06.00. Picked-up and transferred to Sapa by car (40km mountain road from Lao Cai). The mountain landscape of Sapa is magnificent and so different from what we have experienced in the South and Central Vietnam. Don't miss to stop to enjoy its misty pinewoods, graceful terraced paddy fields and get lovely pictures of charming Hmong or Dzao girls you see on the mountainside. After arrive in Sapa, we will have breakfast before leaving luggage at the hotel and hang around with our guide to Sapa market street, where we can meet the montagnards and admire their handicrafts made of wood, silver, or



dyed and embroidered fabrics and clothes and visit Cat Cat village of the Hmong people. After lunch, drive to Lao Chai (10km from Sapa) and trek 5km to Tavan with stops at the villages of the tribal people Hmong, Tay and Dzay en route. Back to Sapa for overnight. Dinner at your own arrangement.

**DAY 13: SAPA – HILL TRIBAL MARKET – LAO CAI (B/L/D)**

If today is Saturday, Sunday or Tuesday, nothing will be better than driving overland to a market of the hill tribal people, mainly from Flower Hmong ethnical group. Depending on the day, you can choose either Can Cau (Sat), Bac Ha (Sun) or Coc Ly (Tues).

Early morning we will drive toward Bac Ha, about 110km from Sapa. With a dozen of tribes living in the surroundings, including Flower Hmong, Chinese, Nhang, Dzao, Nung, Phu La, Thai and King (or Viet), the market is extremely exciting esp. in the early morning. The winding road to Bac Ha helps maintain the colors (in both literal and figurative sense) of the area. The distance to Can Cau and Coc Ly from Bac Ha is 30 – 50km. In all these markets, we can meet hundreds of beautiful women from Flower Hmong tribe, who are famous for their wonderful craft and hand-made flowering clothes and textile fabrics, or intermingle with people from Black Hmong, Dzay, Dzao and other ethnic groups coming to the market not for purchasing stuffs, but for meeting and chatting – just once a week | like in a real cultural center. After lunchtime, we can hike around, following the mountain people to their villages for a visit, or take our car heading to further hamlets in Ban Pho, Trieu Cai, or Na Hoi. If we meet Coc Ly (the market on Tues) not in high water season, we can take a boat trip along Chay River, enjoying marvelous limestone range along the river and drop off to visit a big cave or a village of Hmong or Dzay people. Back to Lao Cai Station later afternoon for dinner and take the night train from Lao Cai to Hanoi.

**DAY 14: HANOI – HALONG – OVERNIGHT ONBOARD (B/L/D)**

Picked-up by car at Hanoi Station around 05.00. Before having breakfast, we can join the Hanoians in their early exercises, esp. nearby the lakes, diversified from jogging, yoga, sword dance, fan dance, and taichi-quan. After breakfast and a short relax, we will go on to Halong Bay via Bat Trang ceramic village. Located by the Red River, the village has gained long time reputation since 15<sup>th</sup> century of making refined porcelain in many styles such as celadon, crackle-glazed pottery, and raw terra cotta products. The pottery of Bat Trang is found everywhere from Asia to Europe and excellent for souvenir. Overland to Halong, one of the two earliest World Heritages as recognized by UNESCO for Vietnam twice in 1994 and 2006. Check-in our boat and enjoy a lunch of fresh seafood while the boat goes about unusual seascape with thousands picturesque rocks and islets, beaches and hollow islands. We can stop to visit some karst grottoes or just go swimming, or stop at a beach and enjoy the sunset on the sea. Dinner and overnight on the boat.

**DAY 15: HALONG – HANOI (B/L)**

The Vietnamese call the “South China Sea” by a point-oriented name “Eastern Sea”, so you may guess how miraculous seeing the sunrise over the islets of the Bay. Our boat will continue to cruise in marvelous areas, where almost each islet has its own name, adopting its shape or reminiscent like Sail Island, Fisherman’s head rock, Butterfly rock or Turtle islet, etc. Back to Halong Wharf and take our car to Hanoi with stopover for lunch at Hong Ngoc Charity Center en route. Check-in hotel and at leisure in the rest of the day. Overnight in Hanoi. Dinner at your own arrangement.

**DAY 16: HANOI DEPARTURE (B/-/-)**

At your leisure until your guide comes to meet and transfer you to the airport to take the departure flight. **Please note!** Checkout time is usually 12.00.

**Optional tour (half day, no lunch or dinner included)**

From Hanoi, head to Duong Lam Village which is 50km from the city, a very ancient village with miraculous Communal House “Mong Phu” which reserves a lot of precious wooden bas-relieves and traditional Vietnamese architecture. Since it is quite difficult to maintain such a traditional Communal House in all Northern Vietnam now, a lot of famous movies in Vietnam have presented the beauty of this house as typical style of the ancient Viet architecture. We can hang around here to intermingle with the villagers in their daily routine and visit some houses making local traditional products, visit special houses made of laterite, chatting with the locals in Duong Lam and go on to visit Mia Pagoda with the biggest collection of earth statues in Northern Vietnam nearby. Back to Hanoi.

**SERVICES INCLUDED**

- English-speaking tour guides
- Land transfer by air-con vehicles
- Train tickets (air-con compartment)
- Twin-shared room
- Meals as mentioned in the program (no drinks)
- Boat trip and admission

**SERVICES not INCLUDED**

- Airfare (international and domestic) and airport tax
- Visa to Vietnam
- Early check-in, late check-out surcharge
- Other meals
- Drinks and personal expenses (phone call, laundry, tipping etc.)
- Any services not mentioned in the program
- Optional tours