

VIETNAM – CAMBODIA ODYSSEY

16 days - 15 nights



Hanoi – Tam Coc - Hoa Lu - Sapa - Bac Ha - Halong - Hoi An - Hue - Saigon - Tayninh - Cu Chi - Mekong delta - Siemreap - Angkor

OVERVIEW

Tour code	IN03
Duration	16 days / 15 nights
Features	A deep discovery into the highlights Vietnam and Cambodia, inclusive of numerous U.N. World Heritage, hill tribal culture, light adventures, sea and river cruises. Most strongly recommended during the time of Vietnam traditional Lunar New Year.
Extension	Easy to connect with Bangkok, Luang Prabang and Vientiane.

ITINERARY IN BRIEF

Day 1	: Arrival In Hanoi - Tam Coc - Hoa Lu Visit (B/L)
Day 2	: Hanoi City Tour - Lao Cai Train (B/L/D)
Day 3	: Lao Cai - Sapa - Villages (B/L)
Day 4	: Sapa - Bac Ha - Hanoi (B/L/D)
Day 5	: Hanoi - Ha Long (B/L/D)
Day 6	: Ha Long Boat Trip - Hanoi (B/L)
Day 7	: Hanoi - Danang - Hoi An (B/L)
Day 8	: Hoi An - Hue (B/L)
Day 9	: Hue (Incl. Boat Tour) (B/L)
Day 10	: Hue - Saigon (B/L)
Day 11	: Saigon - Mekong Delta (Vinh Long Boat Trip) - Saigon (B/L)
Day 12	: Saigon - Tay Ninh - Cu Chi Tunnel (B/L)
Day 13	: Saigon - Siem Reap (Angkor Thom) (B/L/D)
Day 14	: Arrival In Siem Reap (Angkor Wat) (B/L)
Day 15	: Siem Reap (Angkor Thom) (B/L)
Day 16	: Siem Reap Departure (B)

ITINERARY IN DETAIL

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN HANOI – VISIT TAM COC - BIKING IN HOA LU - HANOI (B/L)

Welcome to Vietnam!

The tour guide of Threeland Travel in Vietnam will be welcoming you at the Noi Bai airport in the early morning. Transfer to Hanoi. Have an orientation tour passing by the West Lake with graceful temples, Ba Dinh Square - the most important area where significant cultural events are celebrated outdoor, and most beautiful buildings in the administration area of Hanoi. Head to the south to Ninh Binh, the province of numerous precious religious constructions and outstanding nature landscape. Passing green paddy fields of the Red River Delta en route. Upon arrival in Ninh Binh, take a boat trip rowed by the locals in between limestone mountain ranges on the Ngo Dong river thru long karst grottoes, and just enjoy the scenery and relax! Half way thru the boat trip, we can stop and take a short walk to Thai Vi temple built in 14th century under the Tran Dynasty. After lunch in Tam Coc, have some exercises by biking thru rural villages in Ninh Binh to Hoa Lu, the once capital of Vietnam before Hanoi took over this role in 1010. Here we can research an important part of Vietnam history at the Temples dedicated to King Dinh and King Le, who had reign in Vietnam during 10th century. The two temples now are highly evaluated by their history, their wooden and stone carvings, and worshipping statues. Back to Hanoi later afternoon, check-in hotel in the city centre and relax. Overnight Hanoi. (Dinner at your own account).

DAY 02: HANOI VISIT - LAO CAI TRAIN (B/L/D)

After breakfast at the hotel, have a city tour to visit Hanoi today. This is the most ancient city of Vietnam that functional as a developing centre of culture and economy. Let's start our visit from Ba Dinh Square with the Ho Chi Minh Complex - his Mausoleum, the house-on-stilts where he lived his last years, his fish pond and the One-Pillar Pagoda before strolling around the Old Quarter of Hanoi by pedicab. Continue with the Temple of Literature, the very first high school of Vietnam dating back to 11th century. Lunch with traditional Vietnamese foods.

Afternoon we will go on to visit the Ngoc Son Temple located on the Sword Lake, which is considered the centre and the soul of the city. Visit the statue of Ly Cong Uan, who had moved the capital city from Ninh Binh - Hoa lu to the present location of Hanoi a millennium ago. Study about the Vietnam cultures of different ethnic groups at the Museum of Ethnology. Enjoy a show of Water Puppetry, a unique

stage art created by the Vietnamese peasants before boarding your train at 21.30 to Lao Cai. Overnight on the train.

DAY 03: LAO CAI - SAPA - VILLAGES (B/L)

Early morning arrive in Lao Cai around 06.00am. Picked-up and transferred to Sapa by your vehicle in Lao Cai (40km mountain road from Lao Cai). The mountainous landscape of Sapa is very typical to Northern Vietnam and extremely different from the plains in the Central and South Vietnam. Take some stops to enjoy its misty pinewoods, terraced paddy fields and meet charming H'mong or Dzao girls you see on the mountainside. After arrive in Sapa, we will have breakfast before leaving luggage here to hang around with our guide to Sapa market, where we can meet the montagnards and admire their handicrafts made of wood, silver, or dyed and embroidered fabrics and clothes. Climb up the Dragon Peak mountain for a panorama view of the town. After lunch, drive to Taphin, then hike thru paddy fields and pass an old seminary in Taphin Valley, reach the villages of the H'mong and Red Dzao people, who are skillful in dyeing and making clothes and embroidery by traditional, old silk thread. Go on to Lao Chai (10km from Sapa) and walk thru 5km to Tavan with stops at the villages of the tribal people H'mong, Tay and Dzay en route. Back to Sapa for overnight.

Please note! Check-in time in Sapa is usually 12.00 noon.

DAY 04: SAPA - BAC HA HILL TRIBAL MARKET - LAO CAI (B/L/D)

Once today is Saturday, Sunday or Tuesday, nothing will be better than driving overland to a market of the hill tribal people, mainly from Flower H'mong ethnical group. Depending on the day, we will have a chance to attend the Can Cau market (Sat), Bac Ha market (Sun) or Coc Ly market located by the Chay river(Tue).

Early morning we will drive toward Bac Ha province, about 110km from Sapa. With a dozen of tribes living in the surroundings, including Flower H'mong, 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 area helps maintain the colors (in both literal and figurative sense) of the area. We can meet hundreds of beautiful women from Flower H'mong tribe, who are famous for their wonderful craft and hand-made flowering clothes and textile fabrics, or intermingle with people from Black H'mong, 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 will 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 (optional for Bac Ha market), take a boat trip along Chay river with stopover at Trung Do village en route (optional for Coc Ly) or visit a village nearby (for Can Cau and other markets). Back to Lao Cai Station later afternoon to take the night train from Lao Cai to Hanoi. Dinner in Lao Cai. Overnight on the train.

Please note! Depending on the day of the weekly Market, the boat trip or hiking trip to villages will be adjusted accordingly.

DAY 05: HANOI - HALONG - OVERNIGHT ON BOARD (B/L/D)

Picked-up by our 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 by private car. Located by the Red River, the village has gained long time reputation since 15th 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 designated by UNESCO for Vietnam in 1994. 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 06: HALONG BOAT TRIP - 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 to return to Hanoi. Lunch on the way back at Hong Ngoc centre. At leisure in the rest of the day. Overnight in Hanoi.

DAY 07: HANOI - DA NANG - HOI AN (B/L)

After breakfast and check-out hotel, we will be transferred to Noi Bai airport to take a short flight to Danang, the most developed city in Central Vietnam. Pick-up by car and transfer to Danang and visit Cham Museum, a famous Museum where preserves many traces of the Cham nation's culture who resided all over central Vietnam before it belonged to the feudal kings of Vietnam in 16th century. Head south to Hoian ancient town, and ex-seaport in 17th century with architecture influenced by Vietnamese, Japanese and Chinese styles due to different nations living here. After lunch, we will have the whole afternoon to discover Hoian. Once walking over the tile-roofed Japanese Bridge, visit taciturn Chinese Assembly Halls and Trading Houses, Pagodas, and stroll around the market located by Thu Bon river, you may find out the same feelings of the artists, who see the charm of Hoi An a magical old world of Oriental feel and source of inspiration. At leisure in the evening and overnight in Hoian.

DAY 08: HOIAN - HUE (B/L)

Stroll around to visit Hoian before heading to Hue. Being recognized by UNESCO as the 1st Cultural World Heritage for Vietnam, Hue is highlighted by old royal architectural works and the most traditional Vietnamese lifestyle. We will discover the charm of the city from the Royal Citadel, Forbidden City, Hue Royal Museum and Dong Ba bustling market. Go on to the Tombs of King Tu Duc - one of the best-reserved monuments of the Nguyen Emperors since early 19th and early 20th centuries. Lunch between visits. Overnight Hue.

DAY 09: HUE (B/L)

Take a boat trip in the morning to go along the "Perfume River" (Song Huong) enjoying daily life of Hue people alongside the river. Land at Thien Mu, (or Linh Mu) pagoda, the most well-known Buddhist construction in Hue for its beauty, wide range and history. From here go on by boat to the Tomb of King Minh Mang, a

famous king with many talents of Nguyen Dynasty. Back to Hue for lunch in a garden house restaurant with Hue delicacy, which makes the pride for the people in Hue. At your leisure for own discovery in the afternoon. Overnight Hue.

DAY 10: HUE - SAIGON (B/L)

Transfer to Hue Airport for your short flight to Saigon, the most fascinating city of Vietnam. Welcomed at the airport and transferred to the hotel for check-in. Let's intermingle with the Saigon people by visiting its China town at District 5, visit Thien Hau pagoda, and Binh Tay exciting market. We can clearly tell the difference in lifestyle of the people in the three areas: North, Central and South Vietnam by now. Go on to visit the Reunification Palace in Saigon which witnessed the end of the Vietnam War, which once upon a time made Vietnam known more than the country itself, and stroll around remarkable colonial-styled constructions close by the Palace, including the ancient Cathedral and Post Office. Enjoy Ben Thanh night market or back to hotel for refreshment (optional). Lunch between visits. Overnight Saigon.

DAY 11: SAIGON - MEKONG DELTA (MY THO) - SAIGON (B/L)

After breakfast, head South to My Tho, a province nearby Saigon but full of the Mekong delta culture. The drive will takes nearly two hours before we stop to take a boat along Tien Giang river - a tributary of the mighty Mekong, and head to the Tortoise island, visiting family workshops and small islets with funny names of Dragon, Phoenix and Unicorn to intermingle with the locals in their daily life in the Mekong delta. Have a lunch in an orchard enjoying "Don ca tai tu" (the Southern Vietnamese folk music) played by the islanders. After visiting a coconut candy mill, continue to Ben Tre and stop at the orchards where people feed honeybee and make different candies and handicraft with materials from coconut trees, enjoy relaxing cups of tea or wine with honey in the orchards before returning to My Tho via Tan Thanh canal, cruising in between water coconut lines. Back to Saigon later afternoon for overnight.

DAY 12: SAIGON - TAY NINH - CU CHI TUNNEL - SAIGON (B/L)

After breakfast at the hotel, our day will begin with a visit to Tayninh, the centre of Caodaism, a local sect of Buddhism founded by a Vietnamese countryman in early 20th century. Arriving at noontime, we 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, take a long break 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). Overnight Saigon.

DAY 13: SAIGON - SIEM REAP (ANGKOR THOM) (B/L/D)

At your leisure till our guide come to pick-up you to Tan Son Nhat Airport for flight to Siemreap, Cambodia.

Welcome to the land of Angkor!

You will be picked-up and transferred by the Threeland Travel tour guide in Cambodia to the hotel in Siemreap for check-in. 7km from Siemreap is

the complex of Angkor, being built between the 9th and 15th centuries. No marvel in the Southeast Asia can be comparable with the Angkor for the scale, splendor and magnificence. We will start with the Angkor Thom ("Angkor citadel,") strolling around to admire the beauty of its monuments like the Bayon Temple, the Baphoun, the Elephant Terrace and the Terrace of the Leper King. Climb up and contemplate the sunset over Angkor on the top of Phnom Bakheng (Mountain). Dinner enjoying Apsara traditional dance. Overnight in Siem Reap.

DAY 14: SIEM REAP (ANGKOR WAT) (B/L)

Wake up early in the morning to catch the dawn from behind the five towers of Angkor Wat. This temple, thru the times, is the only construction a nation does choose for their national flag despite very different regimes. The founder of the temple, King Suryavarman II who had reigned Cambodia from 1113 to 1152 had built the five towers in the 12th century dedicating them to the Hindu God Vishnu. The plan of the pyramidal conception of the temple combined with spaces, alleys, ditches is an ancient masterpiece of architectural design and construction. Stroll around Angkor Wat to research its incredible stone carvings and relieves before visiting other ruins of the complex. Go on to Ta Prohm temple, which is a wonderful combination of human construction genius and natural beauty of giant trees, which have grown there for centuries. Visit Ta Keo, dedicated to the Hindu God Shiva and was built at the end of the 10th century, the Thommanon, Chau Say Tevoda temples, and the natural lake of Sra Srang. Lunch between visits. Back to Siem Reap for relaxing at your hotel late afternoon. Overnight Siemreap.

DAY 15: SIEMREAP AT LEISURE (B)

At your leisure the whole day. With the Angkor Ticket of Threeland, you can discover more of the Angkor complex by your own by tuk-tuk, elephant, motorbike, or taxi to the Angkor and its neighborhood (all costs are at your own account. Overnight Siemreap.

DAY 16: SIEMREAP DEPARTURE (B)

After breakfast, at leisure until your tour guide come and pickup you to the airport.

SERVICES INCLUDED

- English-speaking tour guides
- Land transfer by air-con vehicles
- Twin-shared room with daily buffet breakfast
- Meals as mentioned in the program (no drinks)
- Water during transfer.
- Boat trips and Admission, show tickets

SERVICES not INCLUDED

- Airfare (international and domestic) and airport tax
- Visa arrangement
- 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

OTHER SURCHARGE UPON REQUESTS

Balloon at Angkor: 20 USD per person (15-20 minutes)