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Valid for departures: From January 1, 2017 to December 31, 2021



## Cycling Vietnam Trip Notes

**Ways to Travel:** Guided Group, Tailormade Adventures  
**Destinations:** Vietnam  
**Programmes:** Cycling

Trip Code:  
**MOV**



**16 Days** Flight Inclusive  
**14 Days** Land only  
**Min age:** 16

### Trip Overview

We ride from vibrant Saigon in the south to the chaotic capital of Hanoi in the north on this two week cycling tour, travelling on tarmac roads through colourful fishing villages, folding rice terraces and mountains cloaked in jungle. The vast shoreline of white sandy beaches is ours to discover along the way, with time to swim in the sea on a tropical island retreat. Stopping off at the ancient trading port of Hoi An, home to temples and wooden merchant houses, we delve into the peacefulness of rural Vietnam before ascending the Hai Van Pass, riding along twisting coastal roads that lead to remarkable views of the misty forest below.

### At a Glance

- 11 nights comfortable hotels, 1 night boat, 1 night sleeper train
- 9 days cycling (including 1 optional ride) with 90% vehicle support
- Roads nearly all good tarmac
- The route is generally flat with some undulation and the exception of Dalat and the Hai Van Pass
- Group normally 5 to 18, plus local leaders

### Trip Highlights

- Take a cycling holiday through Vietnam's most scenic landscapes
- Savour mouth-watering cuisine
- Crawl through the Cu Chi war tunnels
- Relax in charming Hoi An
- Cruise among the limestone formations of Halong Bay
- Overnight on a tropical island

### Is This Trip for You?

**This trip is rated Activity Level 3- Moderate and classified Road.**

9 days cycling (including 1 optional ride), average 70km/day (43 miles), 90% vehicle support.

#### Terrain and Route:

Road surfaces are mostly on good tarmac. The route is generally flat with some undulation and the exception of Dalat and the Hai Van Pass Vietnam can be hot and humid, but rests and water are readily available. You should be comfortable riding in traffic on occasions. This is a busy trip but anyone not wanting to cycle all day can use the support vehicle.

Following a review of all our trips we have categorised this trip as generally not suitable for persons of reduced mobility. However if you are a regular traveller on such trips, please contact customer services to discuss the trip and your personal condition.

### Group

An experienced cycling tour leader will accompany all groups from start to finish. A bike mechanic will assist the tour leader, and local guides will step in at various sights.

**Adult min age:** 16  
**Min group size:** 5  
**Max group size:** 18

### Itinerary



### Land Only

**Start City:** Saigon  
**End City:** Hanoi

### Flight Inclusive

**Start City:** London  
**End City:** London

## Land Only Itinerary

### Day 1

#### Start Saigon

Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), formerly known as Saigon, is an exciting and absorbing city where bicycles battle with lorries and temples stand defiantly alongside modern developments. Devastated by the Vietnam War, Saigon is now a bustling free market city where anything goes. The Ben Thanh Market and Notre Dame Cathedral are within easy walking distance and are highly recommended.

This evening there will be a welcome briefing with you leader followed by an optional group dinner at a local restaurant.

**Huong sen Hotel or similar**

### Day 2

#### Transfer out of the city; cycle to the Cu Chi tunnels

This morning we drive out of the city, before riding to the Cu Chi Tunnels. This offers a great introduction to cycling in Vietnam and a chance to fine-tune the bikes. The tunnels were Viet Cong sanctuaries, used by the guerrillas as living quarters and escape routes. The network covers 3 levels and approximately 240km of tunnels. Some parts have been widened for tourists, but the tunnels were originally very narrow and it is still necessary to crawl on hands and knees. Claustrophobes may prefer to stay outside in the sunshine!

If you prefer not to visit the tunnels you can have an unguided free day in Saigon. Places of interest include: the Emperor of Jade and Giac Lam pagodas, the former Presidential Palace (now the Reunification Hall), Ben Thanh market and the War Remnants Museum.

**Huong sen Hotel or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 30 km / 18 miles

### Day 3

#### Cycle towards the coast and drive to Mui Ne

After an early breakfast we head out of Saigon by bus and then start cycling towards the coast. We hit the backroads and head through tropical fruit and rubber plantations also passing some small fishing villages as we make our way closer to the coast finishing our ride in time for lunch. We then transfer approx. 3 hours to Mui Ne, a tranquil white sand beach where we can witness our first sunset over the South China Sea. We spend approx. 4-5 hours on the bus today.

**Sea Links Beach Hotel or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 50 km / 31 miles

### Day 4

#### Cycle to Dalat in the Central Highlands

We cycle towards Dalat; the route is undulating with occasional climbs. Along the way we pass coffee and tea plantations as well as flower gardens and pine forests as we reach higher altitude. We rejoin the bus before the road climbs steeply to the mountain town of Dalat. We spend approx 3.5 hours on the bus today.

Dalat is a pleasant hill station, formerly known as Le Petit Paris, and has been described as the most beautiful town in Vietnam. It was favoured by the French for its climate, and is now a popular honeymoon resort for the Vietnamese.

**Sammy Hotel Dalat or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 60 km / 37 miles

**Day 5****Cycle through Bidoup N.P.; to the coast and boat transfer to Whale Island**

Today's ride is predominantly undulating and approximately 30km downhill through pine forests and paddy fields as we descend nearly 1,500m travelling through the Bidoup Ba National Park. This area is home to rare pine forests as well as small villages inhabited by the ethnic minority people of the central highlands. Once we arrive at the coast, we head by bus (approx. 1.5 hours) to the coast near Nha Trang before boarding a boat to our tropical island retreat of Whale Island for the next two nights. Today you can cycle up to 100km according to preference.

**Whale Island Resort or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 100 km / 62 miles

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**Day 6****Cruise around islands with seafood lunch and snorkelling**

Having a rest from the bikes today we get the opportunity to really relax and unwind. We will join a boat trip in the morning for a spot of snorkelling and swimming in the turquoise sea before a seafood lunch is served. In the afternoon there is the option to visit a local fishing village, see the Whale temple or walk around the island to the viewpoint for a 360 degree view of the stunning mountainous coastline and the surrounding coves and white sand beaches.

**Whale Island Resort or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

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**Day 7****Drive to beautiful Dai Lanh Beach; coastal ride to Quy Nhon**

We set off early in the morning and ride to the beautiful fishing village of Dai Lanh. A short transfer out of town past the Po Nagar Cham towers brings us to a high point and from here today's ride is predominantly flat. The beautiful beach at Dai Lanh is a perfect place to stop for a swim (if road conditions and time permit) and lunch before continuing by bus around the spectacular coastal cliff road towards the town of Tuy Hoa and on to Quy Nhon. (Approx. 4 hours in the bus today).

**Seagull Quy Nhon Hotel or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 90 km / 55 miles

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**Day 8****Further coastal ride stopping en route at sand dunes; then transfer to Hoi An**

Leaving Quy Nhon we travel through a new economic zone over the Thi Nai Peninsula and Nhon Hoi Bridge, the longest sea bridge in Vietnam. Getting off our bikes we will visit a market, where it's not unusual to be pulled aside for a photo as this part of the country does not see many western tourists. The coast line features secluded bays, sand dunes and beaches with colourful fishing boats bobbing on the South China Sea. We will cycle until we arrive at Phu Ly and then drive to Hoi An. If time permits, we will cycle the last 12km once we turn off Highway 1 into Hoi An.

Hoi An, the original European trading port in Vietnam dating back to the mid-sixteenth Century is now a living museum, with attractive wooden merchant's houses and pagoda-style temples with Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese and European architectural influences. It is also a marvellous place to wander around and enjoy the thriving riverside market. We spend two nights in Hoi An which is also a fantastic place to buy local art or have some clothes tailor-made for you. It's best to bring a picture or a sample of what you want made. Approx. 6 hours in the bus today. Cycle approx. 50km.

**Hoian River Green Boutique or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 50 km / 31 miles

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**Day 9****Sightseeing in Hoi An; free afternoon**

This morning we take a guided walking tour of Hoi An to explore some of the structures of historical significance in the Old Town, including bridges, temples, wells and houses. Those less interested in architecture can cycle the 5km to the lovely Cua Dai beach or cycle to the Marble Mountains, which are 19km from town. These five marble hills, formerly islands, contain many caves, some of which were used as Buddhist (and Viet Cong) sanctuaries.

Also nearby is China beach, a famous US R & R spot in the war, and Da Nang, where there is a Cham Museum, which despite being in poor condition, is very interesting. It is also possible to visit My Son, one of the most important Cham temple sites in Vietnam where Cham kings were buried as early as the fourth century. Although wartime bombing has destroyed much of the site, there are a number of interesting stone towers and sanctuaries.

**Hoian River Green Boutique or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

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**Day 10****Ride over the spectacular Hai Van Pass; cycle and drive on to Hue**

Today we turn north again for the drive/cycle to Hue. The route traverses over the spectacular Hai Van Pass - the 'Pass of the Ocean Clouds'. The views are stunning though those who prefer to avoid the 580m climb can always take a lift in the support vehicle. Once at the top it will all seem worth it as you plummet back to the ocean, then continue through small villages and timeless rural scenes to the outskirts of Hue, from where we transfer to our city centre hotel. Approx 2.5 hours in the bus today. Cycle approx. 80km.

**Park View Hotel or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Distance covered:** 80 km / 49 miles

**Day 11****Explore Hue and surroundings by bike and boat; overnight train to Hanoi**

Hue is often claimed to be the cultural and historic centre of Vietnam and there is plenty to see. We take a guided tour of the city and surrounding tombs. The most memorable site is the citadel, with walls six miles in length: inside are the palaces and halls of the Mandarins, and the remains of the Forbidden Purple City, where only the emperor and his eunuchs and concubines were allowed. We then take a boat along the Perfume River to the elaborate tombs of the Nguyen emperors, who ruled Vietnam from Hue. Tu Duc's Tomb is very elaborate and set in beautiful gardens. Along the way we will visit the famous Thien Mu Pagoda. The pagoda was a centre for anti-government protests in the early 1960s and it houses the Austin car that transported a monk, Thich Quang Duc, to Saigon in 1963 where he burned himself in protest against the president. The photograph of his self-immolation was printed in newspapers all around the world. In the afternoon we will board the Reunification Express for the overnight ride to Hanoi, 600km to the north.

**Overnight Train**

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Distance covered:** 25 km / 15 miles

**Day 12****Arrive Hanoi; drive to Halong Bay; board boat and cruise/kayak among spectacular limestone formations**

We usually arrive in Hanoi in the early morning and stop for a local breakfast and a stretch of the legs, before we are met by our bus for an approximate 4 hour drive to Halong Bay. This is one of the most stunningly beautiful sights in South East Asia with around 3000 limestone peaks rising directly from the clear emerald sea. We cruise amongst this amazing karst scenery, stopping to kayak in the sea allowing us to get to places inaccessible by boat (weather permitting) and enjoy a seafood lunch on board. We overnight on board in twin share cabins with en suite facilities.

**Overnight Boat**

**Meals included:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Day 13****Further cruising in Halong Bay; return to Hanoi**

Visit Me Cung cave and enjoy further time to cruise the many islands of Halong Bay. We then return to Hanoi late afternoon. This charming city contains many beautiful old buildings and the atmosphere is completely different from that in Saigon in the south, mainly due to the much more conservative nature of the North Vietnamese. Also, unlike its industrial counterpart, the centre of Hanoi has a faded charm with broad tree-lined avenues dating from the French period as well as some attractive lakes and pagodas. In the evening there is the option to enjoy a performance of Hanoi's famous water puppets.

**Lenid Hotel or similar**

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Day 14****End Hanoi**

For land only clients, the tour ends this morning in Hanoi after breakfast.

**Meals included:** Breakfast

**Extend Your Trip****Angkor Wat Extension (from Siem Reap)**

'Discovered' enmeshed in the Cambodian jungle in 1860, Angkor, the ancient capital of the powerful Khmer empire, is one of the finest archaeological sites in the world, and not one to be missed. Built between the 9th and 13th centuries, the wonderfully preserved sprawling complex of temples and palaces is on a par with any great monument of the world with magnificent towers, sculptures and bas-reliefs. During this four-night extension you will also see all the key sites of Phnom Penh, a fascinating city undergoing a huge amount of change. You will travel between the sites in a private car or minibus, depending on how many people take part in the extension, accompanied by an English-speaking local guide. In the evenings, you will be free to enjoy the town. This trip extension is offered before the start of the MOV trip so you can do it at the beginning and then fly to Vietnam to start the cycling trip. The detailed itinerary can be found [here \(/au/cambodia-holidays/trip-extensions/angkor-wat-extension-start-siem-reap/xov\)](#).

Please ask your sales consultant for more details.

**Accommodation****Hotels, Boat & Sleeper Train**

11 nights comfortable hotels, 1 night boat with twin share cabins, 1 night sleeper train, soft-bed berths.

The accommodation on this trip is mostly in good quality hotels (mostly 3-4 star), and all nights are en-suite except the train.

During this trip we spend one night on the sleeper train, this being the best way to travel long distances with the locals. The journey between Hue and Hanoi is quite comfortable although despite being first class, it is still quite basic. You will be in a 4 man cabin, (occasionally 6 depending on season) and bedding is provided, although some travellers prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. On occasion, passengers of different genders will be required to share a compartment and there will be occasions where you'll be sharing with local people who are not part of your group. Most trains have a dining carriage but people generally stock up on snacks before the journey.

On the boat in Halong Bay, we stay in en-suite twin cabins.

Our overnight spot on Whale Island is regarded as an absolute highlight for many, however, it is basic. You will stay in bamboo thatched bungalows each with mosquito nets, fans and en-suite bathrooms. The simplicity of island life and this overnight spot really makes it idyllic but you should be prepared for it to be a bit different to the hotels used for the rest of the trip.

Please be advised that the accommodation listed in each location on the day to day itinerary are the standard hotels used. However, there may be some departures where groups stay at similar hotels of the same standard and quality.

Single supplements are available (on request) and only available for nights spent in hotels during the trip. Please advise the sales team at the time of booking if you would like to request a single supplement.

*Where a single supplement is available, paying for a single only guarantees a room for single use. It does not always mean a twin or double room will be provided for sole occupancy.*

Single supplement from \$492.00 AUD

## Food & Transport

### Eating & Drinking

All breakfasts, 10 lunches and 1 dinner are included.

Thanks to the tropical climate, the long coast and the gigantic range of mountains, Vietnam is blessed with numerous varieties of culinary offerings and consequently maintains its reputation as one of the healthiest cuisines in the world that still packs a punch with delicious, fresh and fiery flavours.

Vietnamese food relies on fresh fish, vegetables, rice and a whole myriad of verdant herbs and spices; lemongrass, ginger, basil and lime all play an important role in the cuisine. The Chinese and French influence is felt throughout the country where you are just as likely to be offered a Banh Mi (stuffed baguette) as you are a hot steaming bowl of Pho (noodle soup).

Each dish is prepared with the Asian principle of Wu Xing in mind (the five elements); meaning that the perfect combination of spicy, sour, bitter, salty and sweet is the ultimate aim. Be sure to also seek out the national beverages; Vietnamese coffee is served iced and sweet with condensed milk, a real sugar and caffeine hit, and beer hoi (local beer, brewed daily) is served on most street corners in the North out of large plastic jugs that are perfect for sharing.

Food is cheap in Vietnam and you can generally avoid the spicier food if you wish. Western food is readily available almost everywhere.

Vegetarians are well catered for but please inform us before departure of any special dietary requests.

Please note that in SE Asia the availability of certain specialised products for restricted diets, e.g. gluten-free or dairy-free, is minimal or non-existent and we strongly recommend you bring these specialised dietary items from home.

You may find it beneficial to bring some 'cycling snacks' with you from home if you have high energy bars or gels that you like to use during a ride.

For those who wish to contribute, a kitty is normally arranged - fresh fruit, nuts, biscuits and local snacks are all provided from the snacking kitty along with even homemade lemonade if the season is right!

### Transportation

Throughout the tour, we use a private coach/mini-bus, which will be quite comfortable, usually with air-conditioning. There are a couple of long driving days on this trip (up to 6 hours). Road conditions are generally good and improving all the time in Vietnam, however progress can be slow in the main cities due to traffic. The train journeys are normally on time, but you may experience delays and departure times can change without notice. Boats are used at various points in the itinerary; these are nearly always private, and vary from converted trawlers to small riverboats. The coach will accompany the riders all the time, allowing you substantial flexibility to cycle as much or as little as you like, plus a support truck for the bikes and baggage.

#### Tet Holiday Period (Vietnamese New Year)

During the Tet holiday period, 3-10 February 2019 and 21-30 January 2020, and two weeks either side of Tet, our itinerary is subject to minor change as despite booking hotels and trains in advance, rooms and seats are difficult to obtain during this busy festive period when people are travelling home to celebrate with their families. It is unlikely that changes will occur and if they do it is likely we will just need to use alternative accommodation.

## Weather & Seasonality

### Weather Information

The weather will be hot and humid throughout with temperatures during the day usually between 28°C and 34°C. It is only a little cooler at nights.

There is quite a range of seasons between the north and the south: the south up to Hue has a distinct dry season between December to April and then a rainy season from May to November when it tends to come in short heavy bursts with bright sunshine in between. Hanoi is cool in autumn, and even gets chilly between November and February (with a drizzly rain).

There is no ideal time to visit Vietnam; it is quite pleasant at any time of year, though due to the shape of the country it is unlikely that the weather will ever be perfect for the entire duration of any trip.

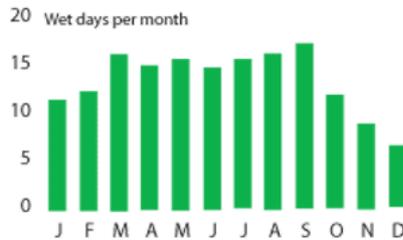
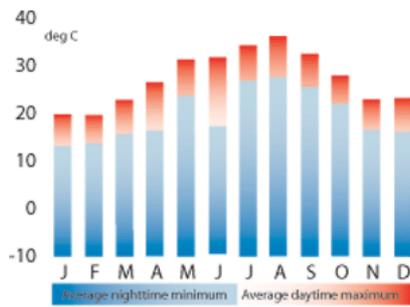
Please be aware that the boat trip on Halong Bay can be subject to short notice change if certain adverse weather conditions develop during your trip. These could occur all year round, but especially in monsoon season (from October to April). Boat trips on Halong Bay are governed by the local authorities who are authorised to make such appropriate safety decisions. If your Halong Bay trip is affected by adverse weather, this could either result in a reduced excursion on Halong Bay for your group, or less likely, the need to re-arrange the itinerary if it is not possible at all to go out on Halong Bay. Whilst this is not a frequent occurrence, our local team and leaders are well equipped to handle such situations and have long offered appropriate options to groups in the instances where this may occur.

If you go to Cambodia for the Angkor Wat extension, the weather will be hot and humid all year round. The dry season is late October to May and the monsoon is normally between May and October; though there is an obvious transitional time between those settled periods.

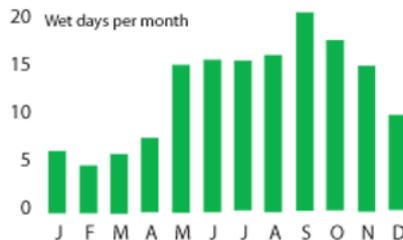
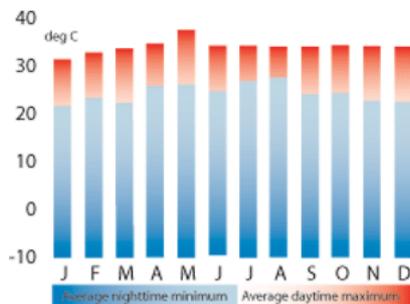
The dry season is as it sounds, with hot days and generally clear skies, though you can expect the odd shower. The monsoon is characterised by short, sharp bursts of rain and is generally overcast all day though this does not detract from the enjoyment of the place; you just need to take an umbrella or buy a cheap local poncho!

### Weather Charts

#### Hanoi



### Saigon



## Joining Instructions

### Travelling flight inclusive from London: 16 days

The group flight from London is an overnight flight departing the day before Day 1 of the itinerary.

### Flights from London

We normally use the scheduled services of Malaysian Airlines (depending on availability). As flight timings and schedules change regularly we recommend you call one of our specialist sales staff or your agent to confirm up-to-date timings. Please note timings may change at a later date and cannot be confirmed until approximately two weeks before departure.

### Travelling land only: 14 days starting in Saigon and ending in Hanoi

Your trip normally starts at our accommodation in Saigon in the evening of Day 1 of the itinerary. Details of how to reach the start point are provided in the Final Joining Instructions - sent approximately two weeks before departure.

As advice about luggage allowances for both hand and hold luggage is subject to change, we suggest you check the airline's website for the latest information prior to your departure. The usual, standard check-in baggage weight allowance is 20kg.

### Regional Flights

The Flight Inclusive price is based on a London departure, but we are happy to tailor this to your local or regional airport. **Please ask about flights from local or regional airports. (/au/regionaldepartures)**

If booking regional flights other than with Exodus, you must allow a minimum connecting time (in addition to the international check-in time) of 1 hour at Gatwick, and 1.5 hours at Heathrow; this is longer than the official minimum, but baggage handling is known to be subject to delays.

### Free Transfers

Exodus offers FREE airport arrival and departure transfers on any flight for this trip, for both Land Only and Flight Inclusive clients. Unless specified otherwise, the transfer will be to the Exodus start (or pre-tour) hotel and from the end (or post-tour) hotel, and will be on the date on which the tour starts/ends; transfers to other hotels in the same city and/or on different dates may attract an extra charge. Transfers may be shared with other Exodus customers on the same flight, or on a flight with similar arrival times. All those taking advantage of the free airport transfers must provide full flight details for both arrival and departure in advance.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers will be sent to you as part of our Final Joining Instructions. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

## Transfers Details

Free transfers are only applicable if booked in advance directly through Exodus before a trip commences.

**Location start:** Saigon

**Location end:** Hanoi

## What to Take

### Essential Equipment

- Casual clothes. As it is generally hot and humid, light cotton clothing is recommended for most of the trip, though it will be cold in Hanoi between November and early March and you should bring a warm jacket, woolly hat, and trousers if you are travelling at that time.
- Cycling helmet (compulsory on this trip)
- A first aid kit is carried on each trip, but you should bring your own first aid kit with diarrhoea treatment, painkillers, rehydration sachets, plasters and a blister treatment kit.
- Insect repellent is also highly recommended. Repellent containing DEET is thought to be highly effective.
- Warm clothes/layers for the overnight train journey, especially in the cooler months.
- Refillable water bottle (1-2 litre capacity)
- Lightweight waterproof jacket or poncho/umbrella
- Strong sun cream and sun hat
- A swimming costume

There will be plenty of opportunities to get laundry done locally at a very affordable price so fine to pack light.

We believe in reducing our negative environmental impacts wherever possible, this goes for when you need to spend a penny in the great outdoors! If no toilet facilities are available at some of the planned stops or during our ride, there may come a time when you need to go to the loo behind a tree/bush/rock. To avoid leaving toilet paper behind we recommend taking biodegradable dog poo/sandwich bags with you. Once you have done your business you can pop the used toilet roll in here and take it with you to dispose of when there are appropriate facilities available.

### Water Included

Plastic bottles are a big issue in many countries where recycling isn't yet widely available; they often end up in landfill sites or get burnt, both processes are harmful to the environment and we would like to reduce our impact here. For your trip we provide an alternative to single-use plastic bottles in order to reduce the amount of plastic used. This means that safe drinking water will be available throughout so all you need to do is bring a bottle to re-fill along the way. Please add this to your packing list!

### Optional Equipment

- Spare or extra long sleeved shirts and light trousers are good for helping to keep mosquitoes off during the evenings.
- You may wish to pack a bag that can be used as an overnight bag as for the night in Halong Bay as you will be required to leave your main bag behind at the previous hotel for the night.
- Torch/headtorch
- Fingerless cycling gloves
- Handlebar bag to carry personal items whilst cycling
- You might wish to pack a bandana/cloth as this does help some cyclists to keep cool in the heat

## Equipment Hire

**Local Bike Details:** Giant Rincon Disc mountain bikes with front suspension.

**Discount for bringing your own bike:** £150

A quality local hire bike is now included in the overall price of our cycling holidays. At the time of booking we will take your height in order to reserve equipment. There may on occasions be insufficient bikes available in the correct size; we will endeavour to find suitable alternative equipment but this cannot be guaranteed. We will tell you before you book whether suitably sized bikes are available.

Conditions

1. The equipment remains the property of the supplier and you may not sell, hire out or part possession with the equipment.
2. You must not misuse the equipment and must return it in the same condition as when received (ordinary wear and tear excepted). The supplier is entitled to charge for any damage caused to the equipment during the period of hire.
3. You must ensure that the equipment is adequately secured when not in use. In the event of the equipment being lost or stolen, you may be liable for the replacement value of the equipment
4. You must not use the equipment whilst under the influence of drink or drugs and should immediately notify the Supplier in the event of breakdown or loss.

### Bringing Your Own Bike

If you prefer the familiarity of your own bike, you may of course bring it along. Please advise us at the time of booking and you will receive a discount off the price of the holiday, as specified above. You will be responsible for any extra baggage charges, please speak to our Sales team for individual airline fees. Any clients bringing their own bike should ensure they have adequate cover for loss, damage or theft under their travel, home contents or a specialist insurance policy. If Exodus is confident that we have taken all reasonable care to ensure the safety of your bike, in the rare event of loss, damage or theft you will need to claim under your own insurance policy.

### Extra Bike Bits

You may like to bring your own pedals and saddle (excluding the seat post) or gel saddle cover to fit to the hire bikes. We encourage this, if it is your preference. However, please note that you are responsible for your own equipment, and removing your saddle/pedals at the end of the trip. We cannot guarantee the return of any bike parts left behind.

### Exodus Policy on Cycling Helmets

Wearing a helmet is mandatory for anyone taking part in any guided Exodus cycling holiday. Group members must bring their own helmets, as they are not available for hire, even if they are hiring a bike from Exodus.

For self-guided cycling holidays wearing a helmet is highly recommended. Customers who choose to ignore our advice do so entirely at their own risk and on the understanding that it may affect the validity of their travel insurance. It should also be noted that in some countries we travel to wearing a helmet is already a legal requirement.

Cycling of all kinds has its dangers and accidents can happen from time to time. Please ensure that you are properly prepared for the riding you are going to undertake.

### Recommended Cycling Clothing

Padded cycling shorts (with loose 'over-shorts' where recommended), breathable clothing, and a lightweight waterproof/windproof top. Shoes with relatively stiff soles are better for biking, but are not essential unless you are cycling long distances. Most people want to carry certain items with them during the day while cycling, for this we recommend a large bum-bag or small close-fitting daysack.

## Reading List

**Romancing Vietnam:** Justin Wintle (Penguin)

**Turtle Beach:** Blanche D'Alpuget (Penguin)

**The Quiet American:** Graham Greene (Penguin)

**Vietnam, Now: A Reporter Returns:** David Lamb (Perseus Books)

**Catfish and Mandala:** Andrew X. Pham (Penguin)  
**Vietnam: A History:** Stanley Karnow (Penguin)  
**Two Cities: Hanoi & Saigon:** Neil Sheehan (Picador)



## Practical Information

### Passport

#### Vietnam

All nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay. It is your responsibility to have the correct personal documents and to obtain your own visa, if one is necessary, in accordance with the regulations of the country you are to visit. The information below is primarily for UK passport holders, and other nationalities should check with their travel agent or the relevant embassies. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise, and any subsequent effects.

### Visa

#### Vietnam

A visa is no longer needed for British, German, French, Spanish and Italian citizens travelling to Vietnam (for all purposes) for a period of up to 15 days, and on the basis of meeting all conditions prescribed by Vietnamese laws. The visa exemption period will end on 30 June 2021. All other nationalities require a visa to enter Vietnam and this must be obtained prior to departure. For further information see [here \(https://www.exodus.co.uk/sites/exod/files/visa\\_sheet\\_vietnam\\_mar\\_19.pdf\)](https://www.exodus.co.uk/sites/exod/files/visa_sheet_vietnam_mar_19.pdf)

**t=1H6h4u&\_\_hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555053323319.1555055960761.14&\_\_hssc=173457148.11.1555055960761&\_\_hsfp**  
 the FCO site and check under Vietnam / 'Entry Requirements'.

Visa regulations can change without notice: please check the current regulations in good time to obtain a visa if one is required.

### Vaccination

#### Vietnam

There are no mandatory vaccination requirements. Recommended vaccinations are: Tetanus, Polio, Typhoid, Hepatitis A and Diphtheria. The risk of malaria is slight, but you may wish to consult your GP or travel health clinic for further advice.

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 for Dengue, and therefore the best form of prevention is to avoid being bitten. We recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Zika fever is a mosquito-borne viral disease and a known risk in places visited on this trip. There is currently no vaccine or prophylaxis available, we therefore strongly recommend you take the usual precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

Travel health can often be something people forget about before going away, but a little preparation and knowledge can go a long way to help you stay fit and healthy while abroad.

The Travel Health Pro website recommends to have a rabies vaccination on this trip, as cycling is considered a higher risk activity.

The above information can change at short notice; as we are not qualified to answer all your questions about travel health we strongly recommend you contact your Medical Professional or a Travel Health Clinic at least 8 weeks prior to departure for up-to-date information. Please note: vaccinations that are routinely recommended to residents of the UK, North America or Australasia are not considered to form part of the travel health advice, and you should ensure these are kept up to date where necessary.

For additional information please visit: <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/countries>)

#### Insurance - are you adequately covered?

It is a condition of joining any of our holidays that you must be fully insured against medical and personal accident risks (to include repatriation costs and air ambulance or helicopter rescue services where appropriate). On arrival in destination for your trip, you will be asked to present details to your leader or local representative of your policy.

If you are resident in the UK we strongly recommend the **Exodus travel insurance policy (/au/insurance)**, this is specifically designed to cover all activities on your trip. If arranging your own policy please ensure that you are covered for all activities that are part of the trip, optional activities that you intend to take part in and/or on high altitude itineraries, that you are covered up to the maximum altitude of the trip.

### Local Time

**Vietnam's Timezone:** Asia/Ho\_Chi\_Minh +07 (GMT +07:00)

### Electricity

**Vietnam's Electricity:** 220 volts AC, 50 Hz. In Vietnam the US 2-pin plug is used in the south of the country, while the Euro 2-pin type is used in the North. It is worth having both adapters with you.

### Money

#### Vietnam's Currency

The national currency of Vietnam is the Vietnamese Dong (VND), with an exchange rate at the time of publication of approximately 30000 to the UK£ and 22000 to the US\$.

Although local currency is preferred, US dollars are widely accepted in Vietnam in tourist shops and restaurants. You can obtain Vietnamese Dong before travel or by using an ATM or changing money upon arrival.

### ATM Availability

ATM's are now widespread in Vietnam and are the easiest way of obtaining money, it is possible to draw a maximum 2,000,000 VND or approx. 60GBP/80-100USD in major cities in one go. Some ATM'S now allow a maximum withdrawal of 4,000,000 VND.

Credit card acceptance is now widespread in cities in Vietnam at restaurants and shops catering for tourists.

If you would like to bring cash there will be ample opportunity for you to change this. Sterling and US Dollars are both easily exchanged.

As you will probably be carrying much of your money in cash, we strongly recommend using a money belt.

### Extra Expenses & Spending Money

You will need about GBP 150-200/USD 195-260 for meals not included, which will allow you to eat well. Apart from the food, you should allow money to cover soft drinks (more if you like a beer/alcohol) and souvenirs.

Most groups also find it useful to operate a snacks kitty system to buy snacks and drinks for the group on the cycling days. If the group would like the leader to arrange this, the suggested amount is around GBP 15-20/USD 20-30 per person depending on the groups size.

### Optional Excursions

#### Hoi An

Tu Bon River boat trip GBP 5/USD 7

Marble Mountain entry approx. 80p/USD 1

My Son excursion from GBP 8/USD 11 depending upon numbers

### Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion, but is customary in Vietnam. In order to take the hassle out of tipping, the leader will suggest you contribute to a tipping kitty of approx. GBP 30- 35/ USD 40-45 per person. This is used by the leader to tip drivers, staff at hotels, on boats etc. but it is not used at restaurants. It is basically to ensure that the hassle is taken out of various activities for you. If you do not wish to contribute to a central pool for tips you are of course free to do so.

In addition (entirely at your discretion), a tip for the leader at the end of the trip is greatly appreciated if you are happy with the service you have received. As a guideline we recommend a contribution of 2GBP/3USD per day for your leader as a reasonable starting point.

The 'tipping kitty' explained above is entirely separate from any contribution to the tour leader. Our local staff are paid well and fairly for their work with Exodus.



### Responsible Tourism

Tourism can be a real help to local communities, providing income, positive cultural exchanges and a financial incentive to protect their natural environment. Ours is a 'total approach' to responsible tourism, covering everything from the way we plan and operate our trips to the practices of Exodus as a company.

We spend the nights in locally owned accommodations that employ local staff and use local produce whenever possible. This ensures that our visit is directly contributing to the local community. Cycling trips have very little detrimental impact on the environment and local residents as it is a quiet, low impact activity requiring comparatively little resources to support.

During the free afternoon in Hoi An, clients can plan a visit to 'Reaching out', a social enterprise that provides opportunities for people with disability to learn skills as artisans and gain employment so that they will be able to fully integrate with their communities and lead independent lives. Purchasing handmade gifts from them is a form of support to local production and its worthy cause.

When in Hanoi, we strongly encourage groups to have a communal meal at KOTO, which is an NGO that provides a two year course in hospitality, English and life skills training to 16-22 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many of the graduates have gone on to continue developing their careers at KOTO restaurants or have gained employment elsewhere with their training making it a great initiative to support.

In March 2019, Exodus Travels launched the **Exodus Travels Foundation** ([https://www.exodus.co.uk/foundation?](https://www.exodus.co.uk/foundation?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555053323319.1555055960761.14&__hssc=173457148.11.1555055960761&__hsfp=18553143)

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[https://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel?](https://www.exodus.co.uk/responsible-travel?__hstc=173457148.f2ba21d2ccabb491f5924f600f1a2876.1547513532465.1555053323319.1555055960761.14&__hssc=173457148.11.1555055960761&__hsfp=18553143)

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### Exodus Community

#### Join the Exodus online community

Don't forget to visit the Community area on our website. You can view the range of Exodus videos and podcasts, read trip write-ups which have featured in the national media and take advantage of some special deals on travel gear and equipment.

In the Community Travel Forum you'll find the Departure Lounge where you can discuss your trip with fellow travellers before you depart. When you get back from your holiday remember to upload your images to the relevant trip page on our website. This helps other people see what our holidays are really like and you'll be entered automatically into our monthly photo competition.

To make full use of the **Community (/au/community)** you'll need to join My Exodus. It's free, registration is simple and easy, so what are you waiting for?

## Important Information

### On all guided trips

Although our leaders are well trained to deal with different capabilities, if they have any concerns about someone's ability to safely partake in an activity, or their impact on other people's enjoyment, we authorise them to take necessary action which, in some circumstances, may involve asking someone to miss that activity.

Although rarely enforced, by booking this trip you agree to section 16 of our Booking Conditions which clearly states that our leaders have the authority to do this. In these circumstances we will ensure anyone sitting out is safely provided for and offered alternative options where possible. Refunds will not be provided for activities missed and customers may be liable for additional costs incurred.

### On all trips

In booking this trip you should be confident in your ability to participate in all activities described in these Trip Notes. If you have any doubt about your suitability you should call the Exodus office and ask to speak to one of the experts on this itinerary.

In an emergency, please contact our 24 hour out of hours service on +44 (0) 844 326 7041.

Every time that you travel abroad you should take the time to read the warnings in the **essential information (/au/about-exodus/essential-information)** in the brochure.

Full joining instructions including local emergency numbers, and details of how to reach the start point, will be sent to you approximately 2 to 3 weeks prior to departure. If you do not receive these at least a week before departure, or require them earlier please contact our office or your travel agent.

The information in these Trip Notes is given in good faith. Where differences exist between the Trip Notes and our current brochure or website, the Trip Notes supersede the brochure and website. All holidays can be subject to unexpected changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible where necessary. Occasionally, as stated in our brochure, it may not be possible to follow the itinerary as planned. This may be for a variety of reasons - climatic, political, physical or other. In these circumstances we will make the best possible alternative arrangements that maintain the integrity of the original itinerary.

As fuel prices, airport taxes and exchange rates fluctuate, and airlines manage their rates to match demand, it is proving harder than ever to guarantee our Flight Inclusive prices. Although we endeavour to keep our website as accurate as possible, daily fluctuations mean that our Flight Inclusive price may be out of date. For accurate prices we recommend that you contact one of our Travel Experts, or your Travel Agent.

### TRAVEL AWARE -STAY SAFE & HEALTHY ABROAD

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office and the NHS have up-to-date advice on staying safe and healthy abroad. For more on security, local laws, plus passport and visa information, see <https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/> (<https://travelaware.campaign.gov.uk/>)

Keep informed of current travel health news by visiting <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/> (<https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/>)

Advice can change so check regularly for updates.

For all latest travel information about your holiday, please visit our **Travel Safety Advice (/au/travel-safety-advice)** page.



## How to Book

### 1. Check availability

Go online to check availability, or contact us by phone or email.

### 2. Secure your place

You can provisionally hold a place on this trip, usually for between three and seven days.

### 3. Complete your booking and payment

When you're ready to book, go to [www.exodus.co.uk](http://www.exodus.co.uk) ([/au/homepage](#)) for online booking, book over the phone or you can complete a booking form (available online or on request by calling us). We accept all major credit and debit cards, or you can pay by cheque. Book with confidence: Exodus is fully licensed and bonded as a tour operator. We hold Air Traffic Organisers Licence (ATOL) number 2582 issued and bonded with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). We are also bonded to the International Air Transport Association (IATA) and we are members of the Federation of Tour Operators (FTO) and ABTA - The Travel Association. This means you can book your Exodus holiday with confidence, as all monies paid to us for your trip are fully protected.

### TRIP NOTE VALIDITY

These Trip Notes are valid from the "Current as" date on page one. They will occasionally be updated post booking and pre-departure; if there are any updates that significantly impact the inclusions or itinerary bookers will be written to separately. All customers will also receive a link to the most up-to-date version of the Trip Notes with their Final Joining Instructions pre-travel.

Version 1