

Vietnam Essence: Nature & Traditions 12 days

Trip overview

Embark on a fascinating 12-day journey through Vietnam, where ancient traditions and modern energy intertwine to create an unforgettable adventure. From sailing among limestone formations in Halong Bay to wandering the lantern-lit streets of Hoi An, each day promises authentic encounters with local culture and history. Savor regional flavors, explore imperial legacies, and share unique moments with welcoming communities for a deeply immersive experience.

- **Durations:** 12 days
- **Trip outline:** Hanoi - Halong Bay - Ninh Binh - Hue - Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh City - Mekong Delta
- **Price from:** US \$1493/person
- **Tour inquiry:** <https://besttratetours.com/vietnam-tours/vietnam-essence-nature--traditions-12-days.html>

Trip outline

day	Activities	Accommodations	Meals
Day 1	Hanoi – First Glimpse of the Ancient Capital	Hotel in Hanoi	NA
Day 2	Hanoi – Cultural Heart and Vibrant Tradition	Hotel in Hanoi	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 3	Halong Bay – Dreamlike Nature	Halong Bay Cruise	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 4	Halong Bay and Ninh Binh – From Waters to Rice Fields	Hotel in Ninh Binh	Breakfast, Brunch
Day 5	Ninh Binh – Imperial History and Authentic Nature	Hotel in Hue	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 6	Hue Imperial Treasures - Head to Hoi An	Hotel in Hoi An	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 7	Hoi An – Historic Charm and Cultural Fusion	Hotel in Hoi An	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 8	Hoi An – Free Day to Discover at Your Pace	Hotel in Hoi An	Breakfast
Day 9	Ho Chi Minh City – Modern Pulse and Traces of the Past	Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 10	War Museum and Cu Chi Tunnels	Hotel in Can Tho	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 11	Mekong Delta – Floating Life and Local Traditions	Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 12	Ho Chi Minh City Departure	NA	Breakfast

Itinerary

Day 1: Hanoi – First Glimpse of the Ancient Capital

Welcome to **Hanoi**, where tradition and modern life blend seamlessly at every corner. Upon arrival at the airport, our driver will be waiting to take you directly to your hotel.

NOTE: Check-in time is usually at **2:00 PM**, but early check-in is available for an extra fee.

To start your journey, join our local guide with an *optional food tour* for a tasting of Vietnamese traditional dishes — a perfect way to experience the city's authentic flavors and connect with Vietnamese culture.



Meals: NA

Accommodation: Hotel in Hanoi

Day 2: Hanoi – Cultural Heart and Vibrant Tradition

Discover **Hanoi**, a city where history and daily life intertwine everywhere. Begin with a visit to the [Temple of Literature](#), Vietnam's first university and an important symbol of its educational heritage.



Then head to **Ba Dinh Square**, known for its historical significance as the site of key national events, and see the [Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum](#), dedicated to the country's most beloved leader. You'll also visit the unique **One Pillar Pagoda**, famous for its special architecture.

NOTE: We will not enter the Mausoleum, as it remains closed to the public for several months each year.



Later, wander through the lively **Old Quarter**, a maze of alleys filled with shops, temples, and traditional flavors. Walk along **Hoan Kiem Lake**, steeped in local legends and always full of life.

To end the day, taste authentic **Pho** at a local street stall and visit a bustling **market** to see the fresh ingredients that make Vietnamese cuisine so special.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hanoi

Day 3: Halong Bay – Dreamlike Nature

Around **08:00**, leave Hanoi's urban rhythm behind and dive into the unmatched beauty of **Halong Bay**, among the world's most stunning natural wonders. A calm sea dotted with thousands of limestone islands awaits you for a truly unique experience.

After about three hours, we'll board our cruise and glide past more than 2,000 limestone islands rising from emerald waters.



We'll have the chance to paddle our kayaks through the bay's emerald waters or slip in for a refreshing swim surrounded by towering limestone cliffs. And, with a bit of luck, we may spot one of the rare golden-headed langurs leaping gracefully among the trees — a truly special sight in this pristine spot of Vietnam.



Enjoy the peaceful sound of the waves, savor freshly prepared local dishes onboard, and watch the sunset over the bay. At the end of the day, rest in a cabin with panoramic views, drifting to sleep as the sea rocks you softly.

NOTE:

- The cruise is staffed with English-speaking guide only.
- The itinerary may vary depending on whether your cruise follows the Halong Bay route or the Lan Ha Bay route.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Accommodation: Halong Bay Cruise

Day 4: Halong Bay and Ninh Binh – From Waters to Rice Fields

In the morning, continue cruising through Halong Bay and enjoy brunch onboard before disembarking. Then travel about three hours by minivan to **Ninh Binh**, known as the “Halong Bay on land” for its striking karst landscapes and vast rice paddies.

Spend the night in a hotel or eco-lodge surrounded by the tranquility of the Vietnamese countryside.



Meals: Breakfast, Brunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Ninh Binh

Day 5: Ninh Binh – Imperial History and Authentic Nature

Discover Ninh Binh, where spectacular scenery meets imperial history. Visit the [Ancient Citadel of Hoa Lu](#), a testament to Vietnam's glorious past, and cycle through paths lined with rice fields and lotus flowers to reach the **Bich Dong Pagoda**, nestled among mountains.



Later, savor authentic local cuisine before boarding a traditional boat to explore the [Van Long Nature Reserve](#), a serene wetland sanctuary and home to the rare Delacour's langur.

At sunset, head to Hanoi airport for your flight to **Hue**, Vietnam's last imperial city, where you'll spend the night.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hue

Day 6: Hue Imperial Treasures - Head to Hoi An

Today you'll explore Hue, the former imperial capital that preserves the grandeur of the Nguyen dynasty. Visit the majestic [Imperial Citadel](#), a UNESCO World Heritage site, to discover its unique architecture. Then wander among the remnants of ancient temples and palaces while uncovering stories of Vietnam's imperial past and its sociopolitical history.

After the visit, we'll savor traditional Hue cuisine at the city's local restaurants.



We'll then explore the majestic **Minh Mang Tomb**, celebrated for its tranquil twin lakes and intricate decorative architecture, before continuing our journey to Hoi An.

If time permits, we'll take the scenic **Hai Van Pass** — one of Vietnam's most iconic mountain roads — on our way to Hoi An, often hailed as the most beautiful city in the country.

In the evening, you have free time to meander through the lantern-lit streets of the Hoi An Old Town, soaking in its timeless charm, or explore the lively stalls of the Night Market brimming with local crafts and flavors.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoi An

Day 7: Hoi An – Historic Charm and Cultural Fusion

Once a bustling international trading port, Hoi An welcomed merchants from across the globe, each leaving their mark on the town's architecture and culture.

Today, its streets still showcase this rich heritage — from ornate **Chinese Assembly Halls** and the iconic **Japanese Covered Bridge** to traditional Vietnamese houses and traces of French influence.



In the morning, we'll take a guided walking tour of the Old Town, discovering its unique cultural blend and timeless charm before returning to the hotel.

The afternoon is free for you to relax at leisure, or you may choose to join our *optional food tour* to savor Hoi An's famous local specialties.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoi An

Day 8: Hoi An – Free Day to Discover at Your Pace

Enjoy a full day in Hoi An to explore however you like. Relax on the beach, wander through charming streets, or sample more of the local cuisine.

You might also browse artisan shops or simply unwind and soak up the calm atmosphere that makes this town so special.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: Hotel in Hoi An

Day 9: Ho Chi Minh City – Modern Pulse and Traces of the Past

After breakfast, we'll head to Da Nang Airport for our flight to Ho Chi Minh City — Vietnam's vibrant largest metropolis and bustling economic hub.

Upon arrival, start discovering its dynamic contrasts, where French colonial buildings stand beside modern skyscrapers and traditional markets.



Visit the impressive **Notre Dame Cathedral** and the historic [Central Post Office](#), two architectural gems reflecting the colonial legacy. See the **City Hall Square** and the grand **Opera House**, symbols of the city's vibrant spirit.

Explore the bustling [Ben Thanh Market](#), perfect for experiencing local life, colors, and flavors. If you wish, you can join an *optional food tour* to sample the best of Saigon's cuisine.

Later, enjoy free time to explore and relax at the hotel.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City

Day 10: War Museum and Cu Chi Tunnels

In the morning, visit the [War Remnants Museum](#) to learn about Vietnam's history through real photos and artifacts.

Next, we'll journey to the **Cu Chi Tunnels** - an extensive underground network once used by Vietnamese resistance forces. Here, you'll discover how people lived, moved, and fought beneath the ground, with the option to venture into a section of the tunnels yourself.



By late afternoon, we'll travel to Can Tho, the heart of the Mekong Delta, to prepare for tomorrow's floating market experience.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Can Tho

Day 11: Mekong Delta – Floating Life and Local Traditions

Dedicate the day to exploring the fascinating **Mekong Delta**, a region of canals, villages, and floating markets that reveal southern Vietnam's authentic life. Your first stop is the famous [Cai Rang floating market](#), where

you'll see fruit, vegetables, and fresh products traded directly from boats.



Cruise along peaceful canals, discover traditional villages and palm-lined fields, and observe the relaxed pace and hospitality of local people. Visit a local family to share moments and learn about their daily life and customs.

Enjoy a homemade lunch prepared with fresh regional ingredients before returning to Ho Chi Minh City to rest and reflect on this unique experience.



Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Accommodation: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City

Day 12: Ho Chi Minh City Departure

On your last day, you'll have free time to enjoy Ho Chi Minh City at your own pace. You might savor your favorite dish one last time or shop for souvenirs at local markets and stores.

When it's time, a driver will take you to the airport for your return flight, bringing home unforgettable memories from this journey through Vietnam.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: NA

Booking Policy

Inclusion

- Shared transfers & tours (min. 4 pax)
- All tours mentioned in the program
- Official Spanish-speaking guides
- Domestic flights in the itinerary
- Baggage allowance: 20kg checked + 7kg carry-on
- Accommodation in listed or similar hotels
- Cruise accommodation as listed or similar
- Meals as per program
- Entrance fees to all visited attractions
- Spanish phone assistance

Exclusion

- International flights & visas
- Guide during airport transfers
- Drinks & meals not mentioned
- Travel & medical insurance
- Tips for guides & drivers
- Early check-in / late check-out
- Expenses due to force majeure, delays, cancellations
- Any services not mentioned

Cancellation Policy

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 30% of total rate

- Cancellation received from 10 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 50% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 10 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

- The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.
- For infants (<04 years old): FOC except for domestic flight tickets.
- 04 - under 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate.
- 04 - under 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate.
- 04 - under 11 years old in twin share: 90% adult rate.
- From 11 years old: count as an adult.

WHY BOOK WITH US?

Best Rate Guaranteed

Local consultants with rich of knowledge will give you the most suitable itineraries for you.

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