



The Grand Vietnam Family Adventure

A sophisticated approach to city life,
activities du jour, and the back streets of
SE Asia's most enigmatic countries

The Ascending Dragon (Vietnam)



This customized itinerary features a variety of activities and venues in Vietnam and Thailand. Northern Vietnam features the memorable market streets of the 1,000-year old capital, Hanoi followed by the highland of Sapa with overnight train then the supernatural islands and coves of Halong Bay. From here we'll take an active and cerebral journey through the classic heritage sights of Hue and Hoi An, followed by the frenetic energy of the commercial hub of Saigon and the fun Vespa trip to Mui Ne. From Saigon we cross borders and fly to Thailand for one last night in Bangkok before flying home!

The pace is practical and is enhanced by paddling, cycling and multiple forms of transport throughout.

Day 1:
Hanoi Arrival and
Multi-Transport
Adventure Hanoi



Flight: TG560, Bangkok-Hanoi,
07:45-09:35

Meals: -

[Church Boutique Hotel](#),

Deluxe Room (or higher)

Upon arrival in Vietnam, we'll meet you at the airport. Escort to your hotel, check in then enjoy the multi-transport adventure of the city! Hanoi is sometimes called the Paris of Asia. Grand colonial architecture, labyrinthine market streets and narrow lanes in the old quarter, Hanoi is an eye-popping experience. There are a couple great ways to get around, from cyclos to moto taxis. We'll hit a few of the must-see's with a flexible morning. While Hanoi has been the capital for 1,000 years and while there's plenty of history to be discussed, there are also a couple of essential experiences we need to get to right from the start: *pho noodle soup and café sua da*. Tonight enjoy dinner at your choice from one of the city's many great restaurants.

We know just the place!

Dinner Suggestion

Dinner is on your own tonight, but here are a couple of our favorite recommendations:

1. Don's Westlake | 16/27XuanDieu St, Tay Ho, Hanoi
T: 37192828 F: 37185998, Legendary Montreal-born chef par excellence of Hanoi!
Monsieur Donald Berger.
2. Club de l' Oriental | 22 Tong Dan, Hoàn Kiem.

Day 2:
Hanoi B-Sides and Eat,
Drink Vietnam



Meals: B, L

Accommodation: Livitrans, Private Cabin

Train Schedule: Livitrans train leaves Hanoi at 8.20pm, arrive Lao Cai at 5.00am

Grilled meats, fresh seafood, tangy salads and a cornucopia of sesame, garlic, cilantro, chili and lime are just the starting point for one of Asia's darling cuisines. This morning we'll give an introduction to Vietnamese food and drink, the basic ingredients, various styles, and of course lots of sampling. Starting out on foot from our hotel in the old quarter, we'll make our way to Cho Long fresh market for a visual and sensory overload of ingredients, from spices to unusual fruit to livestock and a dazzling variety of herbs and vegetables. Sampling is key, and we make a couple stops at cafés to experience a few bedrock culinary experiences: spring rolls, salad wraps, and of course Vietnamese coffee, not necessarily in that order.

Next it is time to attempt to work up an appetite for lunch with a historical walking escapade around the old quarter, ranging from Hoan Kiem Lake through the maze of market streets, to crumbling shophouses and hidden pagodas. Less than the historical and cultural focus of yesterday, this is about visual and sensory experiences, and soaking up the essence of Hanoi.

Lunch – a treat of local specialties, with the locals. Vermicelli noodles with a fantastic grilled pork roll broth and herbs, fresh garlic and chilies. We'll stretch out the walk, even tuck into the Hanoi Hilton for a peak, and then let loose on simply outstanding local

cuisine. Afternoon is free – for shopping, spa, or a nap of course. There is plenty of food still to find in the capital.

Tonight, we will take an overnight train from Hanoi to Lo Cai then have a short transfer to Sapa in the morning.



About Church Boutique Hotel

Church Boutique Hotel is a smart, boutique hotel in the heart of Hanoi's frenetic Old Quarter. Re-designed from an old Hanoi tube-house building, Church Boutique's rooms feature classy furnishings, luxury finishing's and stylish Vietnamese accents. A superb location near the lake, Church Boutique is a quiet gem in Hanoi.



About Livitrains Express Train

Livitrains Express Train is a newly built train and considered as one of the most luxurious trains in Vietnam with its equipment equivalent to a high-class hotel. The train is a joint venture between Vietnam National Coal and Mineral Industry Corporation and Vietnam Railway Corporation

Day 3:

Arrive in Sapa with walking tour in local village



Walking: 3-5km

Meals: B,L

Accommodation: Chau Long Sapa,
RPH New Wing

Arrive in Lao Cai in the early morning. Take an hour drive uphill to Sapa, giving you a glimpse of stunning scenery and impressive rice terraces. Have a light breakfast in a local restaurant then take a short walk around to explore Sapa town. Check in to your hotel and have lunch, then trek down to Cat Cat village, home of the Black H'Mong tribe. We will stop over at one of the very typical houses and learn about its architecture, local culture and custom.

Trek back to Sapa town, on the way visit the beautiful waterfall where the French built a hydro-power plant to supply the electricity for Sapa town residence during the colonial times.

Day 4:
Hiking, Biking and Local
Villages



Transportation: van, cycle

Hiking: approx. 8km

Biking: approx. 15km (paved road)

Meals: B,L,D

Topas Eco-Lodge, Deluxe Room

After breakfast, take an excursion with a walk through the town of Sapa and along a trail through vegetable gardens and rice paddy terraces. We trek from the town through pine forests and mountain valleys surrounded by French architecture. The trek will lead to many different breathtaking sceneries for pictures of Lao Chai, the home of the Black H'mong people via Tavan village which is the home of the D'zay tribe. The trek is an absolutely spectacular walk through rice terraces, river and tribal people wearing their traditional, colorful costumes. After a delicious picnic lunch, we'll trek to Tavan village - the home of the D'zay tribe. From Ta Van, ride bicycles to Topas Eco-Lodge. Upon arrival, check in and free at leisure.

About Topas Eco-lodge



Topas Eco-lodge is situated on a beautiful hilltop deep in the mountains of Hoang Lien National Park - 45 min outside Sapa town. With 25 mountain lodges all built as rustic chalet-style single bedroom houses from local white granite. Each of our bungalows presents a casual style with a private balcony, from where you can enjoy the magnificent view of the towering peaks and endless valleys dotted with ethnic minorities' villages.

Day 5:
Hiking in Sapa



Hiking & biking: approx. 15km
(paved road).

Meals: B,L,D

[Topas Eco-Lodge](#), Deluxe Room

Full day hiking around Topas Eco-Lodge. During the walk you will witness the stunning views of the valleys and rice paddy terraces. At noon you will arrive at the Lech village, inhabited by the Red Dao minority. From the village, you will follow the hill trails up to the main road, enjoying the surrounding breath-taking views of dotted peaks, endless rice terraces and the beautiful Muong Bo River.

Day 6:
Visit Hilltribe village and
local market before
overnight train back to
Hanoi



Hiking: approx. 5-7km

Meals: B

Train schedule: Livitrans train leave
Sapa at 7.30pm, arrive Hanoi at
4.30am.

Accommodation: Livitrans, private
cabin

After breakfast, we'll start hiking to the tribal village, enjoy sightseeing of the plum and peach gardens and meet the Flower H'Mong and other tribal groups who will be heading to the local market. Visit their home to observe and learn how to make the corn wine, and even eventually tasting it!

This evening we will be on the overnight train back to Hanoi.

NOTE: in Sapa, you will have a private guide for hiking biking portions. Sapa is in the mountains but there are routes with more or less degrees of inclines and difficulty, touring is flexible and geared towards how you feel that day.

Day 7:
Hanoi to Ha Long Bay



Meals: B, L, D
[Shared Prince Junk](#), Private Cabin

Depart at 8:00 am: A morning drive (3 hours) takes us to Ha Long Bay along the Red River delta. Upon arrival our crew welcomes us to the junk and we set sail into gorgeous Bai Tu Long Bay to see amazing karst islands. Halong Bay is a geological marvel and we'll explore a couple of the fishing villages by kayak and have time to relax or swim on the boat for sunset

About Pilgrimage Village



The Indochina group have nicely re-fitted several classic Vietnamese trading junks into comfortable, 2 and 4 bedroom shared cruising yachts. The Junks have a nice communal area and wide sun deck.

A coffee machine – of course – and with great selection of wine making sure mornings and evenings are set to sail.

Day 8:
Halong Bay: Exploring
Cap La, Cong Dam, Cong
Do



Meals: B, L, D
[Shared Prince Junk](#), Private Cabin

This morning why not enjoy breakfast is the open air onboard before we set off to explore more rock formations and a kayak through hidden lagoons in Cong Dam geological park. They'll be time to sunbathe, relax or swim before a BBQ lunch on a deserted beach.

This afternoon let's meet some locals, explore lagoons, relax, kayak or go for a swim before a wonderful dinner on board.

Day 9:
Back to Hanoi then take
a flight to Danang then
Hoi An



Flight: VN0177, Hanoi – Danang,
19:00 – 20:15
Meals: Brunch
[Vinh Hung Emerald Resort](#), Emerald
Riverview

With Halong’s stunning backdrop for a sunrise, things come curiously into light. Enjoy the morning cruising the bay, taking it all in from the upper sundeck. Before noon we’ll get off the junk and journey back to Hanoi airport for your flight from the capital into Central Vietnam. Settle into your comfy riverside hotel. This medieval port town dates to the 16th century, and boasts an eclectic mix of Vietnamese, Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese and French architecture.



About Vinh Hung Emerald Resort

Set in the tranquil district of An Hoi, Vinh Hung Emerald Resort is located on the banks of the romantic Thu Bon River and within 10-minute walking distance to the ancient town of Hoi An.

The resort offers 52 well-appointed rooms with free wireless Internet access. All rooms are elegantly designed to maximize their views over the garden, the swimming pool and the river.

Day 10:
Charming Hoi An – Biking
in the villages - cooking



Cycling: 15-25 kms of flat, country roads

Meals: B, L

[Vinh Hung Emerald Resort](#), Emerald Riverview

Start the day with a country cycle to Tra Que vegetable village to enjoy the local culture. Visit the organic vegetable farms and herb gardens and experience a hands--on chance to farm using the traditional techniques of local farmers. Relax your body with a herbal foot massage. You will enjoy a Vietnamese Cooking Class: start with a market tour where we'll buy materials and food for your cooking class. Then we'll head to the cooking place to learn the best way to prepare and cook some of the most popular Vietnamese dishes. The payoff for all your hard work? Lunch! Enjoy the dishes you have cooked.

Free time in the afternoon to enjoy Hoi An

Day 11:
Cycling adventure to Hue
(cycling optional)



Drive: approximately 2hrs; cycling portions (optional) between 30km-60km on flat paved roads

Meals: B, L

[Imperial Hotel Hue](#), Deluxe Riverview Room

Pedal-power is the order of the day as we cycle towards our next destination Hue, passing quaint villages, fantastic sandy beaches, endless green rice paddies and over three mountain passes. Today we'll make our way across Vietnam's geographical and psychological boundary between the north and south. You can bike as little or as much as you like on this day.

Along the way you'll see the Marble Mountains and spectacular Hai Van Pass overlooking Da Nang's coastline and the tele-famous sites around China Beach.

If you'd like to cycle, then typically cyclists take in the last 40km of the ride, while opting for the van ride over Hai Van Pass. Your wish is our command – and the effort will be rewarded with gorgeous accommodations in the ancient capital of Hue.



About Imperial Hotel Hue

Located in the central of Vietnam, Hue was the capital city of the last Dynasty of Vietnam. Hue is the only place where many historic, cultural, architectural, artistic values are preserved. The majestic 16-floor Imperial Hotel Hue is nestled along the famous Perfume River, conveniently close to all the historical sites this UNESCO World Cultural Heritage city has to offer.

Day 12:
Historical Hue



Cycling: 15km-25km mostly flat,
village roads

Meals: B, L

Imperial Hotel Hue, Deluxe Riverview
Room

Known as the Imperial City and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Hue was home to the Nguyen Dynasty from 1805-1945, making it one of Vietnam's most historically important sites. Cycle to Hue's garden--houses, a cultural legacy from the Nguyen Dynasty over 200 years ago. Continue on your ride through the rice plantations and the bucolic Vietnamese countryside to the Thanh Toan village, located 8km away. Free--wheeling along the river will amaze you with dotted temples on the banks, the typical countryside scenario of the mothers washing their linen while their children are biking back home from school.

Day 13:
Brace yourself for Ho Chi
Minh City (Saigon)



Flight: VN1371, Hue- Saigon,
08:30-09:50

Meals: B,L

[The Grand Hotel](#)

NOTE: At 14:00pm. Vietnam Vespa
Team will pick you up at the hotel for
bike and driving orientation.

With an early flight from Hue we'll arrive in Saigon mid-morning and go directly to the stunning Cu Chi Tunnels.

Cu Chi Tunnels - the phenomenal Cu Chi Tunnels are where the Vietcong dug 250 km of passageways from the Cambodian border towards Saigon, eventually capturing it. It's truly astounding what they constructed and you'll have to squeeze through most of these very narrow passageways. Return to Saigon by mid-day and take the afternoon off..



Evening Scooters in Saigon - this evening we'll enjoy a motorcycle journey (as a passenger!) through the vibrant streets of the city, ending at one of Asia's most chaotic intersections where we'll show you a good place to hoist a few mugs and allow the symphony of movement to entertain us

About The Grand Hotel



Located at the southern end of famous Rue Catinat, The Grand is an elegant landmark that has stood proudly since 1930. As one of Indochina's original stately city hotels, The Grand is art deco, French chic, even features an iron-caged antique elevator. Get out your Graeme Green novel and step back into vintage Saigon.

Day 14:
Enjoy Vespa ride and
Camping



Meals: B,L,D
[Mom Da Chim Resort](#)

We meet on the second morning of the tour at 8:00am. for a short drive to Saigon Coast right below Ho Coc Beach then we'll start our ride along the tropical coast through Ho Coc, Long Hai Village and Binh Chau (130 km).

In the late afternoon, we'll drive on through Ho Tram and La Gi to Mui Ke Ga. Come evening, we'll decamp to resort in Mui Ke Ga for dinner and a well-earned night of four-star slumber.

About Mom Da Chim Resort



Mom Da Chim - Lazi Beach Resort is located 500m to the seaside cliffs. This is the ideal destination for you to enjoy a relaxing space and comfort meaningful. The resort offers many amenities such as free Wi-Fi throughout the resort, 2 pools (freshwater and saltwater), tennis court, gym, spa, beach soccer and etc. The resort also located very close to the sights and excursions of Binh Thuan.

Day 15:
Vespa Trip to Mui Ne



Meals: B,L,D
[Anantara Mui Ne](#) – booked on own

After breakfast at Mom Da Chim, we'll hit the pavement again for our second day of riding. The morning's journey takes us along the scenic coastal road from Mui Ke Ga to Phan Thiet (70 km) and its sister town to the north, Mui Ne. On the way in, we'll pay a visit to ancient Cham ruins just south of Mui Ne and stop for a fresh seafood lunch overlooking the crashing surf of the South China Sea. After lunch we will continue to ride around the coastal village and discover the local life of the fishing village. After that we will transfer you back to hotel.

About Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa



Set on Mui Ne's pristinely sweeping beach, Anantara Mui Ne Resort & Spa is an oasis of elegance and comfort offering a unique and unforgettable way to experience the southern coast of Vietnam. Mornings spent by the sea. Afternoon hikes through nearby sand dunes. A soothing spa treatment before starlit evening drinks on the beach.

Day 16:
Day at Leisure in Mui Ne



[Anantara Mui Ne](#) - booked on own

Enjoy your down time at Anantara Mui Ne before a flight to Bangkok tomorrow

Day 17:
Fly to Bangkok, Thailand



Meals: -/-
Flight: FD 655, Saigon-Bangkok-Don
Muang, 15:50–17:20
[Ariyasom Villa](#), Deluxe Room

In the morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight to Thailand. Upon arrival, you will be met by your driver at the airport and transferred to your hotel. This evening, enjoy the night walking trip.

About Ariyasom Villa



A true gem in the city, Ariyasom is a lovingly converted and expanded house dating from 1942. Colonial charm and Thai design combine to create a sublime environment in the heart of Bangkok. Each room is individually decorated and the hotel's design is appointed with quality local and imported materials – old re-cycled teak floors, antique and reproduction furniture, Thai silk drapes.

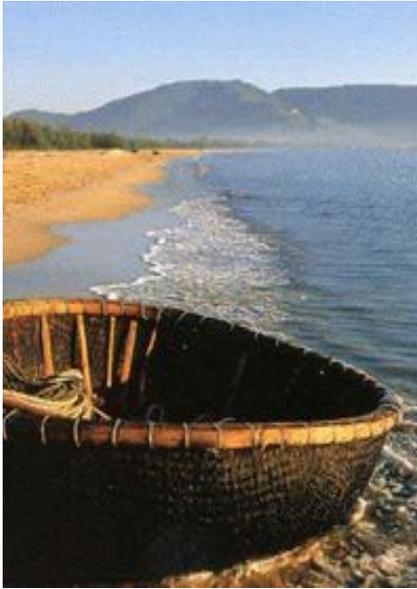
A gorgeous pool, yoga and meditation pavilion, spa, natural restaurant and prime location make Ariyasom an elegant sanctuary in the city.

Day 18:
Departure



Meals: B
Flight: flight back home
10:10-15:50

We will transfer you to the airport for your departure flight back home. It has been a pleasure hosting you!



The Smiling Albino Service Difference

We understand implicitly that a perfect adventure is much more than nice hotels, great meals and hassle-free logistics. For a travel experience to be perfect, all pieces must work together like a symphony. It is the fine details which our guests appreciate most, like cold face towels after a hike, electrolyte beverages for your day cycling, and wine uncorked when the moment is right. From local maps to bottled water and colorful anecdotes on the areas we visit, a Smiling Albino adventure is a thorough, intimately hosted experience. We will also provide you with a complimentary mobile phone for your use throughout your stay. You'll be treated with executive care during your Smiling Albino adventure.

We look forward to hosting you!

The Team at Smiling Albino

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