



SMILING
ALBINO



VIETNAM

A SUGGESTED JOURNEY

HANOI, HUE & HOI AN, HO CHI MINH CITY &
THE MEKONG DELTA



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HANOI

2 - 3 DAYS

SUGGESTED LENGTH OF STAY

DESTINATION: HANOI

WHY HANOI?

Hanoi is the Paris of Asia. The 36 labyrinthine streets of the Old Quarter weave together one of the most enigmatic and charming cities on earth. Modern Hanoi is the culmination of over 1,000 years of wartime history, rugged perseverance, and diverse cultural influences. The ultimate history-buff's city. Oh, but the food! Hanoi is foodie paradise, and the essential introduction to Vietnamese food facilitated through a range of local characters from within our network.

We'll customize outstanding family experiences to keep everyone engaged while providing learning opportunities, historical and culinary indulgence, and meaningful memories.



DAY 1 HISTORICAL HANOI WITH A LOCAL HISTORIAN

1 Guided by a local historian we will explore some of Hanoi's key historical war history sites such as the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Hoa Lo Prison aka the "Hanoi Hilton".

SEE THE CITY BY VINTAGE MINSK AND MEET WITH LOCAL VETERAN

We'll then get picked up by vintage Minsk Motorbikes for a pavement cruise to more hidden remnants of wartime Hanoi, including remains of crashed B52 bombers.

A highlight will be a visit to the house of legendary pilot Nguyen Hong My. My enjoys welcoming guests and chatting about the roller coaster of Vietnam-US relations, and how Vietnam has developed over the last few decades.

Lunch will be served at a vegetarian monastery in the West Lake district. Here we will learn about a conservative Buddhist outlook towards food, which, unsurprisingly, is connected to sustainability!

We'll find the perfect historian from our network of contacts. One of our friends is Dr. Huu Ngoc. Dr. Huu Ngoc, is Viet Minh veteran and renowned scholar.



DAY 2 VIETNAMESE FOOD GALORE WITH LOCAL FOODIE EXPERT

2 Grilled meats, fresh seafood, tangy salads and a cornucopia of sesame, garlic, cilantro, chilli and lime are just the starting point for one of Asia's darling cuisines.

Today we'll enjoy 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 Chau Long fresh market for a visual and sensory overload of produce. Sampling is key, and we'll make a couple of stops at cafés to experience a few bedrock culinary experiences: spring rolls, salad wraps and, of course, Vietnamese coffee.

We'll head for quintessential Hanoian egg-coffee, the story of which is linked both to the war with the French and the Sofitel Metropole hotel, and meet the family of the inventor Nguyen Van Giang who carry on his legacy.

Dinner at "Grandma Restaurant" for some authentic North Vietnamese cuisine.





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CENTRAL VIETNAM: HUE & HOI AN

4 NIGHTS

SUGGESTED LENGTH OF STAY

DESTINATION: CENTRAL VIETNAM

WHY CENTRAL VIETNAM?

Hue played a key role in the Vietnamese War and has some of the most important sites to visit. The splendor of the Imperial City and the famous Hue royal cuisine also make it a noteworthy stop.

Hoi An is one of the most charming towns in Vietnam but also has some of the most incredible food experiences. With our connections, we visit a local organic farm that provides in-depth and hands-on learning as well as meet up with local chefs that run the most happening haunts in town.

The experiences in Hue are focused on wartime history while in Hoi An it is focused on the foodie angle. The two, both very charming towns, perfectly blend together the two main themes of the trip.



CENTRAL VIETNAM: HUE

DAY 1 HISTORICAL HUE BY BICYCLE AND MEET WITH LOCAL VETERAN

We will visit Forbidden Purple City which, similar to the more famous Forbidden City in China, which was formerly accessible only to the elites of imperial Vietnam. We will then head outside of town to see the elaborate tomb of Emperor Tu Duc, the Nguyen Dynasty's longest-reigning monarch.

The bike ride will be rounded off with a visit to bunker hill, where hidden American war bunkers offer a fascinating glimpse into Hue's importance during the Vietnam War but also offer a spectacular view of the Perfume River and the surrounding floodplain. We will arrange an informative meeting with Nguyen Dac Xuan, a culture researcher and survivor from the bloody battle in Hue.

DAY 2 HUE'S BATTLEFIELDS AND DEMILITARIZED ZONE

Accompanied by an expert host we will travel up central Vietnam's coast in search of relics of the Vietnam War. Highlights include the Khe Sanh Combat Base, the 17th parallel, and the Vinh Moc tunnels. We'll also visit local villages along the way to learn about their way of life and how times have changed since the ravages of war.



CENTRAL VIETNAM: HOI AN

DAY 3 HOI AN ALL ABOUT FOOD

For early risers, a visit to the fish and central markets is like going back in time when life in Hoi An centred around these markets. Watch locals preparing for their day, then set out on a walking exploration of interesting nooks and crannies. Next, hop on a bike and head further afield to the countryside where, after enjoying the Vietnamese rural scenery along the way, we'll stop at the village of Go Noi. Here we'll get an insight into the life of farming communities (growing incredible organic vegetables), receive a cooking demonstration and dig into a local gourmet feast.

Relax in the afternoon and dinner will be at the acclaimed Morning Glory restaurant, where an organic focus reigns supreme and we'll meet the famous Chef Vy.

DAY 4 COOKING CLASS WITH CHEF DUC FROM MANGO MANGO

Today meet Chef Duc, a passionate and extremely talented chef with in-depth knowledge on the Hoi An food scene. Duc will take you on a culinary journey embracing a combination of refreshing flavors, beautiful presentations as well as a visit to Hoi An Markets to meet the vendors who supply him daily with some of the finest and freshest ingredients in Vietnam. Join Duc in an intimate hands-on learning experience at his boutique restaurant and reward yourself with a wonderful meal at the end of the class.



ABOUT MS VY

A food icon, published author and Vietnamese restaurant pioneer, chef Vy has built an empire for herself, becoming one of Vietnam's most formidable businesswomen.



ABOUT CHEF DUC

Born in Vietnam, Duc grew up in Texas. He cooked and surfed his way around the world. Chef Duc brings both his experiences growing up in Vietnam with a strong mother and his experiences traveling the world to his daily life, his cooking, and his restaurants.



HO CHI MINH & THE MEKONG DELTA

4 NIGHTS

SUGGESTED LENGTH OF STAY

DESTINATION: HO CHI MINH & MEKONG DELTA

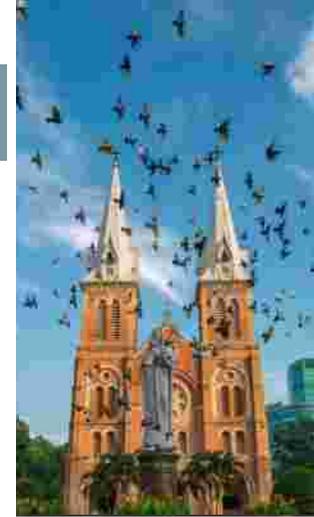
WHY HO CHI MINH CITY & THE MEKONG DELTA

Ho Chi Minh City, and wartime history go hand-in-hand. Referred to by locals as Saigon, the city is renowned for its delicious food. So, including Saigon is important to the theme of this trip!

Saigon is a prime destination where an interest in military history and food can be combined. We can customize some truly incredible family experiences which will keep everyone engaged while also providing learning opportunities.

The Mekong Delta is well known for its vegetable and fruit gardens, shrimp and rice farming, honey, coconut and coconut by-products. It is one of the garden areas of Vietnam with an integral role in the story of food, and especially organic food, in the south of Vietnam.

True immersion in the Mekong Delta is overlooked by many travelers, but for those interested in farming and organic food, it is worthwhile. You will see few places are as jam-packed with orchards, farms, canals, and markets as the countryside around Can Tho. Our star guides mostly come from this area.



HO CHI MINH CITY

DAY 1

SAIGON STREETFOOD SCAVENGER HUNT WITH SIDECAR MOTORCYCLE

Modeled on the “Ho Chi Minh City” Episode of the Netflix Series “Street Food”, the family will be chauffeured in sidecar motorcycles to find the city’s most iconic street food haunts and meet the personalities behind them.

You’ll be hosted by a notable Saigon foodie from within our extensive network.

The evening will be concluded with private drinks at our favorite hidden gem in Saigon: the Safe House, scene of the famous photograph of the last US helicopter evacuation from Saigon.



HO CHI MINH CITY

DAY 2 AMERICAN WAR JEEP TO CU CHI TUNNELS

2 The Cu Chi Tunnels are an incredible 250 km network of clandestine underground passageways the Viet Cong dug from the Cambodian border towards Saigon, eventually enabling them to capture the city. While heavily visited, it's astounding what they constructed and you'll have the opportunity to squeeze through many of these very narrow passageways.

This visit gives an endearing appreciation for the tenacity and sacrifices of the Vietnamese people. For that extra little bit of adventure and excitement we have arranged for you to go by private Former American Jeep with a stop en route at rubber plantation for a deluxe picnic lunch.

We can arrange for an authority on the military history of Vietnam, such as Australian journalist Walter Pearson, to host the adventure and provide an added layer of historical depth.



HO CHI MINH CITY

DAY 3 WARTIME SAIGON AMAZING RACE BY MULTI-TRANSPORT

Museums, hidden bunkers, secret headquarters, and other facets of storied wartime Saigon. These are best explored in an interactive way utilizing the various modes of transport available to Saigonans.

Think of it like an Amazing Race, the final result of which will be a deeper appreciation for the legacies of the Vietnam War.

A highlight will be lunch at Pho Binh restaurant, which was the headquarters of Viet Cong during the Vietnam war. Meet with the son of Mr. Binh. The owner of the house where they used the place for Tet Offensive 1968.



MEKONG DELTA

DAY 4 OVERLAND TO CAN THO AND FULL IMMERSION IN RURAL MEKONG DELTA

This morning we'll depart Saigon to explore the backwaters, abundant orchards and rural life on a journey through the Mekong Delta. Your host will be an expert Vietnamese guide who has spent their life here.

A few hours outside of modern Ho Chi Minh City we'll board our private boat and take on the waterways. We'll begin exploring some quiet passageways, and delve even deeper into the culture with a cycle through rural villages found along the river.

Next we'll return to our boat and take on the Cai Be Floating market with its famous cathedral backdrop. We'll escape the crowds and get in touch with island life through a local family who's spent generations in the Delta fishing and orchard farming. They'll prepare a Vietnamese feast for lunch with fresh ingredients from the region. Next we can relax on the boat while continuing on to the epicenter of the Delta, Can Tho city.



DAY 5 FLOATING MARKETS NEAR CAN THO

Can Tho is the perfect base for exploration of the many floating markets found in the region. We'll begin at the break of dawn and depart the hotel by boat to see the Cai Rang Wholesale market in the morning light when it's at its busiest. Take in all the vendors in their vibrantly painted boats and scan the horizon to see what's for sale, tied on top of tall poles on each boat, this is in the largest market in the Delta.

Next we'll head even further into the river system, the journey takes us through local villages and we can watch local life unfold, our destination is the mostly unvisited Phong Dien Floating market, here the scene changes from wholesale big boats to local paddle boats.

We'll have a coffee and take in the bustling market that is often over before most people start their workdays. From here we'll head back to the hotel for breakfast and spa or relaxation time poolside

.In the early afternoon we'll have a private helicopter take us back to Saigon.





THE SMILING ALBINO DIFFERENCE

AT SMILING ALBINO WE DON'T JUST CONNECT THE DOTS, WE CREATE THEM, AND DELIVER UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCES.

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.

You will be treated with executive care during your Smiling Albino adventure. We look forward to hosting you!

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