

Halong Bay, Angkor Wat & the Best of Southeast Asia

Southeast Asia Cultural Walking Adventure



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“Classic Journeys provides unbeatable access to experiences around the globe.”

— *Travel + Leisure*

The Treasures & Culture of Indochina

Most tourists never see Halong Bay in the morning. They miss the fishing junks sliding past limestone spires that thrust from the turquoise water. They can't imagine how the scent of fresh coffee hangs in the air as eagles float overhead. It's an extravagant sensory moment possible only because we spend the night on the water...on a luxury junk. And it's just one unique event we'll share with you in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. Of course we visit the great cities of Indochina. But we also stop at the simple homestead of a rice farmer...meet the enormous residents of a Laotian elephant preserve...wander the temples of Angkor with an expert guide...and stay in Indochina's finest hotels and resorts. Along the way, you'll wend your way through exotic markets, eat truly remarkable local specialties, and experience the traditional cultures you only find if you approach the region like a traveler, rather than a tourist.

DAY 1

SAIGON & MEKONG DELTA

- Cruise the Mekong River by traditional long-tail boat
- Enjoy a—very—leisurely bike ride between colorful local villages in the Mekong Delta

Saigon is a lively, high-energy metropolis, where futuristic architecture and technology meet the traditional and the historic. To understand what the city is today, it's helpful to go back in time outside of Saigon to "Coconut Island," where many of its people still practice centuries-old methods of production. Exploring with your guide, you'll go into areas untouched by commercial tourism, visit with local people and be welcomed into the villages they call home, while navigating on and along the peaceful tributaries they use as a part of their daily life.

You'll have the opportunity to try all sorts of transportation today, including the iconic xe loi (a sort of motorized cart) that the locals use to get around the village of Huu Dinh out to its green fields and gardens. A short walk leads to the river by Huu Phuoc Bridge, where your boat captain is waiting for you to navigate the small canals with their lush tropical scenery. Your visits include a family-owned coconut business and a brick making factory where the locals still employ centuries-old methods to make bricks by hand. Ashore, follow your guide by bicycle to visit the proprietor of a rice noodle factory and a tasting of Hu Tieu noodles, one of the most popular dishes in the region. Over the course of the afternoon, you'll walk footpaths to a family of fishermen, have lunch at a riverside restaurant, and meet with a former Viet Cong soldier who survived two years fighting the Khmer Rouge in Phnom Penh. You'll have the incredible opportunity to talk with him and his wife while tasting the crispy rice paper... a specialty of the region that he and his wife make.

Later, return to Saigon. Tonight, unwind over dinner as you reflect on an amazing day of immersion into the local culture.

Overnight: Saigon

Meals: L, D

DAY 2

SAIGON & CU CHI TUNNELS

- Speedboat to Cu Chi to explore the famed Cu Chi Tunnels
- Explore Saigon on a guided walking tour
- Relax on China Beach

Today is full of fascinating juxtapositions. It begins on a speedboat bound for Cu Chi. Almost immediately, the banks of the river change from city sprawl to lush jungle. Along the way, your guide shares with you stories and anecdotes of life along the Saigon River, as your boat gracefully slips through knots of floating water hyacinths. Arriving in Cu Chi, join your guide to uncover the secrets of the infamous Tunnels, a vast network of underground passageways built and used by the Viet Cong to evade detection as they moved troops and supplies throughout Ho Chi Minh City's northern districts.

After lunch, return to Saigon, for an afternoon of explorations that include the Reunification Palace, the War Remnants Museum, and Notre Dame Cathedral. The palace is a beautifully preserved residence and home to the President. The War Remnants Museum houses countless artifacts, photographs and pictures documenting the second Indochina war. And Notre Dame Cathedral, which along with the Old Post Office are some of the best examples of classical French colonial architecture. This evening, a flight to Danang leads to the pristine stretch of sand known as Non Nuoc Beach.

Overnight: Danang

Meals: B, L

DAY 3

HOI AN / DANANG

- Wander the pedestrian streets of Hoi An
- Stroll along spectacularly scenic rice fields, meeting locals, outside Danang

After breakfast, we venture into the very heart of rural Danang for a special insight into the everyday life of a local village community. Our guide leads us along footpaths to the small settlement of Hoa Tien, nestled among endless rice fields, where we experience firsthand the very backbone of Vietnam's rural culture. Depending on the season we see the fields being ploughed by buffalo, rice planted by women, or harvested by the men. And we'll visit a mill to see how the rice is dried and husked. This unique glimpse into the rural lives of the villagers is a sight few other visitors see and will be one of the highlights of our time in Vietnam.

We then stop by Tra Que Organic Village, and walk through the market gardens where local farmers work on their fields using the traditional methods of hundreds of years ago - no electrical machinery here. Midday, we pause for lunch at a beautiful restaurant located on the Thu Bon River and decorated in traditional Hoi An style with dark woods and lush gardens.

This afternoon, we journey along the beachfront road to Hoi An. Against all odds, this extraordinary village was untouched by the war and offers a glimpse of a Vietnam that exists almost nowhere else. As we stroll through the back streets of this seaport, it's not hard to imagine it in the 18th Century, when Hoi An was one of the busiest trading ports in Asia. Along its cobbled streets, we'll see Chinese, Japanese and European architecture. At the riverfront, there's a scene of boats brimming with people and wares.

With a hand from our guide, you'll get a chance to shop the local market where the wares range from incense to flowers to betel nuts.

Overnight: Danang

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 4

DANANG / HANOI

- See the Hindu monuments at My Son or relax at your 5-star resort
- Settle in to your luxury accommodations in Hanoi

You have two options this morning. Join your guide for an early breakfast and a visit to My Son ("Beautiful Mountain"). This beautiful region is known for its cluster of Hindu temples, some of which date back to the 7th Century. On your guided visit of the ruins, you'll get a haunting look into the region's rich cultural past.

If you prefer, spend a leisurely morning at the resort to catch some sun on the beach, take a yoga or tai chi class, or enjoy a massage at the spa.

Late afternoon, you will take a nonstop flight to Hanoi. Vietnam's capital is an old-fashioned city with sidewalk cafes and pavement barbers. There are wide boulevards, lined with trees and filled with bicycles. Great mansions give way to crowded alleyways like Silk Street and Fried Fish Street. After a busy day, you'll check into your luxury accommodations.

Overnight: Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 5

HANOI + COUNTRYSIDE

- Follow a scenic footpath from a beautiful pagoda past rice fields and bamboo groves to a local village
- Explore Hanoi's colorful French Quarter
- Linger over a memorable dinner at the Press Club

After another amazing breakfast, you'll depart the hotel and head into the countryside. Northern Vietnam is home to the country's most colorful and revered pagodas and temples. (A Buddhist vocabulary note: a temple is a place to worship the dead; a pagoda is a place to worship the Lord Buddha.) You'll have a chance to roam through Tay Phuong Pagoda, famous for its vast display of finely carved wooden statues of 18th-century monks. From here, you'll start a scenic walk among rice fields and through bamboo groves to a local village. You will have a standing invitation to the small local school where you'll interact with the children bedecked in their blue and white uniforms and their teacher. It's another authentic insight into daily life that has hardly changed in centuries and where foreign visitors are rare exceptions.

You will return to Hanoi for lunch, followed by a guided stroll in the city's lovely Old Quarter to get a real feel for Vietnam's colonial past. After, you'll have some time to relax back at the hotel. Later, you'll enjoy cocktails and dinner at the Press Club, a true local institution.

Overnight: Hanoi

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 6

HALONG BAY

- Marvel at the incredible scenery in Halong Bay

• Enjoy the amenities and service on our luxury junk boat

Leaving Hanoi behind, you'll head for one of our all-time favorite travel experiences – Halong Bay (*drive time approximately three hours*). The bay is considered Vietnam's eighth wonder of the world and it's easy to see why. Three thousand spectacular chalk and limestone outcroppings, cliffs, arches, and coves form a dragon's tail of islands across the bay. Traditional sailing junks and local fishing boats glide by, selling their latest catch.

In time for lunch, you will board a luxury junk boat. Your cruise on the emerald green waters of the bay offers you the chance to visit and explore many islands and caves. But make no mistake: This isn't like cruising on a cruise ship! As you sail through the mysterious Karst Mountains, you can explore the Vung Dang area by kayak or jump into the warm bay for a swim. Evening activities on the junk range from fishing to board games to spa services.

Overnight: Halong Bay

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 7

HALONG BAY / LAOS

- **Wake to sunrise on Halong Bay**
- **Mingle with the locals in Yen Duc village**
- **Banter with shopkeepers at Luang Prabang's night market**

If more mornings could be like this one. It's the most serene. The most picturesque. The most romantic. The most of just about everything you travel for. We happily recommend a quiet breakfast as you watch and listen to the world come to life. You can also hop aboard the tender to go ashore and explore high-ceilinged caverns on a brief walk.

Midday, you'll start the drive back to Hanoi. Along the way, you will arrive in Yen Duc village. Admire the charming fields, small lanes and amazing tranquility in the village. Have lunch, then start walking around the village and visit Canh Huong Pagoda to learn more about Buddhism in Vietnam. Visit a typical house in the village and talk to the friendly local people. Enjoy performances by local artists or enjoy the hands on fishing and gardening activities if time permits. After, you'll continue your drive to Hanoi for an evening flight to Laos.

Serene Luang Prabang sits at the confluence of the Khan and Mekong Rivers and – a hint of events to come – it was once the capital of the "Land of the Million Elephants." We'll settle into our gracious and glamorous colonial-style hotel. Dinner is on your own, but be sure to save time to ramble with our Laotian guide through the town's night market, known especially for fine handicrafts from ethnic villagers.

Overnight: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L

DAY 8

LUANG PRABANG

- **Learn about the life of a mahout (elephant trainer) on our visit to a 2,000-acre elephant sanctuary**
- **Enjoy a guided walk to Tadsae Waterfall.**
- **Interact with the locals at Ban Ansavane village**

Today's adventure is a visit to a 2,000-acre elephant sanctuary in the beautiful and unspoiled Nam Khan River valley. You'll meet the mahouts that train and care for the elephants firsthand. After the demonstration, no visit would be complete without a chance to play with the elephants and walk them down to their favorite spot in the river.

After lunch, your guide will take you on a scenic walk to Tadsae Waterfall. Here, you will have the opportunity to relax or take a dip in the fall's cool natural pools.

Later, you will enjoy a short boat ride to Ban Ansavane village and have an opportunity to interact with the locals and learn about rural Lao life and handicrafts. This is a great experience for those looking for a deeper insight into Lao culture. You will be welcomed to the village with the special, traditional Laotian Baci ceremony. 'Baci' plays an important role even today when welcoming or saying farewell. This ceremony brings good luck and wards off any bad spirits.

Overnight: Luang Prabang

Meals: B, L, D

DAY 9

SIEM REAP—ANGKOR THOM

- Join in the moving alms ritual of the Buddhist monks
- Absorb the incredible scale of the Bayon and Angkor Thom temples with your expert guide
- Experience sunset at Angkor Wat

You'll want to consider rising early today for a unique and very moving experience. In a centuries-old tradition, long lines of barefoot monks walk silently through the streets of Luang Prabang on their morning alms rounds. Before returning to the hotel for breakfast, you'll also explore the lively morning market as the locals shop for the day's provisions.

For the truly grand finale of the week, you'll fly to Siem Reap in Cambodia. First, you'll check into the Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor, one of Indochina's finest properties. You'll also meet your exceptional local guide and immediately begin to explore the awesome Angkor Temples. First comes the ancient walled city of Angkor Thom. Built in the 12th century, the "Great City" contains Bayon Temple, famous for its more than 200 enormous mysterious faces, as well as the Elephant and Leper King Terraces.

Later, your guide performs a near miracle by showing you a way into the Angkor Wat temple complex that's unknown to the crowds. Thanks to his knowledge of the site, the remarkable temples are revealed to you slowly as you approach on quiet paths to be in place in time to witness a spectacular sunset. As this remarkable day ends, you'll settle into your luxurious hotel and enjoy a leisurely dinner.

Overnight: Siem Reap

Meals: B, D

DAY 10

SIEM REAP – ANGKOR WAT

- An in-depth guided visit of Angkor Wat
- Walk through the stone hallways of Ta Prohm

Sleep in if you like, but it's well worth rising before the sun for a visit to Angkor Wat at daybreak. After breakfast, you'll all return for an in-depth walking tour in the largest temple in the world. Erected at the command of King Suryavarman II, Angkor Wat took an estimated 30 years to build, probably as his funeral temple. Your knowledgeable guide will help you grasp the enormity of the place.

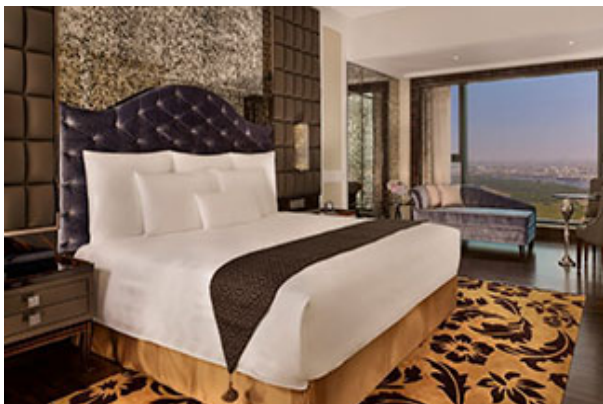
Afterwards, you'll visit Ta Prohm. One of the largest temples, it was dedicated in 1186, but now its labyrinth of stone hallways is overgrown with massive banyan trees, which envelop the stone like tentacles.

Midday, you will return to the hotel where you'll part company with your guide.

Meals: B



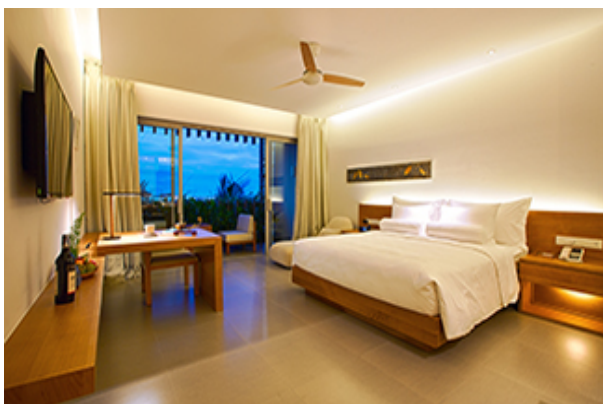
Tour Hotels



The Reverie Saigon

Furnished in the hotel's fanciful, eclectic style, all of The Reverie Saigon's 286 guestrooms pay homage to the Italian passion for exquisite décor, artistry and craftsmanship.

OVERNIGHT: Ho Chi Minh | **NIGHTS:** 1



Naman Retreat

Seamlessly blending timeless Vietnamese heritage and culture with luxurious modern charm. Impressive bamboo architecture and exquisite interiors, combined with authentic Vietnamese hospitality assures you a wonderful retreat experience.

OVERNIGHT: Danang | **NIGHTS:** 2



Sofitel Metropole Hotel

Hanoi's most legendary 5-star hotel, the Metropole, is in the French Quarter. It's a study in sophisticated design and extreme comfort, with its superb service, tropical gardens and outdoor pool. It is consistently ranked one of Asia's best hotels.

OVERNIGHT: Hanoi | **NIGHTS:** 2



Dragon Legend Cruise

Each of the 24 spacious, wood-paneled cabins have been luxuriously designed for the comfort and enjoyment of our guests. The restaurants and bars are perfect for lounging. There is a mineral seawater pool, along with fitness and spa facilities.

OVERNIGHT: Ha Long | **NIGHTS:** 1

Tour Hotels



Avani Luang Prabang

A handsome and architecturally respectful luxury hotel, offering contemporary elegance in a prime location, just steps from the main street. Reflecting the fascinating fusion of the Laos' cultural heritage with the current desires of a luxury traveler.

OVERNIGHT: Luang Prabang | **NIGHTS:** 2



Raffles Grand D'Angkor

Rated as one of the world's best places to stay, the Raffles Grand has been synonymous with Angkor Wat for 75 years. Guest rooms are appointed with Cambodian art and art deco furnishings. The state-of-the-art spa includes a 35-meter lap pool.

OVERNIGHT: Siem Reap | **NIGHTS:** 1

Tour Dates & Prices

To see the full list of dates and prices for this tour, go to our website by clicking [here](#).

Want to travel with just your group on a date of your choosing? Visit [CLASSICJOURNEYS.COM/PRIVATE](https://www.classicjourneys.com/private) to learn more about Private Journeys.

Trip Essentials

TRIP LENGTH	10 Days, 9 Nights
START	Lobby of Park Hyatt Saigon, Saigon, Vietnam
END	Siem Reap Airport, Siem Reap, Cambodia
TERRAIN	Easy to moderate on good trails and paths. An average of 2 to 3 hours of walking per day, with a mini-van usually in support.

What's Included

- Award-winning boutique hotels and a luxury junk that provide you unlimited access to the people and places, culture and history you came to experience
- All breakfasts, 8 lunches and 7 dinners
- Airport transfers in Park Hyatt Saigon and Siem Reap
- Full-time experienced guides who are with you throughout the trip and handle behind-the-scenes logistics
- Admissions to tastings, historic sites and other scheduled events as noted in the detailed daily itinerary
- Gratuities for hotels, meals, and baggage
- All land transportation during the trip

Above & Beyond Benefits

- Invisible Check-In
- Privileged Access Events

READY TO BOOK?
CLICK TO MAKE A RESERVATION

Or give us a call

1-800-200-3887

Mon-Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM PST

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AMBASSADOR CLUB

As a Classic Journeys guest, you are invited to join the Ambassador Club after your first Classic Journeys tour. As a member, you'll have access to [a whole suite of Ambassador benefits](#) you can use immediately and as often as you like.

ENJOY THE UNEXPECTED

When you travel with Classic Journeys, you can expect handcrafted surprises built into every trip, but some things just can't be anticipated. Unusual weather, a once-a-year festival or an unscheduled site closing will inspire us and your local guide to improvise and modify this itinerary. Likewise, the hotels named here are used on the majority of our trips, but occasionally one of them can't accommodate us. If that happens, you can count on us to let you know before departure and make sure you're in a hotel of equal or better quality. It's our goal to make your trip exceptional!

**Any discount offered cannot be combined with other offers, and only applies to published (regularly scheduled public) departure dates in our catalogs or on our website.

THE Classic Journeys Difference



HANDCRAFTING TRIPS OF A LIFETIME.

At the end of the day, we fundamentally believe that every guest on every departure of every trip should have a trip of a lifetime. We're fortunate to play the role of well-connected friend, linking our guests with amazing guides, artisans, winemakers, hoteliers, restaurateurs, naturalists, and too many others to list here.

That's what motivates me and our team — in our La Jolla HQ and around the world — every day. Join Us!

President & Founder



You can expect the highest standards:



Luxurious Lodgings:

Ours include coveted properties that appear in "World's Best" and "Gold List" rankings.



Included Activities:

You'll never be surprised with add-on fees on your activities that include snorkeling to cooking lessons.



Local Guides:

Your guides are locals who are always at your side like well-connected friends.



Small Group Travel:

With an average of just 10-12 guests, it's a small footprint that guarantees you access that's off-limits to larger groups.



Amazing Cuisine:

From Michelin-starred restaurants to lunch in a farmhouse kitchen, you'll have a seat for the region's signature dishes.



Unmatched Value:

"Excellent value" and "unbeatable access" are two of the reasons that Travel + Leisure has consistently voted us a World's Best Tour Operator.

You'll enjoy these handcrafted travel experiences in Southeast Asia...

- Overnighting on a traditional junk in Halong Bay, one of the Seven Wonders of Nature
- Watching sunrise during a privately guided tour of the magnificent Angkor Wat temple
- Playing with an elephant in the Mekong River
- Receiving the unique privilege of meeting the descendants of King Khai Dinh
- Gaining access to special friends and authentic Vietnamese culture through your amazingly well-connected local guides

"I can't imagine a more efficient tour guide than Mai. She coped with all the changes regarding our flight and hotel changes due to bad weather remarkably. She was very knowledgeable, helpful and caring for all of us."

-Diane V., Hillsboro, OR,