

CULTURAL WALKING ADVENTURE

# Vietnam, Laos & Cambodia

## Halong Bay, Angkor Wat & the Best of Southeast Asia

CLASSIC JOURNEYS  
THE WORLD'S FINEST WALKING TOURS



“

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

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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 wind 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.

## The Classic Journeys Difference

- ACTIVE HIKING & WALKING
- LOCAL WELL-CONNECTED GUIDES
- PREMIERE HOTELS
- FOODIE FOCUSED
- HANDCRAFTED TRIP DESIGN
- MORE IS INCLUDED

## What's Included

- All breakfasts, 8 lunches and 7 dinners
- Airport transfers in 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

When your group arrives, we whisk you and your bags to your room immediately. No waiting – no tipping.

### → PRIVILEGED ACCESS EVENTS

One-of-a-kind access to remarkable people, places and activities arranged just for you.

## 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.

DAY 1 »

## Saigon & 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. 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.

MEALS: L, D

OVERNIGHT: SAIGON

DAY 2 »

## Saigon & Cu Chi Tunnels

Today is full of fascinating juxtapositions. It begins on a speedboat bound for Cu Chi, and 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 on foot at eye level. Visit the Reunification Palace and the War Remnants Museum, which houses countless artifacts, photographs and pictures documenting the second Indochina war. Discover the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Old Post Office, which 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.

MEALS: B, L

OVERNIGHT: DANANG

DAY 3 »

## Danang

Enjoy a morning walk through Tra Que Organic Village, ambling through the market gardens where local farmers work on their fields using the traditional methods of hundreds of years ago - no electrical machinery here. Experience everyday life in a local village community, as you pick out fresh coriander, sesame rice paper, and Vietnamese mint for your upcoming cooking lesson. Get the opportunity to learn from a local chef about preparing and cooking Vietnamese food from scratch. Using your fresh ingredients from the market and traditional Vietnamese utensils, you'll cook several courses, including the national dish 'Pho'. Afterward, sit down together and enjoy the delicious fruits of your labor.

In the late afternoon, head to My Son Sanctuary, which is a beautiful region known for its well-preserved complex of Hindu temples. Surrounded by mountains, you'll get up close to this region's rich cultural past at this dramatic UNESCO World Heritage site. During your guided explorations, learn about the Cham heritage and the significance of these ruins, some of which date back to the 7th Century. As the sun starts to set and other visitors have left, you can truly experience the tranquility of this historical site and admire the ancient architecture all around you.

MEALS: B, L, D      OVERNIGHT: DANANG

DAY 4 »

## Hoi An / Hanoi

This morning, you'll 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 you 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, you'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 your guide, you'll get a chance to shop the local market where the wares range from incense to flowers to betel nuts.

Late afternoon, you'll 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 full day, you'll check into your luxury accommodations and dine on local specialties.

MEALS: B, L, D      OVERNIGHT: HANOI

DAY 5 »

## Hanoi / Countryside

Fortified from breakfast, you'll venture into the countryside of Northern Vietnam, which 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 explore Thay Pagoda, on foot at eye level. This serene spiritual site was established in the 11th century and sits on a lake within a tranquil forest. From here, you'll start a scenic walk among rice fields and through bamboo groves to a local village. You'll be invited into the small local school where you'll interact with the children (bedecked in their blue and white uniforms) along with their teacher. It's another authentic insight into daily life that has hardly changed in centuries and where foreign visitors are rare exceptions.

Enjoy lunch in Hanoi followed by a guided stroll, as well as a cyclo tour, in the city's lovely Old Quarter to get a real feel for Vietnam's colonial past. Learn about the intricate architecture as you stroll by the Opera House and along Kiem Lake before returning to the hotel for some downtime. Later, you'll enjoy a memorable dinner at the Press Club, a true local institution.

MEALS: B, L, D      OVERNIGHT: HANOI

DAY 6 »

## Halong Bay

Leaving Hanoi behind, you'll head for one of our all-time favorite travel experiences – Halong Bay. 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.

Midday, you'll board a luxury junk boat. While your crew readies the boat for departure, you'll savor delicious regional cuisine and admire the incredible views. Spend the rest of the day cruising on the emerald green waters of Halong Bay, spotting wildlife from the deck, kayaking into Luon cave, and even strolling the cinematic beaches on Titov Island. Later in the afternoon, you might want to relax over afternoon tea and join your guide and the junk's chef to roll up your sleeves for a hands-on cooking instruction. You'll never make (or eat) spring rolls again without flashing back to this incredibly memorable experience. After dinner, it's your choice to relax, turn in for the night, or take the opportunity to learn how to fish for squid, just like the locals.

MEALS: B, L, D      OVERNIGHT: HALONG BAY

DAY 7 »

## Halong Bay / Laos

If only more mornings could be like this one. It's so serene and incredibly picturesque. If you'd like, you can start your day by learning Vovinam exercises (Vietnamese martial arts) on the deck. You can also head ashore to explore the high-ceilinged caverns of Me Cung Cave on a fascinating pre-breakfast walk. Or simply enjoy a quiet breakfast as you watch and listen to the world come to life.

Midday, you'll disembark and transfer 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.” Settle into your gracious and perfectly sited accommodations. Dinner is on your own this evening, but be sure to save time to ramble with your Laotian guide through the town's night market, known especially for fine handicrafts from ethnic villagers.

MEALS: B, L      OVERNIGHT: LUANG PRABANG

DAY 8 »

## Luang Prabang

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 who train and care for the elephants. You'll get the chance to play with the elephants and walk them down to their favorite spot in the river.

Following lunch, your guide will lead you on a scenic walk through Luang Prabang, arguably the most traditionally preserved Buddhist town in Southeast Asia. Just before the sun goes down, you'll walk to a nearby boat pier and take a relaxing local-style riverboat trip. As you cruise along the mighty Mekong, your guide unbundles the scenery and local life that you'll see along the way. Back on shore, head into town and enjoy being welcomed 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.

MEALS: B, L, D      OVERNIGHT: LUANG PRABANG

DAY 9 »

## Siem Reap / Angkor Thom

You'll want to consider rising early today for a unique and very moving experience. In a centuries-old tradition, barefoot monks walk silently through the streets of Luang Prabang on their morning alms rounds. With your guide, explore the lively morning market as the locals shop for the day's provisions. If you'd like, you can select local foods and join the villagers as they provide breakfast to the monks.

For the truly grand finale of the week, you'll fly to Siem Reap in Cambodia. Together your exploration of the region's amazing Angkor temples begins with a visit to 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.

Next, you'll head to Ta Prohm, which is one of the largest temples and was dedicated in 1186. Explore its labyrinth of stone hallways which are overgrown with massive banyan trees and envelop the stone-like tentacles. As you get up close to these fascinating ruins, you'll see why its unique backdrop was chosen as the film location for the Tomb Raider movie.

MEALS: B, D

OVERNIGHT: SIEM REAP

DAY 10 »

## Siem Reap / Angkor Wat

Sleep in if you like, but it's well worth rising before the sun for a visit to Angkor Wat at daybreak. Board a remark (Tuk Tuk) to arrive at the famed ruins as you watch the sunrise and walk 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 while teaching you about its history and archaeology, as well as the restoration efforts to preserve these landmarks. Continue by Tuk Tuk to the traditional wooden Khmer house of Sala Kdei. Savor a delicious organic Khmer breakfast while enjoying the views of the banks of Sra Srang.

Refreshed and invigorated, continue by Tuk Tuk before walking through jungle trails to the south wall of Preah Khan temple. Stroll along the secluded moat to reach the watchful eye of a Garuda carved into the outside wall of the temple. Local legend says that the Garuda has won the fight with the Naga and is keeping watch over the Naga that lies dormant in the moat. Depart from its East Gate, where you'll be rewarded with spectacular views of the royal reservoir that surrounds the Temple of Neak Pean. Head there for an in-depth walking tour around this intricate Hindu temple which sits on an island, and whose ancient waters were thought to cure all illnesses.

After your adventures, enjoy lunch with some time to revisit one of your favorite spots or to expand your explorations to new areas of the temple. Soak in these memorable moments before transferring to Siem Reap airport for your departing flight.

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.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



### [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.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



### [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.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



### [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.

NIGHTS: 1 nights



#### [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.

NIGHTS: 2 nights



#### [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.

NIGHTS: 1 nights

# Arrival & Departure

## → ARRIVAL DETAILS

START LOCATION: **Lobby of The Reverie Saigon**  
START CITY: **Saigon**  
START TIME: **9:00 AM**

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## → DEPARTURE DETAILS

END LOCATION: **Lobby of Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra**  
END CITY: **Siem Reap**  
END TIME: **12:30 PM**