

VIETNAM

12 DAYS | HISTORY

PROGRAM ITINERARY

Vietnam's astounding natural beauty, rich cultural heritage and profound war history make for a truly immersive travel experience. Students will meet war veterans and climb into Viet Cong tunnels as they learn about how the Vietnam War shaped the country, and the role of the Australian troops in it. On our journey from Ho Chi Minh City to Hanoi, our trip takes in the staggering geology of Halong Bay and the Mekong River Delta, with plenty of opportunity to learn new skills, from cooking to Tai Chi.

1

DEPART AUSTRALIA

Today we jet off for Vietnam on a trip which promises to unravel the deep-rooted culture and complex history of the country.

2

ARRIVE HO CHI MINH CITY

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City. On this first full day of our trip we set off on foot to explore former Saigon, a city which played a major role in the Vietnam War. We'll walk through ancient alleys in search of temples, visit French colonial buildings such as the Notre-Dame Cathedral, and reflect on how far this modern city has come since the war. In the evening, set sail along the Saigon River on a dinner cruise.

Dinner at local restaurant

3

HO CHI MINH CITY – VUNG TAU – HO CHI MINH CITY

A full day guided tour will give us an insight into the role of Australian troops during the Vietnam War. We'll hop on the hydrofoil to Vung Tau, today a popular beach resort, where division 1 ALSG created an important base

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

despite many hardships. We'll also get to visit the Minh Dam Secret Zone, where students can meet a Vietnam War Officer.

From here we'll continue to the Australian Operations area in Phuoc Tuy Province, stopping at the former Nui Dat Task Force Base and Long Phuoc Tunnels on the way. The tunnels were one of the region's most strategic tunnel systems throughout wars against both the French and Americans. Our last stop will be a commemorative service at Long Tan Cross Memorial, where we can reflect on what we've learned during the day.

4

HO CHI MINH CITY

Today we head below the bustling streets of Ho Chi Minh City to explore the Cu Chi Tunnels. During the war, the Viet Cong dug tens of thousands of kilometres of tunnels, including this extensive network underneath the Cu Chi District of Saigon, through which they transported supplies and mounted surprise attacks. Students will also visit the War Remnants Museum for a sombre yet powerful insight into the brutal effects of the wars on civilians. The fascinating Yersin Market and its military memorabilia makes for a quirky experience before a traditional meal at Koto Restaurant.

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

5

HO CHI MINH CITY

Set sail along the mighty Mekong River on this full-day cruise. Local life thrums on the vast Mekong Delta, and we'll get to experience first-hand the centuries-old traditions and get caught up in the bustle of the Sampan Cai Be floating market.

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

6

HO CHI MINH – HOI AN

Today we fly to Denang and make our way to the ancient town of Hoi An for a guided tour. Once a major Southeast Asian trading post during the 16th and 17th centuries, the town is a beautifully preserved living museum home to architecture such as the Chinese Assembly Halls and Japanese Bridge. Students and teachers can then try their hand at the traditional art of lantern making before learning

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

new culinary skills at the Red Bridge Cooking School.

7

HOI AN

Today we venture into the emerald green landscape of central Vietnam in search of the My Son Sanctuary. This astounding temple complex is an UNESCO World Heritage Site, designated for its importance as the religious and political capital of the Champa Kingdom. This full-day excursion will give students an insight into the indigenous people through their intricate carvings and impressive architecture. The 32 ancient towers were built during the same era as those at the world famous Angkor Wat in Cambodia, and are the largest and most holy temple of the time in the south central coastal area.

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

8

HOI AN – HALONG BAY (OVERNIGHT ON JUNKET BOAT)

This morning we fly from Denang Airport to Cat Bi Airport, from where a coach will take us to our waiting junket boat on stunning Halong Bay. We'll spend the afternoon and night out on the water, cruising through the emerald waters to get up-close-and-personal with the region's geological wonders. Towering limestone pillars and tiny, forest-topped islands burst from the sea, so it will be cameras at the ready to capture the beauty of this UNESCO World Heritage Site. The wooden junket boat offers a lesson in the ancient traditions of South East Asian maritime history as we sail past Vung Viêng Floating Fishing Village, Bái Tá (Long Bay) and anchor for the night in the ethereal Ho Dong TIen (Fairy Lake).

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner on Junket

9

HALONG BAY - HANOI

Be prepared for an action-packed day which begins with Tai Chi on the sundeck as we make our way to Hanoi. We'll stop at an eco-adventure village where students can learn traditional farming and crafts methods from local women and farmers, as well as meet war veterans. Once in Hanoi we'll get to know the

Breakfast on the Junket

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

city with a heart-pounding rickshaw tour around the Old Quarter.

10

HANOI

Vietnam's capital is vibrant mix of old and new, and we'll visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, Presidential Palace and Loa Prison Museum on this full-day guided tour. We'll hone our cooking skills at a workshop at Koto Restaurant, followed by a dinner of traditional Vietnamese cuisine.

Breakfast at the hotel

Lunch and dinner at local restaurant

11

DEPART HANOI

After 11 days of travelling, exploring and learning the history and culture of southern Vietnam, our trip comes to an end today. We'll depart from Hanoi.

Breakfast at the hotel

12

ARRIVE AUSTRALIA