Fathom Asia
Inspired Holidays in Asia

LONG STAY SAMPLE ITINERARY OF VIETNAM
(14 DAYS/13 NIGHTS)

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE

13 nights' accommodation based on twin share
Daily breakfast
Meals as per itinerary
English speaking guide
Transport as per itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Hanoi
Day 2: Hanoi original city tour
Day 3: Hanoi – Mai Hich
Day 4: Mai Hich – Pu Luong nature reserve
Day 5: Pu Luong – Ninh Binh
Day 6: Ninh Binh – Halong
Day 7: Halong – Hanoi – Hue
Day 8: Hue and the unsuspected beach
Day 9: Hue – Bach Ma national park – Hoi An
Day 10: Hoi An, half day adventure
Day 11: Hoi An free
Day 12: Hoi An – Saigon – Mekong delta
Day 13: Mekong delta – Saigon
Day 14: Saigon half-day city tour on vintage scooter

ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival in Hanoi

You are welcomed in Hanoi and driven to your hotel in the city center (room may be available from 2pm only). Drop the luggage, refresh a bit and follow the guide (optional) on a short orientation walk around the old quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake. Rest of the day at leisure.

Overnight at local Hotel

Day 2: Hanoi original city tour (B/L)

The guide meets you at 9am in your hotel's lobby. We transfer to the Temple of Literature, a little architectural gem, first university of Vietnam and temple devoted to Confucius. We then walk north to reach the Ho Chi Minh complex and visit the gardens of the Presidential palace, the one-pillar pagoda and the house on stilts where Ho Chi Minh lives his the last days of his life. Done for the classics, now let's see Hanoi more like locals do. For lunch, we go to Truc Bach peninsula to eat in a small food shop the speciality of the neighbourhood: the pho cuon and pho xao. Choice of several dishes based on *pho* noodles, sautéed beef, and some nice greens on top. Very local, delicious. We then hop on a small electric cart to ride around the largest lake of the city. The journey takes about 1 hour, 18 kilometres to see a different Hanoi with a stop en-route at one of the oldest wooden pagodas in town. We loop the loop and go for a leg stretching walk throughout Ngoc Ha village. This is a sparkling maze of narrow alleys with a market, schools, shops everywhere and the B52 Lake. We exit the labyrinth and end up the afternoon with a slice of pure real Hanoian daily life: a cool beer and some fresh peanuts at a popular bia hoi.
We drive back to the hotel, end of the day at leisure.

Day 3: Hanoi – Mai Chau – Mai Hich (B/L/D)

The guide meets you in the lobby at 7am for departure. We head west to the valley of Mai Chau. It takes about 4 hours including a refreshments and legs stretching break on the way. Mai Chau is a circus surrounded by high limestone mountains and filled with rice fields. From the top of the last pass we drive up, we will stop and you can see the whole valley dotted with hamlets of wooden houses on stilts. Welcome to the White Thai lands. We let the touristy spots of Mai Chau behind and travel a bit farther in a remote sub-valley. Arrival at our small intimate lodge made of few bungalows and a swimming pool set in a green garden. We drop the luggage and then cycle about 3km to a small village nearby, where we have lunch at a traditional guesthouse. In the afternoon. We can go for a walk around the village, take a bike ride to see farther and/or spend some chilling time at the swimming pool. Dinner at the lodge.

Day 4: Mai Hich – Pu Luong (B/L/D)

After breakfast we hit the road towards Laos' border. We quickly enter Pu Luong nature reserve and cross it from West to East. This is a condensed of all spectacular sceneries of North Vietnam: terraced rice fields, limestone mountain covered in jungle, rivers, cascades, natural pools and hamlets of wooden houses on stilts. If you like, there are opportunities to hike from 1h up to 6h. Once at the edge of the reserve, the car cannot go any further, we do the last 5km either walking (about 1.5h) or riding pillion at the back of moto-taxis. They take us to a secluded valley and a small ecolodge lying between two streams. Check-in your bungalow and go refresh in one of the streams. Dinner and overnight onsite.

Day 5: Pu Luong – Ninh Binh (B/L)

After breakfast, we walk back or ride back the 5km to our vehicle. We drive for a little while and catch up with the Historical Ho Chi Minh road. We should arrive in Ninh Binh for lunch. In the afternoon, we reach a hidden corner of the region and start a nice scenic rowed sampan cruise, we are in a sub-valley of Tam Coc, the most renowned valley of the region for it towering limestone rocks and beautiful rice fields. We visit the Bich Dong pagoda that offers a climb up on its three levels to admire a breath taking view of the area once at the top. We end the day at a superb resort, where you can relax by the swimming pool.

Day 6: Ninh Binh – Halong bay (B/L/D)

Early wake up, early breakfast, and early departure to Halong. We drive across the Red River delta and reach the coast little before noon. We embark on a beautifully crafted wooden junk for an overnight cruise in the legendary seascape of Halong. Once on board, we are served a delicious seafood-based buffet lunch, while the limestone rocks are setting up the décor. In the afternoon, we reach a less travelled area and will devote ourselves to relaxation, sunbathing, floating village discovery and eventuyally kayaking. The program is not fixed and depends on the time of the year and weather. We end the day on the sundeck while the sun sets. It is time for an aperitif or to attend a cooking demonstration before dinner. Overnight in a comfortable private cabin with en-suite bathroom.

Day 7: Halong – Hanoi – Hue (Brunch)

While cruising back to the pier, a brunch is served as we are getting closer to disembarkation. Early Tai Chi session is proposed, coffee and tea are served early as well for the early birds wishing to see the beautiful lights of sunrise. We have the chance to visit a grotto before starting our way back to the coast. We disembark and drive to Hanoi's airport to catch a flight to Hue. You are greeted in Hue and transferred to your Eco-resort. End of the day at leisure.

Day 8: Hue – Phu Thuan beach (B/L)

The tour starts from the hotel's lobby at 8am. We visit the beautiful Tu Hieu pagoda and the Emperor Tu Duc's tomb. We then veer off the common path and go for an easy cycling ride around the village of the Mandarins. We discover there some centuries-old houses set in beautiful orchard-gardens. We meet the Mandarins' descendants and have lunch at one local house. In the afternoon, we visit the citadel and discover a slice of Vietnam's feudality before we drive about 15 kilometres to a beautiful desert beach. Chill out by the sea in the late afternoon and stay overnight at a nice local lodge.

Day 9: Phu Thuan – Bach Ma – Hoi An (B/L)

In the morning, you have some more time to enjoy the beach for a while. About 10am we make our way along a coastal road lying between the sand dunes and the Tam Giang Lagoon. We reach the majestuous Bach Ma national park and take a 19-km scenic drive to its top. There we have lunch before starting the 5 lakes trek. It is a short, accessible trek through the jungle of the national park. We follow a stream and its "lakes" that are more kinds of natural pools. The trek lasts about 2 and a half hour and we get back on our vehicle towards Hoi An ancient town. We pass the Lang Co bay and the Hai Van pass right at the time when the lights get beautiful. Then we head down to Danang and Hoi An. Arrival in the early evening, end of the day at leisure.

Day 10: Hoi An, half day of exploration (B/L)

The guide picks you up around 9am. We drive straight to Cam Thanh mangrove just a few kilometres away from the center. Quickly, hop on kayaks or Stand-Up paddles and journey along arroyos made of freshwater coconut bushes. We set foot on land again and visit the workshop of probably the most skilful bamboo craftman of the entire region. We borrow some of his bamboo bicycles and go for a ride around the quaint countryside surrounding the area. We come back to the bamboo place and have a homemade lunch. Afternoon at leisure, we can drop you off at the hotel or at the beach upon your preference.

Day 11: Hoi An at leisure (B)

Today you have the day to yourself - take a break and enjoy either the town or the city, or both.

Day 12: Hoi An – Saigon – Mekong Delta (B/L/D)

Early departure to catch the first flight to Saigon. We are picked up at the airport and driven straight to the doorstep of the Mekong delta. We stop for a while at a little pier that only few know about and that gives access to a less travelled area. We will embark on a boat on the mighty River and ride along its arroyos. Opportunities to cycle the rural lanes of the area as well, meet locals, discover their crafting or cooking skills and immerse in their lush orchards. In the late afternoon we are boat-transferred to our lodge. End of the day by the pool before dinner is served.

Day 13: Cai Be – Saigon (B/L)

In the morning, we get on boat to go see the reminiscences of Cai Be floating market. This is not as big and busy as in the past but we should still have chances to see the barges loaded with fruits and vegetables of the delta. We then start our way back to Saigon. End of the day at leisure. If you want to have a nice sunset cocktail, we recommended you the Chill Skybar for a nice panoramic view over Saigon skyline.

Day 14: Saigon, departure (B)

In the morning, we will take a global sightseeing tour around the different districts on the back of vintage Vespa scooters. A chance to soak up the different atmospheres of Saigon in a glimpse of time. Then we visit the museum of traditional medicine FITO and take you back to the hotel. Rest of the day at leisure before a driver picks you up to drive you to the airport for your outbound flight.