

Vietnam, looked like an elongated 'S' on the map, with the South China Sea to the East and borders with Laos and Cambodia to the West, is a country with fertile farmlands and lush forests. The Vietnamese traced their origin to a legendary union between a dragon from the ocean and a fairy from the mountains; the union spawned a hundred sons. From 111 AD, for a millennium, Vietnam was dominated by China and influence by its culture. They adopted Chinese characters for written communication, and a social structure based on Confucianism, a philosophy of social organization that persists in the country to this day. In the 10th century, it obtained independence with conflicts with the Khmer (modern-day Cambodia) in the north and the Champa from the South. In the 13th century, they repelled the formidable invading Mongols and Kublai Khan who had conquered China and Korea but the war had weakened the kingdom. In the 16th century, the country was split by rival warlords with the Trinh in the North and the Nguyen in the South. In the late 17th century, Alexandre de Rhodes, a French Jesuit, created a Romanized alphabet as an alternative of the cumbersome Chinese scripts; that made a lasting impact on the Vietnamese culture in written communication. In the 19th century, after England took Hong Kong from China, the French tried to gain a stronger foothold in Asia and set their sight on Vietnam. King Tu Duc did not have the mean to defend against the French and agreed to give up and lower third of Vietnam as the colony of Cochinchina. In 1887, the French Indochina was formed with Cochinchina (South Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos) as colony, and protectorates of Annam (Central Vietnam) and Tonkin (North Vietnam). After the Russian Revolution in 1917, Marxism was introduced to Vietnam and adapted by Ho Chi Minh's Viet Minh front, a resistant party fighting for Vietnam's independence. The country was briefly ruled by Japan with a puppet Vichy French government during WWII. After the War, the French reasserted control ceded to the Japanese and the First Indochina War started and lasted for 8 years. In 1954, the French was defeated in Dien Bien Phu. Nevertheless, the country was still divided between Ho Chi Minh's Communist government in the North and the Republic of Vietnam in the South supported by the United States. The second Indochina War, or Vietnam War, was fought for 21 years from 1954 – 1975 between the Chinese and Soviet supported North and the United States supported South. In 1975, The country was unified by the Vietnam Communist Party after the United States withdrew all their troops. For the next 20 years, Vietnam was practically isolated from the Western world with trade embargo imposed by the United States. They received \$3 billion in aids each year from the Soviet Union. The dissolve of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused a change in direction of the government and seek to normalize relationship with West. In 1994, President Bill Clinton lifted the trade

embargo and normalized diplomatic relationship in the following year, opened an embassy in Hanoi. In the same year, Vietnam became a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Today, Vietnam is a nation on the rise with economic growth at an impressive 6% per year. Ha Long Bay's incomparable seascape, the cloud-covered highland peaks, Mekong Delta waterways and splendid limestone grottos....With its natural sceneries, unique culture and cuisines, it gradually becomes a travel destination.



Without any doubt, many visitors are attracted to Cambodia by Angkor Wat, the splendid remain of a once thriving Khmer Empire. But besides that, there are also beautiful countryside, architectural wonders, unique cuisines and friendly people. Historically, it is difficult to overlook the country's recent tragic past. Early history of Cambodia was recorded by Chinese historians in the third century, it depicted a unified kingdom that might have existed with capital in the present day Angkor Borei. The records showed that the people lived in raised houses, cultivate herbs and plants, and domesticated elephants. The land was successively ruled by two kingdoms called Funan and Chenla from the 2nd to the 9th century. The discovery of Sanskrit and Khmer inscriptions at the Sdok Kak Thom Temple in eastern Thailand help historians pieced together the history of the Angkor Empire. It was found by King Jayavarman II in an area around the modern-day Siem Reap. The Empire ruled from the 9th century to the 15th century, and gave Kampuchae (or Cambodia) its name. The era represents the golden ages of Cambodia, during which many architectural masterpieces were built. The post-Angkor period from mid-15th to mid-19th century is referred to as Cambodia's dark ages. This is because the lack of firsthand accounts of most of the period and invasions conducted by the rising Siamese (Thai) Empire next door. The constant military incursions prompted the King to move the capital to Chaktomuk, the modern-day Phnom Penh. In the 17th century, after marrying a Vietnamese Princess, the King asked his royal in-laws for assistance and the Vietnamese expanded their authority over the area. In the next two centuries, the country became a battle ground between the invading Thais and the occupying Vietnamese. By 1841, the land was divided between Thailand and Vietnam, and Cambodia no longer existed as a sovereign state. At last, the



Vietnamese push the Cambodians too far and from an uprising, Cambodia regained some of the land. King Ang Duong asked France for help and Cambodia became a French Protectorate in 1863. The country established a peaceful period of colonization lasted until World War II. After the War, the French installed Norodom Shihanouk as king. In 1953, independence was obtained and the Kingdom of Cambodia was formed. In 1970, Shihanouk was disposed in a coup d'état by a general call Lon Nol. During this time, Cambodia was victimized by the Vietnam War with heavy American bombing of its eastern border which was a Viet Cong refuge for several years. In 1975, the bombing stopped, and the notorious, Chinese-supported Communist Party of Kampuchea, better known as the Khmer Rouge gained control of the country. Pol Pot, the brutal leader of the Khmer Rouge, implemented a transformation of the country to create a unrealistic, radical Maoist, rural, agrarian utopia. As a consequence, hundreds of thousands died of starvation and disease; and about 2 million were executed through the government's purge of 'state enemies'. In 1977, conflict began again with Vietnam; in 1979, Phnom Penh was captured by the invading Vietnamese. It ended the bloody rule of the Khmer Rouge but started a period of civil and guerrilla wars that would ultimately last another two decades. In 1993, the UN intervened, several democratic elections were conducted in the coming years; a constitutional monarchy was formed and Norodom Sihamoni, son of Shihanouk, was selected King. The 21st century is a new dawn for the Kingdom of Cambodia. The country has emerged from decades of wars and genocide and finally obtained stability and democracy. Angkor Wat, the biggest impression Cambodia had made on the face of the earth, serves as a national symbol, and an inspirational reminder that Cambodia is on its way to prosperity again.



Tour Itinerary:

Day 01: U.S. - Hanoi
Depart U.S. for Hanoi.

Day 02: Hanoi
Arrive Hanoi, transfer to hotel.
Accommodation: Hotel Nikko Hanoi.

Day 03: Hanoi
Full day Hanoi city tour visiting Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, Temple of Literature, Fine Art Museum, Quan Thanh Temple, Hanoi Old Quarter Hoan Kiem Lake and traditional water puppet show. (B/L/D).



Day 04: Hanoi - Ha Long Bay
Morning at leisure. Afternoon East through some rural farmland and the Red River Delta for Ha Long. Dinner at a local restaurant. (B/D).
Accommodation: Halong Dream Hotel.

Day 05: Ha Long Bay - Hue
Morning cruise of the splendid Ha Long Bay, observe its limestone islets and grottos. After lunch, transfer to Hanoi Airport for domestic flight to the historical city of Hue. (B/L).
Accommodation: Imperial Hotel.

Day 06: Hue - Hoi An
Morning tour of Hue on the Huong River, visit Thien Mu Pagoda, Imperial Citadel and King Tu Duc's Tomb. After lunch, travel south to the port city of Hoi An. (B/L/D).
Accommodation: Palm Garden Resort.

Day 07: Hoi An - Ho Chi Minh (Saigon)
Morning tour of Hai An Old Town. After lunch, transfer to DaNang Airport for domestic flight to Ho Chi Minh City. (B/L).
Accommodation: Movenpick Saigon.

Day 08: Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)
Day tour of Saigon, visiting the Notre Dame Cathedral, Old Post Office, Opera House, Reunification Palace. Lunch at a local restaurant, after lunch, visit the War Remnants Museum, Thien hau Pagoda and the Binh Tay Market. (B/L).

Day 09: Saigon - My Tho - Can Tho
Depart Saigon and journey to My Tho in the Mekong Delta; observe the daily life of the fishermen and visit a tropical orchard. In the afternoon, onward to Can Tho, the largest city in the Mekong Delta. (B/L/D).
Accommodation: Victoria Hotel Can Tho.

Day 10: Can Tho - Chau Doc
Morning visit to the Cai Rang Floating Market, then onward to the Chau Doc, a city by the Vietnam-Cambodia border where people of three different ethnic background, Vietnamese, Champa and Khmers, live together in harmony. The city is famous for catfish farming and tourism. (B/L/D).
Accommodation: Victoria Hotel Chau Doc.



Day 11: Chau Doc - Phnom Penh
Transfer to Chau Doc pier for a 5-hour boat ride to Phnom Penh. Afternoon tour of Phnom Penh, visit the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, Raung Damrei Museum, National Museum of Fine Arts and Wat Phnom. (B/L/D).
Accommodation: Intercontinental Phnom Penh.

Day 12: Phnom Penh - Siem Reap
Sightseeing transfer to Siem Reap along National Road No.6. En-route, visit the Kompong Cham Village and the Kompong Thom Province.
Accommodation: Sokha Hotel.



Day 13: Siem Reap
Morning Siem Reap tour, visit the Bayon Temple, the Royal Enclosure, Elephants Terrace and Terrace of the Leper King. In the afternoon, visit Angkor Wat, one of the largest religious structures in the world and a symbol of the Angkor civilization. (B/L/D).

Day 14: Siem Reap - Bangkok
Transfer to Siem Reap Airport for flight to Bangkok. Proceed to hotel after arrival.
Accommodation: Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport.

Day 15: Bangkok - U.S.
Transfer to airport by hotel shuttle for departure.

Tour Costs

Air cost: airfares are seasonal and predicated on variable factors such as availability and fuel surcharges, please call for information.

2013 Land Costs (per person)

2 people travel together	\$2,529.00
Family discount: 3-6 people travel together	\$2,190.00
Single room supplement	\$925

Costs subject to change without notice.

