

Lifestyle Travel Ballarat
11 Armstrong Street North
Ballarat, Victoria 3350

Telephone 03 5331 8277
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2024 Vibrant Vietnam & Cambodia

19 Days

A Lifestyle Travel Boutique Escorted Tour

Personally Escorted by Maree McClelland



Departing Friday 23 August and Returning Tuesday 10 September 2024

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[Fri 23 August - ARRIVAL VIETNAM](#)

Depart Melbourne on Vietnam Airlines at 10.35am
Arrive Ho Chi Minh City 23rd August at 4.25pm

Depart Ho Chi Minh City 23rd August 8.10pm
Arrive Da Nang, Vietnam 23rd August 9.30pm

Our Vietnam Airlines flight will take us from Melbourne via Saigon to Danang, the gateway to the World Heritage Listed town of Hoi An. After special assistance through Customs and Immigration we will be transferred to our accommodation. Nestled on the banks of Hoai River, overlooking the Hoi An Ancient Town, our hotel will provide a peaceful retreat.

Bay Hoi An Resort/ Deluxe Heritage Room - 3 nights.

[Sat 24 August - DISCOVERING HOI AN \(B\)](#)

Relax over breakfast and perhaps enjoy a swim. In the afternoon, we'll take a walking tour of this ancient town recognized for its well-preserved architecture, pedestrian-only streets and distinctive local cuisine. The colorful market features stalls brimming with local specialties including silk, which can be turned into fashionable garments within days.



[Sunday 25 August - A COOL DAY AT BA NA HILL \(B,L\)](#)

A morning drive will take us to the old growth forest, Ba Na Hill, 1,487 meters above sea level. It's mostly cool year-round where you'll enjoy possible wildlife sightings from the cable car with over 543 species of flora and 256 species of fauna here. Next, visit some old French villas as well as a suspension bridge, Nui Chua and the Mountain Peak. Experience the feeling of walking in the clouds and enjoy the views from the Golden Bridge which is supported by giant hands at a height of over 1,400m above sea level.



Monday 26 August - A TASTE OF VIETNAM PLUS ARRIVAL SAIGON (B,L)

A local market tour with a renowned chef will be great introduction to Vietnam's food. Then, at the Market Restaurant and Cooking School, housed in an elegant old French Colonial style building we will participate in an entertaining, hands-on cookery lesson.

Later we will fly to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon) now Vietnam's largest city and often referred to simply HCMC. No matter what you call it, it is a seamless blend of history and modern youthful energy, where pagodas and French colonial grandeur mingle with bustling old-world marketplaces and modern skyscrapers.

Saigon Hotel - 2 nights.

Tuesday 27 August - EXPLORING HCMC (B)

Ho Chi Minh City is a heady mix of French and Vietnamese cultures, where baguettes and croissants are sold alongside *pho* (Vietnamese noodle soup) and motor scooters buzz past colonial-era architecture. Today we will explore the city's wide boulevards, reminiscent of Paris, lined with jewels such as the Opera House, fashioned after the Petit Palais, and the grand Central Post Office, designed by Gustave Eiffel. Aromatic food stalls and colourful shops purvey local specialties and all manner of Vietnamese wares, from conical hats to *ao dai*, the traditional silk tunic worn by women.

Wednesday 28 August - FAREWELL HCMC/WELCOME ABOARD VIKING SAIGON (B,D)

Take a morning visit to one of several green spaces where locals can be spotted engaging in their daily morning exercise - maybe a round of badminton, tai chi or using the outdoor gym equipment. Then, it's time to check out and journey on to our embarkation port where the Viking Saigon awaits. Step on board, unpack and prepare for 7 wonderful nights cruising.

Viking Saigon - 7 nights.



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[Thursday 29 August - CAI BE - WELCOME TO THE MEKONG \(B,L,D\)](#)

A feast for the senses, Cái Bè is a Vietnamese enclave nestled among the lacework of waters of the Mekong Delta. Surrounded by fruit orchards, this small town with a charming village air boasts remarkably preserved old houses in its Đông Hòa Hiệp Commune. Village life here centres on the waters of the delta, where old-world commerce still survives as craftspeople trade and sell their produce and wares in small floating markets. The region is also known for *Cài Luong*, a Vietnamese-style folk opera that mixes ballads and theatre with storylines focused on rural life.



[Friday 30 August - TAN CHAU - HOME OF SILK PRODUCTION \(B,L,D\)](#)

A thriving border town on Mekong shores, Tân Châu occupies a rural district in the delta of Vietnam. Founded in the mid-18th century, its growing population has earned it an upgrade to a township. High-quality silk is produced here, skilfully woven in delicate traditional patterns, and expertly dyed in bright colours. Sedge grass weaving is another long-held tradition, producing mats, baskets, and other useful items. The surrounding terrain, crisscrossed by canals and smaller rivers, is mostly flat and supports rice fields and other agriculture.

[Saturday 31 August - PHNOM PENH, CAMBODIA \(B,L,D\)](#)

Time seems to have passed by Phnom Penh. Once known as the "Pearl of Asia," this bustling Cambodian capital is home to charming French colonial architecture along relaxed boulevards, beautifully wrought pagodas and the monumental Angkorian complexes for which Cambodia is revered. The city's park-like riverfront boasts plenty of inviting cafés and restaurants, and its rich collection of universities, museums and other institutions have grown into Cambodia's centre of cultural heritage.

[Sunday 1 September - PHNOM PENH, KHMER CUISINE \(B,L,D\)](#)

Twice chosen as Cambodia's capital, Phnom Penh's history is punctuated with periods of Khmer and French rule. More recently, the city has experienced rapid urbanization and has enjoyed a thriving cultural and food scene. Although often shadowed by the more well-known cuisine of neighbours, Thailand and Vietnam, traditional Cambodian fare represents the flavours and techniques of one of the world's oldest surviving culinary traditions: Khmer cuisine. In Phnom Penh, opportunities abound to sample its signature dishes, from savory fish *amok* to fresh *nom banh chok* rice noodles.



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[Monday 2 September - SCENIC SAILING: MEKONG RIVER \(B,L,D\)](#)

Journey along the Mekong and understand why it is truly the “Mother River of Southeast Asia,” sustaining civilizations through the centuries. Pass Mekong rice fields, villages and towns that seem frozen in time, and see ample evidence of the river’s role in farming and fishing. A lush landscape of evergreen and broadleaf forests drapes across flat landscapes that rise to rugged peaks. As the river opens up to the Vietnamese delta, narrow rivulets lead to inviting floating markets where all manner of the earth’s bounty is sold from ubiquitous longboats.

[Tuesday 3 September - KAMPONG CHAM \(B,L,D\)](#)

The capital city of Kampong Cham province, which loosely translates to “the riverside of the Cham people,” is the sixth-largest city in Cambodia. Its streets, which spread away from the Mekong River, exude a pleasant French colonial charm. The Kizuna Bridge over the river, opened in 2001, is the first span to cross the Mekong in Cambodia. Another bridge, modest in comparison but no less impressive, is the elaborate bamboo bridge that, during the dry season, leads to Koh Paen island, where Khmer and Cham villages are mounted on stilts in anticipation of high water season.

[Wednesday 4 September - SIEM REAP - GATEWAY TO ANGKOR WAT \(B,L,D\)](#)

After breakfast, disembark your ship and transfer to your destination. Gateway to the magnificent temples of Angkor Wat, Siem Reap boasts an atmospheric Old French Quarter where colonial-style buildings stand alongside Chinese architecture. Everywhere there is evidence of its place in history as a city with strong ties to its rural past. Still, Angkor Wat gets much of the attention; the UNESCO World Heritage Site is one of the most important archaeological sites in the world, drawing not only historians and archaeologists but also the likes of Charlie Chaplin and Jackie Kennedy.

Siem Reap Hotel - 3 nights.



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[Thursday 5 September - SIEM REAP - MAJESTIC MONUMENTS & KHMER HISTORY \(B,L,D\)](#)

The lasting legacy of the Khmer Empire is evident across many parts of Southeast Asia. The Khmer were known for their construction skills and ability to establish economic links with societies across the continent, trading in rice, fish and other goods via the Mekong River. The Khmer civilization was deeply embedded with Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, which are reflected in much of the country's ancient architecture. The majestic monuments of Angkor Wat and Bayon pay tribute to the Khmer's vast power and wealth, which at its peak was larger than Europe's Byzantine Empire.

[Friday 6 September - SIEM REAP - OPPORTUNITES FOR ART LOVERS \(B,L,D\)](#)

From Siem Reap, a number of stunning smaller temples can be explored. The ruins of Ta Prohm Temple, featured in the movie *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider*, is a fascinating sight, with its collection of towers, courtyards and corridors of delicately carved stone enveloped by the vast roots of banyan trees. The center of Siem Reap enjoys a vibrant atmosphere with eateries offering a range of local and international cuisine, as well as stores that are open until late selling a variety of goods, from Khmer art and jewelry to handmade silks and lacquerware.

[Saturday 7 September - HANOI, VIETNAM \(B,L,D\)](#)

After breakfast, fly to exciting Hanoi, a French-conceived colonial city. No other destination better represents the contrasting nature of modern Vietnam than Hanoi. It was the capital of French Indochina from 1902 to 1954 and today boasts one of the most beautiful panoramas in the region, with more cultural sites than any other city in Vietnam. Amid more than 600 pagodas and temples, Hanoi's Old Quarter displays the original streets and architecture from the early 20th century. A stroll along its historic streets is like stepping back in time.

Pan Pacific Hanoi or similar - 3 nights.

[Sunday 8 September - HANOI, THE OLD QUARTER AND MUCH MORE \(B,L,D\)](#)

At the heart of Hanoi's Old Quarter lies a labyrinth of narrow streets that, despite the noise levels, are well organized. Amid the bustle, a pattern of trade emerges from the street names, each dedicated to the products that have been produced and sold here for centuries. From Hàng Bạc (silver) to Hàng Bè (baskets) and Hàng Bông (cotton) to Hàng Đào (silk), just about any item can be found at a store or market stall alongside a variety of Vietnam's famous street food vendors.

[Monday 9 September - HANOI, A FINLA DAY FOR EXPLORATION OR SHOPPING \(B,L,D\)](#)

Hanoi is famous for its delicious street food, serving up an array of dishes from all corners across the city. Steaming bowls of pho, a Vietnamese rice noodle soup, are served alongside marinated meats grilled to perfection. The café scene in Vietnam is equally as popular; egg coffee is a local specialty and a decadent cap to any meal. Enjoy a day of leisure in this vibrant city, before we enjoy a casual meal together, our farewell dinner.

[Tuesday 10 September - HOMEWARD BOUND \(B,L,D\)](#)

After breakfast, we will be transferred to the airport for our direct flight to Melbourne.

Departing Hanoi Vietnam Airlines on Tuesday 10 September at 10.00am
Arriving Melbourne on Tuesday 10 September at 10.15pm



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Pricing

From \$12,995.00 per person twin share – French Balcony (B) on Viking
From \$14,195.00 per person – Veranda (A) on Viking
Limited sole use availability, price on application.

Upgrades

Premium Economy – From \$1185.00 per person
Business – From \$5195.00 per person

Package Includes:

- Return Economy Class Airfares with Vietnam Airlines, including all taxes.
- Meet & Assistance on arrival & departure, all transfers & exclusive touring.
- Accommodation, hotels tax and service charges
- Meals as specified.
- Entrance Fees to included sights.
- English speaking driver & guide throughout

Included Sights:

- A guided walking tour of Hoi An, the ancient World Heritage town
- Full day tour to Ba Na Hill
- Master Chef led market tour and cooking lesson
- Full day Panoramic City Tour of Ho Chi Minh City
- Cu Chi Tunnels visit
- Cái Bè Sampan tour to local village and market
- Backwaters Sampan cruise through colourful canals of Mekong Delta
- An up-close look at rural Vietnam by Sampan and Rickshaw
- Private cycling tour of Phnom Penh
- Excursion to sobering memorials of the Cambodian genocide (participation optional)
- Udog Monastery and Silversmith Village visit
- Visit the twin Holy Mountains of Phnom Pros and Phnom Srey, Man Hill and Woman Hill
- Attend a traditional performance by Apsara Dancers
- Explore Crown Jewel of Khmer Architecture, the 12th Century Temple of Angkor Wat
- Visit Ta Prohm and Angkor Thom
- Full day excursion in Hanoi



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Not Included:

- Extra Meals other than those mentioned.
- Travel Insurance
- Personal Expenses
- Approx AUD 500 per person for Guides & Driver tips

