Day 1: Hanoi

Xin chao! Welcome to Vietnam. Hanoi is famous for its beautiful lakes, shaded boulevards, verdant public parks and its thriving Old Quarter. The latter is a veritable architectural museum piece, with blocks of ochre buildings retaining the air of a 1930s provincial French town. You will be transferred from the airport to your hotel, and your adventure begins with a welcome meeting at 5pm. Afterwards, perhaps enjoy some dinner with your family and fellow travellers (this is optional).

Accommodation
Hong Ngoc Cochinchine Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Complimentary Airport Arrival Transfer

Meals Included
There are no meals included on this day.

Day 2: Hanoi

Embark on a full-city tour of town. You will visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum, and the tranquil Temple of Literature – an oasis of calm in the heart of town. Also head to the Museum of Ethnology to learn more about the diverse heritage of Vietnam. Enjoy some lunch at KOTO restaurant, an excellent establishment and longtime friend of Intrepid which lives by the philosophy of 'know one, teach one'. It supports the underprivileged local youth by giving them a chance at making a career in the hospitality industry. In the evening, sit down to a traditional water puppet performance. This northern tradition, dating back nearly a thousand years, is performed alongside traditional Vietnamese music that employs drums, wooden bells, horns and bamboo flutes.

Accommodation
Hong Ngoc Cochinchine Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Hanoi - Temple of Literature
Hanoi - Water puppet show
Hanoi - Ho Chi Minh Complex: Ho Chi Minh, Stilt House and Museum
Hanoi - Koto Restaurant lunch
Hanoi - Museum of Ethnology

Meals Included
Breakfast
Lunch

Special Information
Please note that the Ethnology Museum is closed on Mondays. If you are on a departure that falls on a Monday in Hanoi, you will visit the Vietnamese Women's Museum instead. If you are arriving into
Hanoi before the trip departs, we highly recommend you take the time to visit the Ethnology Museum in your own time as it is a real highlight.

Day 3: Halong Bay

Travel by minibus to the spectacular World Heritage-listed site of Halong Bay (approximately 4 hours). The bay is a breathtaking secluded harbour, with some 2,000 limestone islands jutting out of the waters of the Bac Bo Gulf. Board your private boat and cruise among the dramatic limestone peaks. There's an opportunity to swim in the famous Vietnam East Sea and explore caves filled with stunning stalactites and stalagmites. Spend a peaceful night on board, beneath a sky alive with stars. Your sailing junk has twin-share cabins that have air-conditioning and private facilities. There's also a dining room and bar.

Notes: Due to recent, unforeseen changes by local authorities, many boats are no longer permitted to stay overnight on the bay. This has resulted in a boat shortage. To ensure Intrepid travellers are all accommodated, a larger boat, usually with 12 cabins, may be used, and passengers may be split across multiple boats. An Intrepid group leader will be present on each boat, and the route and onboard inclusions will remain the same.

Accommodation
Halong Bay Junk (1 night)

Included Activities
Halong Bay - Overnight boat cruise with seafood lunch and dinner

Meals Included
Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Day 4: Hue

Enjoy breakfast on the boat this morning and perhaps head out for an optional early morning kayak. Return to Hanoi by bus (approximately 3.5 hours). From there you will board an overnight train bound for Hue. As the former imperial capital of Vietnam, Hue holds the treasures of Vietnam’s royal past. It’s a curious mix of bustling streets and tranquil settings. Although conditions are basic on your train journey, overnight trains are a classic South East Asian experience and the best way to travel long distances with the locals. Lie back and enjoy the ride! Most trains have a dining carriage serving simple food, but it’s a great idea to stock up on fresh bread, cheese and fruit before you head off.

Notes: Sleeper trains typically have four-berth compartments (occasionally six-berth, depending on seasonal variations) which have bench seats that convert into sleeping bunks. A sheet, pillow and blanket are provided, although some travellers prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. On occasion, passengers of different genders will be required to share a compartment and there will be occasions where you’ll be sharing with local travellers or travellers who are not part of your group.
Accommodation
Overnight sleeper train (1 night)

Optional Activities
Halong Bay - Kayaking - VND250000

Meals Included
Breakfast

Special Information
In order to safely participate in the optional kayaking children must be a minimum of 8 years old. All kayaks are two seater and the experience will last for approximately 1-1.5 hours. Note that kayaking is restricted to designated zones within the bay.

Day 5: Hue
Welcome to Hue! Your leader will help you chose a local, tasty breakfast option this morning after you disembark the overnight train. Afterwards, enjoy a dragon boat cruise along the Perfume River. The trip includes a visit to Thien Mu Pagoda, which is considered by many to be the unofficial symbol of Hue. It's an active Buddhist monastery originating in 1601. One of the most poignant displays here is a car belonging to a former monk who, in 1963, drove to Saigon and set himself alight to protest against the treatment of Buddhists by the South Vietnamese regime. You will visit one of the royal tombs, that of Emperor Tu Duc, and see the central lake set amid a grove of frangipani and pine trees. There is also the chance to visit the tomb of Minh Mang. Its lush forest backdrop and impressive architecture make it perhaps the most majestic of all the royal tombs.

Accommodation
Thanh Lich 2 Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Hue - Perfume River cruise

Meals Included
There are no meals included on this day.

Day 6: Hue
Delve further into the fascinating former capital today. You will visit the Imperial Citadel, which is the best-preserved remnant of a large citadel and Royal centre that once existed on this fortified site. The unique fortifications are fascinating, even though much of this place has sadly been destroyed by war. The foliage-covered ruins make for an interesting couple of hours of exploring. You will visit the Forbidden Purple City, which was almost totally wiped out during the Tet Offensive in 1968. The gaping holes left by bombs give an idea of the shocking destruction wreaked upon the country during the war.

Accommodation
Thanh Lich 2 Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Day 7: Hoi An

Travelling by bus, head south through coastal rice paddies, then traverse the spectacular Hai Van Pass along the mountains en route to Hoi An (approximately 4 hours). Recently declared a World Heritage site, Hoi An is beautifully preserved and exudes a tranquil atmosphere. It's perfect for strolling around at a leisurely pace, with many beautiful Japanese houses and Chinese temples lining the narrow lanes. Parts of Hoi An look exactly as they did more than a century ago. It's also a shopping mecca – browse local markets and shops for original paintings, handcrafted woodwork, ceramics, embroidery and lanterns. Hoi An has also become famous for its tailoring, with a great variety of fabrics and tailors to choose from.

Accommodation
Indochine Riverside Hoi An Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Hoi An - Orientation walk
Hoi An - Old Town walking tour

Optional Activities
Hoi An - Cooking Class, Central Vietnamese - VND420000
Hoi An - Thu Bon river boat trip - VND100000
Hoi An - Countryside bicycle hire - VND40000

Meals Included
Breakfast

Day 8: Hoi An

After breakfast we head out to spend the morning at Cua Dai beach. This beach is known for its stunning palm-fringed white sand and views of the Cham islands. Transfer back to town for lunch, before spending the afternoon learning how to prepare White Rose Cake. This hands on experience is one the whole family will enjoy!

Accommodation
Indochine Riverside Hoi An Hotel or similar (1 night)
Day 9: Hoi An

Enjoy further free time in this beautiful old town. Perhaps take up a cooking class and learn the secrets of preparing local specialties like cao lau – dark pork broth with thick yellow noodles, sliced pork, bean sprouts, green vegetables and croutons. Street food tours can also be arranged. Alternatively, hire some bikes and take the family out on a cycling trip into the gorgeous surrounding countryside. Another great activity which kids will enjoy is a bamboo basket ride down the waterways of the jungle. For more optional day- and half-day trips, chat to your leader.

Accommodation
Indochine Riverside Hoi An Hotel or similar (1 night)

Meals Included
Breakfast

Day 10: Ho Chi Minh City

Take a short flight to the economic hub of Ho Chi Minh City (approximately 1 hour). Formerly known as Saigon, Ho Chi Minh City is characterised by a vast array of sights and sounds – a fascinating blend of old and new, East and West. Check out Ben Thanh Market and experience a delicious local lunch of street food, and enjoy an orientation walk. Afterwards, you're free to explore the city on your own. Your leader will have plenty of interesting and fun ideas for you and the kids. Consider scooting off on cyclos to Cholon, the Chinatown area of Ho Chi Minh City, for a bit of temple-hopping. Or visit the Vietnamese version of a department store for some serious shopping.

Accommodation
Lavender Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Ho Chi Minh City - Orientation Walk

Optional Activities
Ho Chi Minh City - Reunification Palace - VND40000
Ho Chi Minh City - War Remnants Museum - VND40000

Meals Included
Breakfast

Day 11: Mekong Delta

Head down to the Mekong Delta and visit unexplored Ben Tre where coconut is everything and anything. The fertile delta is famous for its abundant harvests of tropical fruits and flowers. On arrival, board your private boat and cruise along the maze of waterways to visit some local cottage
industries. This is a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at a different part of the local economy. Then head to your overnight homestay by the water. Be invited into a family home for a true local experience – a chance to see daily life from the inside. You’ll be sleeping on simple camp beds in dorm-style rooms, with all meals included. Bedding and mosquito nets are provided.

Accommodation
Homestay (1 night)

Included Activities
Mekong Delta - Boat cruise and homestay

Meals Included
Breakfast
Lunch
Dinner

Days 12-13: Ho Chi Minh

Life in the delta starts with the sun, so embrace the day early. You will visit a local market and soya bean workshop before heading back to Ho Chi Minh City for one more night. You should arrive in the afternoon, which will give you time for a final exploration of the city. On Day 13 your trip comes to an end, and you are free to leave at any time. For those who have booked an airport transfer, the leader will confirm your departure time and onward flight details.

Accommodation
Lavender Hotel or similar (1 night)

Included Activities
Mekong Delta - Soya bean workshop
Mekong Delta - Local market visit

Optional Activities
Ho Chi Minh City - Cu Chi Tunnel Experience Urban Adventure - USD43

Meals Included
Breakfast (2)