



ADVENTURES
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WATS AND WONDERS OF VIETNAM AND CAMBODIA

Trip Summary

HIGHLIGHTS

- Experiencing both modern and rural, traditional Vietnam
- Staying at the Topas Ecolodge - one of National Geographic's Unique Lodges of the World
- Traveling to the summit of Mt. Fansipan - the highest mountain in the Indochinese Peninsula
- Cruising the World Heritage-listed seascape of Halong Bay aboard a private junk - an ancient Chinese sailing ship
- Visiting Angkor Wat, the center of the Khmer Empire and the largest religious monument in the world
- Shopping for artisan goods at one of the many local markets

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TRIP AT A GLANCE

Location:	Hanoi, Vietnam
Activities:	Multisport
Arrive:	Arrive before 2 p.m. at the Noi Bai International Airport in Hanoi Vietnam
Depart:	You are free to leave anytime on the last day from the Siem Reap International Airport in Cambodia

Trip Overview

Spending time in the land of dragons, temples, and tea is an unforgettable experience. We'll begin our trip in Hanoi, Vietnam's capital, known for its bustling side streets and world-class street food. From Hanoi, we'll travel to the Sapa region where we'll hike through rice fields, explore limestone mountains, and visit a few of the colorful ethnic minority communities along the way. We'll then head north to Ha Long Bay where we'll spend our last few days in Vietnam, cruising the bay's beautiful blue waters aboard an ancient Chinese sailing ship. Our journey ends in Siem Reap, Cambodia where we'll experience its rich creative culture and the extraordinary temples of nearby Angkor.

Rating

This trip is a combination of touring, hiking, learning about the local history and culture, and optional kayaking and swimming. The hiking is in Vietnam's Sapa region and on the last day in Cambodia. You'll hike about 2.5-3.5 hours each day on dirt roads and paths that can be muddy with rocks and ruts with both downhill and uphill sections, but not any significant elevation gain. Some sections can be slippery, especially if there has been recent rain. You'll also do a lot of walking to explore Angkor Wat, which can feel significant with the steps and the humidity. The trip is rated a 2 and is suitable for any woman who regularly walks at a brisk pace 3 to 4 days a week for 35 - 45 minutes and there are typically 3 to 5 hours of daily activity. Patience, flexibility, and adaptability will be great to bring with you!

Rating: 1 [\[2\]](#) 3 4 5

What's Included

- An English speaking female, local tour leader and an AGC group leader
- 10 nights double occupancy at 5-star hotels in the cities, an eco-lodge in the mountains, and double-occupancy boat cabins while cruising Ha Long Bay

- All activities mentioned in the itinerary, including Mount Fansipan and Angkor Wat
- All meals -breakfast, lunch and dinner - from arrival dinner to departure breakfast (see itinerary) and water with meals
- All transportation during the trip, including airfare from Vietnam to Cambodia

What's not included: Travel to Vietnam and from Cambodia, airport transfer outside the trip dates, visa fees, alcoholic and other beverages at meals, snacks, guide gratuities, travel insurance.

OUR ITINERARY

Below is the itinerary we have planned for the trip. As is true on any adventure travel trip, plans for any specific day may be modified due to weather considerations, unforeseen circumstances, new opportunities, and group interests.

DAY 1

Welcome to Vietnam! Our trip starts today in Ha Noi - one of Asia's most picturesque cities and Vietnam's capital. Upon arrival at the Noi Bai International Airport, a representative will greet you and assist with the visa procedure. You'll then meet your guide and transfer to the hotel. Schedule your flight to arrive anytime before 2 p.m. at the airport and the group will meet officially at 4 p.m. We'll start getting to know each other and review our plans for the trip, before sharing our first dinner. The remainder of the evening is free for you to get some much-deserved rest or continue to get to know each other. Overnight Pearl Hotel in Hanoi or similar. (D)

DAY 2

We will get an early start today, as is the local custom, and head towards Hoan Kiem Lake. This freshwater lake in the center of the city is a peaceful spot where many locals, especially women, start their morning routines and practice tai chi. As we cross the iconic Rising Sun Bridge to visit the Ngoc Son Temple, we will try to spot one of the endangered large soft-shell turtles, which is considered quite auspicious. Afterwards, we'll stop at a charming coffee shop to try Vietnamese iced coffee or, if you're feeling more adventurous, an egg coffee!

Continuing our walking tour, we'll then explore Hanoi's Old Quarter. With its gorgeous crooked lanes, charming colonial architecture, and scents of tantalizing street food - it's a sensory delight! We will stop along the way for a traditional lunch before visiting the Temple of Literature. Built in 1076, the Temple of Literature housed Vietnam's first university and functioned for 700 years educating royalty, mandarins, and members of the elite. It's gardens and well-preserved architecture offer a fascinating glimpse into Vietnam's past. We'll then visit Vietnamese Women's Museum and if time allows, the Hoa Lo Prison. Our day concludes with a fresh draft beer - bai hoi - and tasting some of the delicious, local specialties.

Overnight in Hanoi at Pearl Hotel or similar. (B, L, D)

DAY 3

Today we go north to the mountainous region of Sapa! The drive takes about 5 hours in our comfortable, private van. This region is famous for its welcoming ethnic minority groups, vast rice patties and is home of the tallest peak in Indochina - Mount Fansipan. It's also quickly becoming a premier trekking base in Vietnam.

We'll arrive at Topas Ecolodge in time for lunch and settle into our rooms for the next two nights. Topas Ecolodge is nestled in the mountains of Hoan Lien National Park, about 45 minutes from Sapa town, and is a Certified "Unique Lodge" by National Geographic. After lunch, we'll stretch our legs with a 2.5-3 hour walk to a Red Dao village. The Red Dao women typically wear distinctive red triangular shaped turbans and shave their heads and eyebrows. They are known for their beautiful handmade embroidery and basket weaving. We'll have a chance to meet the local woman and learn about their culture before hiking back to Topas Ecolodge for dinner.

Overnight at Topas Ecolodge. (B, L, D)

DAY 4

After a quiet morning enjoying the sunrise from your prime viewpoint atop the mountain, we'll pack up to explore a more remote part of Hoang Lien National Park.

Today's trek will start near Sin Chai village in the high mountains where the trail passes waterfalls and deep valleys. Our first stop will be at the Red Dao village of Nam Nhiu, where we will stop briefly to learn about their agrarian lifestyle and visit a few homes. We will then turn onto a small dirt trail dotted with bamboo huts, which are used by local farmers during harvest season. We'll arrive at Nam Cang village in time for lunch at the Topas Riverside Lodge, where the jungle is the backdrop and connected to the village by a suspension bridge - one at a time here!

After lunch we'll visit Nam Cang village and learn how they make rice paper, jewelry, and their colorful embroidery. If the sun is out, we may also take a swim in the river before transferring back to Topas Ecolodge for the afternoon. The rest of the afternoon is free to relax in the infinity pool or schedule a traditional Red Dao herbal bath at their spa.

Overnight at Topas Ecolodge. (B, L, D)

DAY 5

We will have our last morning with our new friends at the Topas Ecolodge before packing up to journey to the top of Mt. Fansipan. Once in Sapa town, we'll board the Muong Hoa mountain train for a short, scenic trip to the Fansipan cable car station, which is the longest cable car in the world with the highest elevation gain. We'll ride a private cable car to the base of Mt. Fansipan and climb the final 600 steps or take the funicular to reach the summit.

After taking our time to explore the summit, we'll re-trace our steps back to Sapa for lunch. After a wonderful few days in the mountains, we'll transfer by private bus back to Hanoi for a good night's rest.

Overnight at Pearl Hotel or similar. (B, L, D)

DAY 6

Today we set out to sea! We'll make our way northeast to Ha Long Bay. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1994, we'll get a premier glimpse of its natural beauty aboard our own private junk - a type of ancient Chinese sailing ship.

After a welcome drink and safety briefing, we'll check into our cabins, freshen up, and then sit down for a specially prepared Vietnamese lunch while cruising to the Cap La fishing village and several islands. We'll take our time exploring the beautiful emerald waters, towering limestone cliffs and fascinating karst islands with options to kayak, swim or stretch your legs on a short hike. At sunset, we'll get back on the boat to sail towards our overnight anchorage spot in Bai Tu Long Bay. After dinner, we can try our hand at squid fishing!

Overnight on Private Junk. (B, L, D)

DAY 7

We will start our day with a Tai Chi lesson on the sun deck, a perfect way to start the day. After breakfast we will visit the Thien Canh Son Cave to learn more about the history of Ha Long Bay. Then we will transfer to a smaller boat to reach the Vung Vieng fishing village, a tranquil area for kayaking and swimming. While feasting on a fresh seafood lunch we will cruise to our next destination, Vung Ha where we can swim and kayak some more through the Karst Mountains. Back on the boat we will celebrate our last night on the water with a sunset party.

Overnight on Junk (B, L, D)

DAY 8

Our peaceful morning on the bay begins at sunrise with a tai chi lesson on the sundeck. Feeling refreshed, we will then nourish our bodies with a Western-style breakfast or the option to taste Pho, a traditional Vietnamese food. We will have a bit of free time to explore Bai Tu Long Bay before sharing one more meal aboard the boat - a traditional Vietnam lunch, which will include a cooking demonstration. We'll then bid farewell Ha Long Bay and make our way back to Hanoi for an early afternoon flight to Cambodia.

We will arrive in Siem Reap, Cambodia in the late afternoon and transfer to our hotel to settle in. Dinner will be at the exceptional Jaya House River Park hotel where we will be staying the next 3 nights. (B, L, D)

DAY 9

Today we will explore the world-famous Angkor Archeological Park, which is one of the largest and oldest religious monuments in the world. After a short tuk-tuk transfer from our hotel, we'll spend the day walking its vast network of temples dating from the 9th to the 15th century during the Khmer Empire.

We will start at the South Gate of Angkor Thom with an optional short walk to a hidden temple, visit several other temples, and then take a break for an invigorating lunch at Marum restaurant. After lunch, we'll explore the fabulous jungle temple of Ta Prohm with the rest of the afternoon set aside to visit the main temple, Angkor Wat, which means "Temple City" in Khmer. Angkor Wat was constructed in the early 12th century, then mysteriously abandoned by the Khmer civilization two centuries later. It is now one of the main reasons for visiting Cambodia. After a full day of walking the vast Angkor complex, we'll return to our hotel with time to freshen up before dinner at Chanrey Tree restaurant. The day isn't over yet! A visit to Siem Reap wouldn't be complete without experiencing a Phare performance - the Cambodian Circus. Phare is a non-profit art organization founded in 1994 by eight young Cambodians returning from refugee camps along the Thai border and provides education and professional training to local youth. This high-energy performance with its emotion, enthusiasm and talent will not disappoint.

Overnight at Jaya House River Park. (B, L, D)

DAY 10

Our exploration of the fascinating history of the Khmer Empire continues today at what's considered its birthplace, Phnom Kulen National Park. We will drive about 1.5 hours north of the city, stopping first at the Angkor Centre for Conservation of Biodiversity - the first nature conservation center in Cambodia. Their knowledgeable and passionate staff will give us a guided tour of the animals and explain their efforts to rescue, rehabilitate, breed and release native wildlife. We'll then hike along the River of a Thousand Lingas to a waterfall where we can take a swim or dip our feet. Along the way, we will learn about the Lingas - symbols of fertility - carved directly into the stone of the riverbed. The waters hold special significance to the people of Cambodia and flow down to Angkor Wat. Given time, we may also visit a massive reclining Buddha statue at the top of the mountain. Before heading back to Siem Reap, we'll share a local Khmer lunch and have time to soak up our surroundings.

We will spend the rest of our unforgettable journey in Siem Reap. You will have time this afternoon to relax at the beautiful Java House River Park or visit a local market in town for some final souvenirs. We will share our last dinner together at The Square 24 restaurant. You'll want to save room for this fantastic meal featuring modern Khmer dining. (B, L, D)

DAY 11

You can leave anytime today. Transfer to the airport is included and your guide will make sure you depart in time to catch your flight. Hotel check out is at 12:00 noon. (B)

ADDITIONAL TRIP INFORMATION

Getting There

Plan to fly into Noi Bai International Airport by 2 p.m. on Day 1. Group shuttles will be arranged based on arrival times and a representative will be available to assist you upon arrival. If you are arriving earlier, we can arrange a private transfer for \$60 one-way or you can take a taxi for about \$15.

Our meeting time is **4 p.m.** in the lobby of the [Hanoi Pearl Hotel](#), 06 Dao Khanh Lane, Hoan Kiem Dist., Ha Noi, Vietnam, +84 24 3938 0666.

If you would like assistance with airfare, we recommend contacting our AirDesk Partner, [Exito Travel](#). Start by submitting this [form](#). Just fill in your dates and destinations, including any additional notes about preferred carriers, class of service, possible stopovers, etc., and an agent will typically respond via email within a few hours. If you prefer to call, the number is 800-655-4053; be sure to tell them you are traveling with Adventures in Good Company.

Please note: Most of the international airlines are in-network for Exito, so they do not charge extra for their services (and often have access to discounted rates). When necessary, processing fees out-of-network carriers are minimal at around \$35-\$50 per ticket.

Accommodations

We will be staying in modern, tourist hotels in Hanoi and Siem Reap that are double occupancy and have en suite bathrooms. We'll spend 2 nights at the Topas Ecolodge in their executive bungalows with double occupancy rooms and en suite bathrooms. Two nights will be spent aboard a private sailing ship with 8 double-occupancy cabins and en suite bathrooms. There are 4 single supplements available for this trip, but they do not include the two nights on the boat due to limited capacity there.

Travel Insurance

We recommend that you purchase a travel protection plan to help protect you and your travel investment against the unexpected. For your convenience, we offer travel protection through Travelex Insurance Services. For more information on the available plans or to enroll, visit www.travelexinsurance.com or call 1-800-228-9792 and reference location number 06-0331.

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