



Vietnam & Cambodia

 **Tour Length:** 13 Days
 **Tour Departs:** Your preferred dates

Experience Vietnam and Cambodia via stunning Ha Long Bay cruise.

Vietnam and Cambodia are lands of striking contrasts and unforgettable moments—where ancient temples rise from jungle canopies and bustling cities hum with energy and warmth. In Vietnam, you'll cruise the mystical waters of Ha Long Bay, explore Hanoi's colonial charm, shop the riverside markets of Hoi An, and feel the pulse of Saigon's vibrant streets. Across the border, Cambodia welcomes you with quiet beauty and a deep, contemplative past; its riverside towns, peaceful landscapes, and the awe-inspiring temples of Angkor Wat leave a lasting impression. Throughout it all, five-star comfort and warm hospitality ensure your journey is just as enriching as the destinations themselves.

Highlights

This tour includes many of the highlights of both Vietnam and Cambodia, and while each country has its own distinct history and culture, they complement each other with their diverse landscape, scenery, magnificent sites and of course friendly people.

- Vietnam: Hanoi, Halong Bay, Hoi An, Saigon
- Cambodia: Siem Reap, Temples of Angkor Wat, learning about the Khmer Rouge

Tour Costs Per Person

Priced from

Price available on request

This is an independent non-escorted package

Pricing subject to availability and dates.

We can customise this to your requirements.

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Tour Costs

Inclusions

- Accommodation with daily breakfast in the program*
- Ginger Junk cruise in Halong/Lan Ha **cruise itinerary and schedule are subject to change upon weather conditions
- Transportations with guide services: all transfers and transportation on tour by private air-conditioned vehicle with driver and stationed English-speaking guides in each city.
- Air tickets as mentioned in the itinerary: SAI-HAN, HAN-HUI and DAD-SGN (Economy class and included airport taxes)
- Entrance fees of the scenic spots as per program
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary. Not include drinks in the meals.
- Mineral water provided daily

Exclusions

- Visas and visa stamping duties
- Early check in or late check out at all hotels
- Meals where not indicated in the program
- All drinks
- Other air-tickets and train tickets not mentioned in the program and in the inclusion column
- International airport taxes
- Overweight luggage
- Travel insurance
- Gratuities/Tipping to guides, drivers, boatman, bellboys etc (*we recommend USD5-10 per traveller per day as tips for your guides and USD\$3-5 for your driver, however you might like to pay more or less depending on service)
- Personal expenses (such as room services, laundry, optional activities etc)
- Optional tours and extra activities
- Other services not mentioned in the program and in the inclusion column

To register for this tour please contact us at 0800 500 518 or tours@mahertours.co.nz

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Tour Itinerary

13 Days

Day 1 | Siem Reap

Welcome to Cambodia/Siem Reap!

Meet & greet: Upon arrival at airport, you will be welcomed to Cambodia by your private English-speaking guide, and then transferred to your hotel for check in (early check-in is subject to availability of the hotel, early check-in is not included today). The journeys from new Siem Reap airport to your hotel will be about 44km and will take approx 1 hour drive, depending on traffic condition.

Welcome dinner: This evening we recommend you try 'The Grill Lounge', a new trendy restaurant that has taken traditional Khmer recipes and given them a modern twist. It is located nearby the night town, which is one minute away from the hustle and bustle Pubstreet. The restaurant has got the classics, but they've also gathered the most over-the-top, outrageous, and creative recipes for your grilling pleasure.

Accommodation: Raffles Grand Hotel d'Angkor /State room

Day 2 | Siem Reap

(B)

Sunrise over Angkor temples: In the early morning around 06.00am we wake up early to take a trip to Angkor Temple architectural marvel. In the pond that surrounds it we see reflected mintra see the sunrise. Then, we walk to the backdoor to visit Angkor Wat Temple at level 1, level 2 and level 3, an architectural marvel, one of the world's most impressive ruins. The temple has fine carvings of Apsaras in stone made during the Angkor period. Following, beat the crowds at the photogenic Ta Prohm temple of "Tomb Raider" fame, the temple that had nearly disappeared into the jungle and remains overgrown, an oddly haunting and exotic scene. The magnificent roots of a tree, pushing between the huge stone blocks of the temple in a sort of embrace, evoke feelings that you may remember forever. Undisturbed by crowds of tourists you can better appreciate the interplay of man and nature at this magical site. Back to hotel after the visit for late breakfast. Lunch is taken at your resort.

Afternoon, take a tuk tuk ride to explore the mysterious Royal city Angkor Thom. Its 50-tower temple is an awesome sight. At first glance it seems a shapeless mass of stone, but further scrutiny reveals a face, and then another and another until suddenly you are engulfed by the silent, heavy, enigmatic and silent gaze through half-closed eyes, staring out from a primitive and remote time. Enter at the Victory Gate before uniquely walking along the 8m high wall through the forest to the less touristy Death Gate. Passing behind the Terraces of Elephants and Leper King walk through the shaded parkland to Phimeanakas and Baphuon temples, learning about the trees and fruits used locally. End our sightseeing this afternoon with a visit to Bayon temple with its iconic carved faces.

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Day 3 | Tonle Sap Lake

(B)

Morning guided tour of Tonle Sap Lake.: Depart your hotel this morning and drive 45 minutes to the largest settlements on the Tonle Sap Lake, also known as the Great Lake. It is referred to by many specialists as a natural wonder of the world as it can expand nearly five times during the wet season. Living on water is an art the Khmer people have mastered over the course of time. Learn how communities live and work on the lake and see floating schools, markets, and police and gas stations. Observe the local customs and talk with your hosts about the differences they face living on the water. (It is advisable to wear sturdy, walking shoes with a decent grip). This is a great chance to witness one of Cambodia's and the world's most amazing natural wonders. Then return back to Siem Reap town before noon.

Afternoon at leisure or explore the remote temples in countryside: This afternoon is option of your choice to relax at your hotel or continue to explore more. We will drive out of Siem Reap and visit Wat Bo Krum village on the banks of Siem Reap River. Wander around this typical Khmer village and enjoy the peaceful scenery. Visit the local children at the village school. Donations are always welcome and you may want to bring some notebooks, pens, new or used clothes, or rice to hand over to the school or village pagoda. After the visit, drive back to Siem Reap with a stop en route to visit the smallest, but magnificent, Banteay Srei built in the 10th Century and dedicated to Shiva. The temple was the birthplace of Khmer classical style architecture and the bas-relief work is the best example of Khmer classical art remaining. The pink sandstone structure bears a series of striking and beautiful sculptures, lintels, pediments and friezes. Khmers say the temple must have been carved by women for the details are too fine for the hands of a man. The remainder of the day is free at leisure. Siem Reap town itself has a good selection of shopping and dining areas for you to explore.

Day 4 | Siem Reap - Hanoi

(B)

Morning at leisure: This morning, you have time to relax. Alternatively, there are opportunities to visit village surrounding Siem Reap or continue exploring Angkor temples.

Private transfer: At approximated time this afternoon you will be transferred to the airport for the flight to Hanoi.

Welcome to Hanoi/Vietnam!

Meet & greet: Upon arrival at airport, you will be welcomed to Vietnam by your private English-speaking guide, and then transferred to your hotel for the night.

Once you have done immigrations and customs formalities, walk through exit gate and look for a tour guide displaying a welcome signboard with the group name on it. Embark the comfortable vehicle for transfer to your hotel for check-in and balance of the day is free at leisure for your relaxation.

Suggested evening Water Puppet show: Water Puppetry is a traditional and unique Vietnamese Art. This highly entertaining form of theatre uses the water surface as stage. Standing waist-deep in the water, the master puppeteers are hidden behind a bamboo screen. The technical virtuosity of the puppeteers is startling and the music enticing. The entire atmosphere is truly enchanting. Many of the brief episodes relate to scenes of the daily life. (The water puppet show is not included in your itinerary but can be arranged by your guide and paid for locally).

Accommodation: Sofitel Legend Metropole hotel/Premium room

Day 5 | Hanoi

(B)

Morning tour of Hanoi & cyclo tour of the Old Quarter: Start the tour of Hanoi with a visit to Imperial Citadel of Thang Long, a relic complex associated with the history of Thang Long – Dong Kinh citadel and Hanoi province starting from the pre-Thang Long period (An Nam invaded in 17th century) through Dinh – Tien Le period. thriving under the Ly, Tran, Le dynasties and Hanoi citadel under the Nguyen dynasty. This is a huge architectural work, built by the kings in many historical periods and became the most important monument in the system of Vietnamese monuments. Following we will pass by the Soviet style Ba Dinh Square where Ho Chi Minh read out the declaration of the nation's independence in 1945. Afterwards you will visit the ancient Temple of Literature which was built in the 11th century and was the first university established in Vietnam. End the day by enjoying a cyclo ride through the Old Quarter. The best way to explore the picturesque area of the Old Quarter is by "cyclo" (a three-wheeled bicycle taxi). Also known as the "36 Streets District", it was once the thriving commercial centre of the city. Each of the 36 short lanes used to specialise in a particular trade represented by one of the guilds. This is still reflected in the names of certain streets: like Silk Street, Gold Street and Fish Street. Among the ancient homes and attractive temples there is a multitude of tantalising souvenir shops.

Afternoon at leisure in Hanoi: This afternoon you have time at leisure to explore the Vietnamese capital independently. Stroll around the picturesque Hoan Kiem Lake, go shopping in the Old Quarter, and sample some of Hanoi's many culinary delights for dinner.

OPTIONAL TOUR AT SUPPLEMENT COST

Street food tour of Hanoi: This late afternoon, you will be taken on a street food tour of Hanoi by a member of Hanoi Gastronomy Club, to experience the amazing sights, sounds, smells and tastes of Hanoi. The foodie expert will meet you at the lobby of your hotel and will introduce you the sites by foot combining with the car to the authentic small streets so you can later by yourself or walk with your partners. He would journey you to so many parts of Hanoi that you would not otherwise see and even imagine about, from the maze of zigzagging backstreets, hectic traffic, old French boulevards, and witnessing some special activities in the Old Quarter. You will see and learn about the REAL HANOI and tasting REAL HANOI FOOD not as in usual sightseeing as common tourists. Immerse yourself in the sights, scents, and sounds of this wonderful Hanoi Street Food Story and your food expert will also share with you some local favourite eateries. Vietnamese cuisine focuses on the harmony of ingredients to bring refreshing flavours, keep natural tastes, and be good for health. It also expresses a part of the beauty of Vietnamese people's culture, lifestyle, feelings and thought. In each dish, you will find adequate taste including sour, spicy, salty, and sweet, which is very attractive like a bowl of "pho". Bun Cha, served by a plate of rice noodles, fresh herbs, and a bowl of warm broth with grilled minced pork, etc...or spring-rolls filled with pork or crab. Eat all what you can and if you want to try with a special dish – Cha Ca La Vong, which is only one dish – grilled fish fillets, smothered in dill and saffron-infused oil, served straight from the frying pan onto your plate. Please note that the detail of this tour is flexible and your guide may make changes to give you the best experience depending on the day. Your food journey would not be complete without a cup of egg coffee at a nice shop or taste a glass of fresh beer along the street. When you're done with the drinks, you will be taken back your hotel for relaxation. ***Note: Please note that the detail of this tour is flexible and your guide may make changes to give you the best experience depending on the day.

Day 6 | Hanoi – Halong Bay

(B,L,D)

Private transfer to Ha Long: This morning (at approximate 08.30am) you will be picked up from the hotel by your driver & guide. You will then drive to Ha Long via highway, drive takes approx. 2 hours and 45 minutes.

Overnight Ha Long cruise: You will arrive in Ha Long around midday, where you will board your deluxe junk where a welcome drink awaits. After a relaxing break, enjoy a delicious seafood lunch while cruising through the magical bay, where thousands of sculpted limestone islands rise from the waters like dragons' teeth. All activities arranged by the cruise are on a shared basis. After lunch you will explore some of Halong Bay's famous caves and grottos. There will also be the opportunity for swimming on a quiet beach or sunbathing on the sundeck. In the late afternoon there will be an excursion to a local fishing village, and a water tunnel. Return to the boat in time for a pre-dinner drink as the sun is setting. Please note that the cruise itinerary is subject to alteration dependent on sailing conditions.

Accommodation: Ginger cruise/Junior Suite cabin

Day 7 | Ha Long - Hue

(B)

Morning's Cruise: Enjoy an early start with Tai Chi on the sundeck, otherwise sleep in until breakfast is served. This morning, you will be transferred by tender to the Titov Island. About one hour is spent on the island, allowing time to climb to the peak for a breath-taking panoramic view of the Bay (there is also an expansive viewing deck half way up). After seeing these amazing rock formations return to the quay at Tuan Chau Island in the mid-morning, whilst brunch is served on board. Disembark the Indochina Sails junk late this morning.

Road journey from Ha Long back to Hanoi: Travel back by road to Hanoi with sightseeing en route, a journey of approximately 3 hours. Continue to Hanoi airport in time to catch your flight to Hue.

Private transfer: On arrival, you will be greeted by your guide and transferred to your hotel in the city.

Accommodation: Azerai La Residence Hue hotel/Superior room

Day 8 | Hue

(B,L,D)

Guided tour of Hue city: This morning, stroll around the Imperial Citadel and the Forbidden Purple City nearby. Modelled on the Forbidden City in Beijing by the Nguyen emperors in the early 19th century, the city was badly damaged during the war but the imposing city walls surrounded by a large moat afford good views of Hué. The palace retains a feeling of its past scale and importance, with detailed stonework and pavilions and it is at the moment in the process of being restored to its former magnificence. Following, we will take a short walk through the beautiful garden home complex of Phu Mong (Kim Long) and stop by a local home for tea-break and possible interaction with local family before visit one of the Royal Mausoleums in Hue, the final resting places of the Nguyen Emperors, which are dotted around the hills surrounding the south bank of the Perfume River. End the day with stop by Thien Mu Pagoda, sitting on the riverbank outside the city, this octagonal seven tier stupa has long been regarded as the symbol of Hué and was founded in 1601. It is still a site of Buddhist worship and its huge bell is said to be audible from the city.

Afternoon at leisure: This afternoon is time at leisure to relax at your hotel or explore Hue city and surrounding area independently.

Day 9 | Hue – Hoi An

(B,L,D)

Road journey from Hue to Hoi An: This morning, you will be driven south, along highway 1, to Hoi An, a journey of approximately 3 hours. Soon the highway meets the Hai Van Pass (meaning Pass of the Ocean Clouds). There are some spectacular vista points and photo opportunities en-route as the Truong Son Mountain range cuts across the narrow centre of the country. The mountain range has created a barrier to the cold airstreams from the north which often results in thick cloudbanks over the peaks. The pass has been a strategic military focal point during Vietnam's turbulent history and from the top there are views of the curve of Danang Bay. Then, continue transfer to Hoi An and check in your hotel and relaxation.

Afternoon Hoi An walking tour: You will enjoy a walking tour of the ancient town centre including temples, old houses, pagodas and the Japanese-covered Bridge to introduce an insight of Hoi An architecture/ history as well as the restoration plan being implemented by UNESCO. Free on your own to explore this ancient town and the colourful market with its stalls brimming with tropical specialties. The market is a good place to buy silk, which can be made upon into fine garments, all within a day. The remainder of the day is free at leisure for your own time of shopping or hanging around

This evening is at leisure to explore Hoi An town independently or attending Hoi An Memories Show. Extra tours and excursions can be arranged locally. Hoi An Memories Show is the most authentic cultural and historical values for visitors, deeply imprinted for every visitor watching the show thanks to the scale and the extremely elaborate investment in quality. It is an incredible show, spread over 25,000 square metres 500 performers take over the outdoor stage in their traditional ao dai costumes and modern staging techniques.

Accommodation: Namia River Retreat resort/Nipa Pool Villa

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Day 10 | Hoi An

(B,L)

Guided tour to Hoi An's countryside and cooking class at Kumquat: After breakfast, around 08.00am drive from your resort to Duy Hai Fishing Village, enjoy the hustle of morning fish market and then visit a family-run fish-sauce workshop under the guidance of the owner to learn about this essential ingredient in Vietnamese cuisine. Get on boat and go upstream the "Mother River"- Thu Bon to Duy Vinh village, well-known for traditional weaving sedge mat. Your journey is passing by a shrimp and duck farm to get a glimpse about agriculture river life. Upon arrival at Ban Thach Mat Village, where abundant sources of raw rush used to weave mats have allowed the villagers to develop their own handicraft and improve their lives for 400 years and drive to explore the beauty of a typical village in the Central of Vietnam. Learn the full process of sedge mat weaving from cutting sedge on the field to a finished mat following traditional method. See the way locals manage to keep their traditional occupation in a modern and constantly evolving time. Display your creativity to make your own pattern. We will then head to Tra Que vegetable village, which is named after a sweet-scented herb they grow and use to spice up Hoi An specialties. Upon arrival, learn about the history and custom of this charming village. Learn the traditional gardening methods and how they cultivate the vegetables. Arriving at Kumquat Cooking class restaurant, where we have a chance to freshen up before joining our cooking class. Working together with your chef we learn the traditional ways of preparing and cooking Vietnamese food. Using the freshest ingredients and traditional Vietnamese utensils. After the class we sit down and a chance to savour the dishes we have prepared. Recipes from the class will be made available to you so you can recreate them at home. After lunch, take a short drive back to Hoi An ancient town. Return back your resort for afternoon at leisure. Option of your choice to, on the way back we will visit to local shops selling handmade lanterns, leather, jewellery and textiles. Then, take a walk to local coffee in Hoi An town (near the riverbank) to try a local coffee or local fruit/ice-cream. Remainder of the day is at leisure to explore the charming tour of Hoi and surrounding area independently.

Afternoon at leisure: Afternoon is at leisure to explore the charming tour of Hoi and surrounding area independently or relax at the nearby beach.

Day 11 | Hoi An - Saigon

(B,L,D)

Private transfer: This morning you will be met by your driver and transferred to the airport for your flight to Saigon.

Private transfer: On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel in the city.

Afternoon guided tour of Saigon city: With over eight million inhabitants and four million motorbikes, Saigon is truly a city that never sleeps. This afternoon, visit Saigon's historic landmark including the Notre Dame Cathedral, a red brick edifice with twin spires constructed from materials imported from France (entrance is only permitted when no services are being performed). Then head across the square to the Central Post Office, completed in 1891. A short drive away is the former Presidential Palace, the headquarters of the Saigon Government during the American War. Continue to the War Remnants Museum for a vivid perspective of the American War through the eyes of the Vietnamese. (Please note that some of the displays are very graphic.) Experience Saigon's famed street coffee culture while your guide provides a brief language lesson as well as insights into daily life of a Saigonease before returning to your hotel. You may want to visit Ben Thanh market at the end of trip.

ALTERNATIVE/OPTIONAL TOUR AT SUPPLEMENT COST

Afternoon guided of the Cu Chi Tunnels: This afternoon, your guide and driver will transfer you out of the city to the Cu Chi Tunnels. This vast network of tunnels, stretching for over 150 kilometres, was built by the Viet Cong in the battles for the South. The tunnels are a sobering insight into the dedication of the Viet Cong who virtually lived in the narrow and claustrophobic tunnels whilst the war raged. Nearby, a chilling demonstration of the traps and weapons that were used against the Americans is given. The Cu Chi tunnels have been widened in places for visitors, however they can still be dark, hot and claustrophobic inside so please bear this in mind if you do not like enclosed spaces.

Day 11 | Hoi An – Saigon (cont.)

(B)

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY (ADDITIONAL SUPPLEMENT)

Explore Saigon nightlife by vintage Vespa motorbike, including all food and drinks (starts at 18.00pm & finish at 22.00pm): This evening, you will be picked up at your hotel to enjoy a fun tour with a local guide on the back of a vintage Vespa motorbike. You will be briefed of tour program and learn more about the nightlife in Saigon. The evening kicks off with drinks at a rooftop bar, while enjoying views over the Saigon skyline! Then your expert driver will take you through the city, weaving through the buzzing thoroughfares of Saigon as well as narrow back alleys. Sitting on the back of the Vespas, you'll be able to soak it all in: the glittering illuminated sites, the smells of streetside food stalls, the sounds of the city and more. The tour includes stops at a mix of venues, giving you the opportunity to experience a truly local night out. We take you to two popular restaurants where you'll sample several beloved Saigon dishes, all washed down with a cold drink. After dinner, you'll also kick back at a Vietnamese-style cafe, enjoying live music while sipping a beer or cocktail. You then have the option of returning back to your hotel to relax, or continuing the night wraps up at a lively music bar where you can groove to the tunes alongside the hip young Vietnamese crowd. If the latter you will end the trip at around 10.00pm and your Vespa driver will bring you back the hotel for the night. All food and drinks are included- all you need to bring is your appetite and sense of adventure.

Accommodation: Park Hyatt Saigon hotel/Park room

Day 12 | Mekong Delta

(B,L)

Guided tour to Mekong Delta/Ben Tre: This morning you will be met at your hotel and head one and half hours southwest of Saigon and along the way notice lush rice paddies and fruit farms emerging alongside the highway. Upon arrival Ben Tre, we board the charming wooden boat sailing across the Mekong Rivers while enjoying coconut juice. Our first stop at a brick making shop, where the locals still use centuries-old traditional methods to make the bricks by hand. Following, we will visit a local coconut manufacturer to see procedure of coconut processing, such as peeling coconut, coconut crushing, coconut pruning, coconut candy, making activated carbon ... We will also visit local handicraft – mat weaving, where we will meet and talk with local people, known for their friendliness, warmth and generosity.

Afterward, you have option to get on a rickshaw motorcycle riding on narrow village roads to enjoy the lush surroundings of rice paddies and fruit farms alongside or start a bicycle trip around Nhon Thanh village around 4km (or can do longer), traveling through some tranquil villages where vegetables gardens to be able to touch on real life and find out about tropical culture from Peasants. We will enjoy simple lunch at local family house offering Mekong Delta specialties. After Lunch, a hand-rowing sampan will take you through narrow canals under a green canopy of water-coconut trees to catch a glimpse of the daily activities of the local people.

After the visit, re-embark your boat to ride back to the pier in Ben Tre for disembarkation and drive back to Saigon.

Day 13 | Saigon Departure

(B)

A free morning today is your time for last minute shopping, sightseeing, and relaxing by the pool in preparation for the journey home.

Private transfer: At the appropriate time, today you will be collected from your hotel by your guide, and transferred to the airport in time for your onward flight.



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