

Vietnam



Hanoi to Saigon Bike Tour

13 days Hanoi to Saigon

The classic bike tour of South East Asia down Vietnam's beautiful coastline

Vietnam is a place that has become so much a part of Western culture that it remains a 'must see' for many people. While this existed mostly from the Vietnam War experience, Vietnam now attracts visitors for its vibrant culture, long history, village life and great travelling experiences. And, of course, cycling Vietnam is the best way to explore this country dominated by two wheels.

One of Asia's classic cycling journeys, riding from Hanoi to Saigon seems to have captured the travelling world's imagination so much so that even people not interested before in cycling tours have taken up the ultimate way to travel. Our Hanoi to Saigon is unashamedly a coastal journey and what makes it different from other tours is that with Grasshopper you will ride from hotel to hotel without ever transferring in the bus. We have designed an amazing back roads route that avoids Highway One for all but 60km of the 500+km of the ride.



Itinerary

Day 1 | Hanoi

Today group members will be arriving throughout the day so the day will be free to explore the sights of this charming city. We'll all meet in the evening for a group meeting and head out for our first dinner together. (D)

Day 2 | Hanoi & Hue | 20km

In the morning we will head out on our first ride in Vietnam on a nice easy ride around the country side just outside Hanoi. This is a great introduction to the rural face of Vietnam, friendly locals and villages that will be a feature of your cycling in Vietnam. In the late evening we head out to the airport for the flight to Hue. (B)

Day 3 | Hue | 30km

Another gentle day on the bikes takes us through the historic city of Hue. Our bikes will take us to the ancient Forbidden Palace where emperors of the past ruled Vietnam. We will explore the Palace on foot before riding to one of the emperor's tomb - an amazing ruined resting place of a former ruler. (B,L,D)

Day 4 | Hue to Lang Co | 80km

Our first full day on the bikes takes us out of Hue and south riding along the coast past small bays and alongside the famous Reunification Express. The ride is flat and easy and we stop early in the day to stay the night in the beach side town of Lang Co. With its relaxing beach you'll enjoy a pleasant seaside afternoon. (B,L,D)

Day 5 | Lang Co to Hoi An | 70km

The morning begins with a challenging 10km uphill ride to the top of Hai Van Pass, the geographic divider of north and south. While a test of endurance, the road sits ominously overlooking the ocean and the scenery is your motivation to keep you going up the climb. From the top there is a thrilling downhill before riding through busy Danang and onto the beautiful town of Hoi An. Hoi An was once a major trading port and now the World Heritage protected old town is a wonderfully preserved area. (B,L,D)

Day 6 | Hoi An

Enjoy a full day to relax in Hoi An. Explore the old town, spend the day shopping or head down to the beach for a relaxing afternoon - there's plenty to do. (B)

Day 7 | Hoi An to Tam Ky | 50km

First things this morning we board a boat to get us across the river the Hoi An sit alongside. Then we ride a wonderful coastal road with next to no traffic that passes through small villages, sand dunes and the beach of course. The entire route is on quiet roads so this will be one of the most relaxing



rides of the trip. Tam Ky is a small town that receives few visitors so expect a bit of attention. (B,L,D)

Day 8 | Tam Ky to Quang Ngai | 90km

Our morning takes us down Highway One before we turn off and take a fantastic back road around the coast that takes us to the site of one of the many dark moments of the Vietnam War - the My Lai Massacre Memorial. The Monument stands as a great antiwar statement. Quang Ngai is another town well off the tourist route. (B,L,D)

Day 9 | Quang Ngai to Binh Duong | 100km

Our route today stays inland away from the coast but it is not less interesting. With a few hills to climb, lots of farming land and small back roads to ride this is a real experience of a region rarely seen by visitors. Binh Duong is a non-descript town on Highway One and spending a night here gives a great insight into a regular Vietnamese town. (B,L,D)

Day 10 | Binh Duong to Quy Nhon | 100km

We consider this one of the best day's of riding of the trip. This beautiful back road takes us past some magnificent deserted beaches - definitely one of the highlight rides in Vietnam. Quy Nhon is a quiet beachside town and the perfect place to celebrate the end of the riding part of the tour. And you can happily celebrate today knowing that tomorrow is a rest day on the beach. (B,L,D)

Day 11 | Quy Nhon

Enjoy a day relaxing at the resort or exploring the sites of the town. (B)

Day 12 | Saigon

Flight times vary out of Quy Nhon but we will take the first available flight south to the big smoke of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City, often still referred to by it's old name Saigon. You'll have free time to explore the city before we gather for our final night dinner together. (B,D)

Day 13

Today is the end of the tour. Check out time is midday. If you want to stay longer in Saigon, need assistance with flight tickets to other destinations, or want to head in to Cambodia to explore the Angkor temples by bicycle let us know. (B)

Tour Details

Style

Fully supported cycling tour

Inclusions

Entrances, local guide, tour leader, most meals, support vehicle.

Group Size

Minimum 4, maximum 14.

Accommodation

11 nights comfortable hotel, 1 nights local guesthouse

In the towns with some hotel choice we use very comfortable 3 or 4 star hotels while in the smaller towns we have the selected the best hotel available - these are generally 2 to 3 star. In Binh Duong we stay in a local guesthouse for one night. The guesthouse is simple but clean and still comes with



private bathrooms and air conditioning.

Single Room

On Grasshopper Adventures tours single travellers do not have to pay any extra to join our trips - we will match you up with another same sex, single traveller. However, should you wish to choose to take a single room we are happy to book rooms for you for an extra charge. This single supplement is completely voluntary and only applies to hotel accommodation, on overnight train trips there are no single rooms available. We should point out that on occasion single rooms may not be available and in these instances you may need to share for a night or two - we will refund part of your single supplement in these cases.

Extra accommodation

We can book additional accommodation before the tour in Hanoi or after the tour in Saigon at competitive rates. Please book extra nights when you book your tour.

Arrival Details

Upon your arrival at Hanoi International Airport you will need make your own way to the starting point hotel. The easiest way is to take a prepaid taxi which is US\$12-15. Sometimes the taxis try to drop you at their friend's hotel rather than the one you requested so be sure to only get out when you are sure it is our hotel (they usually don't try this when you have a reservation). We have found that the Noi Bai taxi company is reputable.

We will advice you as to the location of the starting point hotel closer to the start of the tour.

Food

Included meals: 12 breakfasts, 7 lunches, 9 dinners, plus water, fruit and biscuits on cycling days. You should consider bring some of your favourite energy snacks and electrolyte powder for the cycling days.

Cycling Days & Distance

8 days, 540km

Difficulty

Moderate - this trip involves some longer days over 80km and a couple of hills. Riders should be of reasonable cycling fitness. We have a support vehicle on hand at all times if you have difficulty with any sections.

Cycling Conditions

Road conditions in Vietnam are good. Apart from some short section on unsealed roads this tour is on sealed roads. We do spend a little time on Highway One for these sections be prepared for traffic that can include trucks and buses, motorbikes, pedestrians, children, dogs, chickens and other fun surprises. You will need to stay alert at all times!

Bikes

You can bring your own bike for this trip. The best bike for conditions in Vietnam would be a good working mountain or hybrid bike with 21 gears or more and hybrid tyres to cope with the varying conditions. You should have your bike serviced by a professional bike mechanic before travelling to ensure that it is in good working order. While we do provide mechanical assistance and carry some spare parts during the trip you will need to bring spare parts (including tubes) for your bike as different bikes use different parts and we cannot guarantee that we will have a part to suit your bike.

Bike Hire

If you don't have a bike or don't want to bring your own you can hire a bike from us for the entire trip. We provide well maintained Trek mountain bikes in various sizes and will be responsible for any maintenance required during the trip for these bikes. All bikes are fitted with one bottle cage. Pannier racks are not supplied. For added comfort you may consider bringing your own seat and pedals which we can easily fit to your rental bike. Please note, renters will be liable for any damage caused to rental bike which is a result of riding accidents.



Helmets

For safe cycling we strongly recommend wearing a helmet whilst cycling on our trips.

Transporting Your Bike

Most international airlines consider bicycles as part of your regular luggage weight allowance, so you will need to pack light. The best way to transport a bicycle is to package it in a bike box. Most bicycle stores are happy to give away boxes for free. You will need to remove the front wheel (and sometimes the rear wheel), handle bars, pedals and seat post. Tape any loose parts to the bike frame and pack a few extras in the box such as your helmet. You can keep your box until the end of the trip to pack it for the trip home.

Support Vehicles

For the cycling days we will have the backup support of a small bus that will carry our luggage, snacks, water, and anybody not cycling. You can use the support vehicle whenever you feel like no longer cycling.

Travel Details

Visas

In Vietnam 30 days visas need to be obtained in advance from your embassy. Make sure that you enter the correct dates for properly.

Before you travel check your passport to ensure that there is room for a visa and entry/exit stamps (at least 3 pages) and that it has at least 6 months validation remaining.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of participating in a Grasshopper Adventure that you hold travel insurance for the duration of the trip. Insurance must include comprehensive medical and emergency evacuation. Your travel insurance details will be checked by your group leader on arrival at the starting point hotel.

If you are looking for an insurer we can recommend World Nomads. [Click to see more details.](#)

Flights

International flights to the starting point and from the finish point are not included in the price of this tour. We can assist with the purchase of inter-Asia flights and/or provide advice if you are considering overland travel. All domestic flights as per itinerary are included.

Money

The official currency of Vietnam is the dong which should be used for all transactions. Vietnam has a modern banking system with ATMs and money changers in everywhere. When in Vietnam it is possible to use Visa/Mastercard or Cirrus/Maestro cards to access cash with an ATM. You should, however, carry travelers cheques as a backup. Most international currencies can be exchanged so it is not necessary to bring only US dollars - AUD, EUR, CAD, NZD are all accepted at banks in major centres.

For current exchange rates visit:

www.oanda.com

Costs

We recommend that you allow approximately US\$20 for food and general living costs per day while travelling. It is customary to tip the guide and support crew in Laos. You should allow approximately US\$30 for tips. Note: this is a guide only, feel free to tip more or less (or nothing) depending on your satisfaction. If you think your tour leader has done a good job you may also tip him/her. Again this is completely up to you.



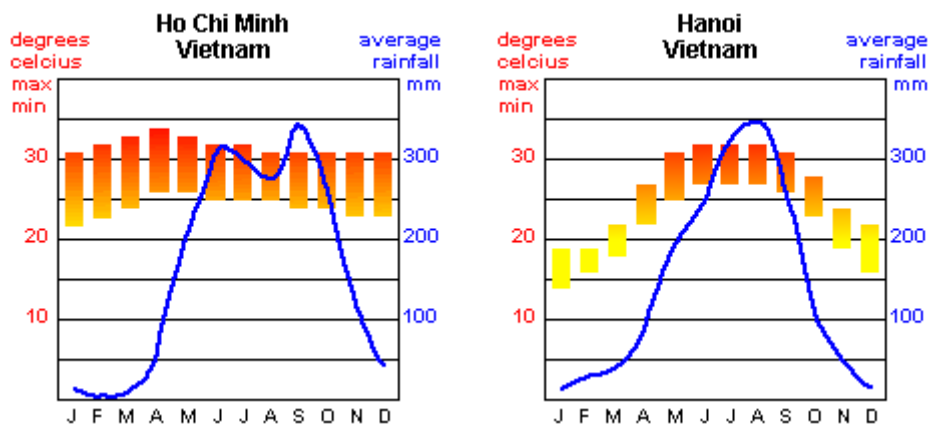
Health

There are no specific health requirements for travelling in Vietnam, however, we recommend that you visit a travel medicine doctor before travelling. You should carry a well stocked first aid kit with you when you travel. All Grasshopper Adventures Group Leaders are first aid trained, however, they are not permitted to distribute any medications.

Climate

Most of Vietnam is a classic tropical climate with generally warm to hot days and warm nights. The north is sub-tropical so if visiting in winter (Dec-Feb) expect cool days and

nights (January average is 14 to 19 degree). Being such a long country there are many sub-climate throughout the country so expect rain and heat all year round - chances are you'll experience all Vietnam's climate has to offer as you travel through the country.



Electricity

Vietnam works on a 220 volt system and uses American/Asian 2 flat pin plugs. For more on plug types visit the [World Electric Guide](#). You can easily buy an adapter in Vietnam for much cheaper than in your home country.

Packing

While we do have a support vehicle to carry your luggage during the cycling days, you will be required to carry your own luggage at times. Luggage will need to be loaded on and off buses and up and down stairs at hotels. For this reason we recommend that you pack as lightly as possible in a backpack or small wheeled bag. If traveling to Vietnam in December/January in the north it is quite cool at night and in the early morning. You should bring a wind breaker and cold weather clothing.

You should consider bringing the following items:

<p>Personal Items</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backpack or small sized wheelee bag (some of the guesthouses we have do not have lifts so you may need to carry your luggage up some flights of stairs) • Long trousers • Shorts • Shirts • Hat • Sandles/light shoes • Swimming costume • Sunglasses • Light rain jacket • Warm clothing if travelling in Dec/Jan • Toiletries • Small towel • Sunscreen • First Aid Kit • Mosquito repellent • Camera • Alarm Clock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passport with 6 months validity and spare pages • Passport photo • Travel insurance details • Flight tickets • Money - cash/credit cards/travellers cheques • Phrase book <p>Cycling Gear</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicycle • <i>if renting</i> - your own seat & pedals (optional) • Something to carry your personal belongings in while cycling, eg. day pack, bum bag, handlebar bag • Helmet • Cycling gloves • Bicycle water bottle • Bike shorts with something to put on over the top while off the bike
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Positive Impact

An integral part of traveling is to have a positive impact on the country that you are visiting. On this trip there are a number of things you can do to have a positive impact on the communities that we visit.

Phrase Book

A highly memorable part of your travels will be the local people that you meet. In the tourist areas some people will speak English but away from these areas it is great to learn a few words of Vietnamese. We will teach you some of the basics but if you want to really interact we recommend bringing a phrase book.

Donations

Often when coming on trips overseas people like to bring items such as sweets, pens and books for children or old clothing for families. While this is a fantastic idea, if distributed in the wrong way it can actually create more problems. Giving items away to local people can create an expectation that a visiting foreigner equals free give away's. In some communities in Asia this has created whole villages where the only interaction is the locals asking for things. If you would like to donate anything to the communities that we visit we suggest that you give the items to Grasshopper Adventures which we will then pass on to development organisations, schools or whole communities. In this way items are distributed by those working in the communities who understand better the local needs.

Poverty

There is poverty in Vietnam which you will see, particularly in tourist areas. If you choose to give something to a beggar you must bear in mind the value of money in the country you are visiting. Many beggars can earn more than those who work unskilled jobs. There are organisations in Vietnam who are working to alleviate this poverty issue and may be able to do more good with donations that you might like to make. Your Tour Leader will be able to provide more information about this.

Important

All information in these tour notes is researched with care and provided in good faith. The information subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and Grasshopper Adventures.

