

## BIKE & BOAT CYCLING CRUISES - VIETNAM

15-days / 14-night discover Ha Long Bay, Hội An, Hanoi, Saigon and the Mekong Delta



Vietnam is a vibrant and unique country full of splendid natural beauty and of ancient and modern history. It is a country of contrasts with bustling cities, fascinating towns and villages, places where time seems to have stood still. It is also growing in popularity as an interesting and exciting cycling destination.

On this tour we cycle between lush green rice paddies, past water buffalo, temples and pagodas. We explore the fascinating scenery of Ha Long Bay sailing aboard a traditional yet comfortable sailing junk. We explore by bike a place where the emerald-green waters of the South China Sea and the incredible cave formations are beautiful and overwhelming. In Central Vietnam we discover impressive monuments of Vietnamese emperors, the historic World Heritage listed town of Hội An and in South Vietnam the labyrinth that is the Mekong Delta.

**Departs:** 23<sup>rd</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> October; 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> November, 2022

**Cost from:** **\$5390** per person twin share    Single cabin / room supplement: **\$1355**

**Includes:** 14 nights' accommodation with 4 nights' on comfortable junk/ship in spacious, air-conditioned double cabins and 10 nights' in selected 3 or 4-star hotels, domestic flights (as mentioned), meals as specified in the itinerary (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner), guided bicycle tours, walks and sea-kayaking tours with English speaking guides, all city tours and entrance charges to National Parks, museums as shown in the itinerary, bike hire (bike styles may vary depending on destination), airport transfers on the official arrival and departure days.

**Not included:** Travel to Hanoi and from Hồ Chí Minh City; Vietnamese visa; meals not listed in the itinerary, drinks on board and in hotels, gratuities, and personal expenses.

**Angkor Wat extension:** A 4-day, 3-night post-tour extension cycling in Siem Reap and Angkor Wat in Cambodia is available, please ask about cost and itinerary.



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Carved dragon heads decorate the prow of the junks in the Ha Long and Bai Tu Bay. Dragons belong to the circle of four sacred animals of Vietnam. Proudly they guide the traditional wooden boats through the islands and rocky cliffs and outcrops of the South China Sea. The spacious saloon with its upholstered wicker furniture and colourful carpets feels like a homely living room. For each meal the tables are lovingly set and the folded cloth napkins are a work of art. Hospitality is rated very highly in Vietnam and onboard our crew in their brilliant white uniforms greet you warmly with a welcome drink.

The junk offers up to 11 comfortable cabins furnished in Far Eastern style for that Asian atmosphere. Cabins have individually regulated air-conditioning and are located between decks, with doors opening to the outside. The large cabin windows guarantee good views at all times. Each cabin has its own tiled bathroom with shower and toilet. On the large sundeck there are comfortable deckchairs where you can relax while the boat cruises through a fascinating island world, with Vietnam's red flag with a yellow star fluttering above your head....



In the Mekong Delta we sail on one of the larger, modern but traditional styled ships in the region. Its shape is reminiscent of the travelling barques of southern Vietnam. This 27m long and 6.5m wide, wooden boat is protected by the watchful dark painted eyes of the dragon on the prow. The generously proportioned saloon is a comfortable place to relax, it is also the dining room with beautifully set tables serving local and regional cuisine. This comfortable ship has 10-wood-panelled double cabins with French style or two single beds. Each cabin has a tiled bathroom with a shower and toilet. There is again a large sundeck with padded deckchairs - probably the best place to watch life along the river and the activities of the fishermen along the Mekong Delta.



### **Suggested itinerary – subject to change:**

#### **Day 1 Sunday Arrival in Hanoi**

Arrive at Hanoi airport and transfer to your hotel in the heart of the old city centre. Hanoi appears provincial and traditional and the historical Old Town quarter is considered one of the best preserved in all of Southeast Asia. That night visit the famous water puppet theatre and enjoy dinner together. Overnight at the hotel. (D = Dinner)

#### **Day 2 Monday Hanoi – Hoa Lu – Tam Coc**

#### **Cycling @ 35km**

After breakfast a bus takes us to the rural province of Ninh Binh, where we begin our first cycling tour alongside vast tiers of vibrant green rice paddies. We cycle to Hoa Lu, the former capital of Vietnam. We have time to explore this fascinating historical site with its well-preserved relics of past dynasties, then continue on through spectacular landscapes dotted with traditional pagodas. We complete the day with a traditional rowing boat trip on the Tam Coc River and a visit to a bird sanctuary. (BLD = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

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### **Day 3 Tuesday Tam Coc – Ha Long Bay**

After breakfast our shuttle bus takes us to Ha Long City, where we enjoy a delicious lunch aboard our boat. We set off on our first boat trip through the impressive island world of Ha Long Bay with its spectacular limestone islands towering above the water. In the afternoon we visit one of the numerous caves formed over millennia. Set your creativity free – imagination provides life and shape to the stalagmites, stalactites and cavern walls. In the afternoon we have a guided kayak tour of a lagoon where we hope to see wild monkeys frolicking. We spend the night at anchor. (BLD)

### **Day 4 Wednesday Trà Bần Island and Bai Tu Long Bay**

**Cycling @ 25km**

After an early breakfast we take the hydrofoil to Trà Bần Island, a unique place barely touched by tourism. The island offers us an insight into the earlier, traditional life of the island inhabitants, as if time had stood still. We cycle past grazing Vietnamese water buffaloes and perhaps strike up conversation with one of the local farmers tending to their fields. After a picnic lunch, the hydrofoil returns us to the pier where our junk awaits. A relaxing cruise through the island world of the Bai Tu Long Bay tops this eventful day off. Enjoy an evening under the stars with a nice sundowner. (BLD)

### **Day 5 Thursday Bai Tu Long Bay and Lan Ha Bay**

**Sea kayaking**

After breakfast we farewell our junk and the friendly crew and transfer by boat to Lan Ha bay. Here we climb into kayaks and paddle to a magnificent beach where the midday meal awaits us. After lunch and perhaps a relaxing swim in the emerald green waters, we kayak from the beach to the island of Cát Bà. Transfer to our hotel where we have time in the afternoon to unpack, relax at the pool side or at the beach. (BLD)

### **Day 6 Friday Cát Bà Island – Việt Hải Village**

**Cycling @ 20km**

Early in the morning we transfer by boat to a small jetty. From here we cycle to a tribal village of the Việt Hải minority. Parking the bikes here, we have a guided walk through protected old-growth forest. The aim is to reach the highest peak of the island which, on a good day, offers breath-taking views of Ha Long bay and the rest of Cát Bà Island. After the walk we cycle back to the boat and travel back to a stay in a hotel in Cát Bà City. (BLD)

### **Day 7 Saturday Cát Bà Island – Hải Phòng – Hội An**

After breakfast a taxi boat transfers us to Hải Phòng where we board our bus to take us to the nearby airport and we fly to Da Nang. From Da Nang airport there is a short transfer by shuttle bus to our Hotel Resort in Hội An. This evening is free for a pleasant walk through the old town. Dinner is at your own arrangements. (BL)

### **Day 8 Sunday Hội An**

**Cycling @ 17km**

Today we take a closer look into the lives of the rural people cycling to Tra Que – a small village near Hoi An – where our hosts will prepare a meal using traditional ingredients including the unique sweet and spicy vegetables grown in the area. The afternoon is free to relax or to explore the white beach of Cua Dai. Dinner is at your own arrangements. (BL)

### **Day 9 Monday Hội An – Huế**

**Cycling @ 20km**

We leave Hoi An this morning and head towards Huế. We start off on our bikes and a transfer bus picks us up en route to take us over Cloud Pass, the weather line between North and South Vietnam. We stop for lunch and perhaps a swim at Lang Co Beach before we continue to Thuan An beach by bicycle or bus, you choose. The evening is yours at leisure to explore Huế, with dinner at your own arrangements. (BL)

### **Day 10 Tuesday Huế**

**Cycling @ 12km**

The entire day is devoted to exploring the old imperial city of Hue located between hills and rice fields at a bend of the Perfume River. The spiritual heart of Vietnam beats here in more than 300 temples and pagodas. By bike and on foot we explore this ancient city including the Dong Ba Market, the old town of Bao Vinh and the citadel with the “Forbidden Purple City” (once exclusively reserved for the Nguyen royalty). After a late lunch in a typical restaurant, we explore the rural surroundings of the city of Huế, cycling through bamboo groves, rice fields and small villages to the Thanh Toan covered bridge. Then we have a free evening, before another night in Hue. (BL)





### Day 11 Wednesday Huế – Hồ Chí Minh City – Mekong Delta

**Cycling @ 20km**

A morning transfer to Da Nang and flight to Hồ Chí Minh City, formerly Saigon, then a transfer to Mỹ Tho, where we join our ship and cruise along the Mekong in the direction of Cai Be. In the afternoon we cycle along the various arms of the river to the scattered islands at the river mouth, with perhaps a chance to try some unusual tropical fruits and to see local handicrafts. At sunset we sail towards Cai Be and spend the night at anchor. (BLD)

### Day 12 Thursday Mekong Delta: Cái Bè – Islands of Vĩnh Long and Traon

**Cycling @ 30km**

In the morning we cross to Vĩnh Long Island and under palm-tree shaded paths we cycle around the island. We rejoin the boat to Traon Island where we have more time to explore. Later on we can enjoy the excellent cuisine on board our boat and the wonderful atmosphere in the water labyrinth of the Mekong Delta at sunset. (BLD)

### Day 13 Friday Cần Thơ - Hồ Chí Minh City

Whilst we breakfast the boat cruises to Cần Thơ where, as time allows, we can visit one of the region's colourful markets. After an early lunch on board our ship we transfer back to Hồ Chí Minh City. (BL)

### Day 14 Saturday Hồ Chí Minh City

Hồ Chí Minh City, formerly Saigon, is the modern centre of Vietnam. We take a guided tour of the megacity; exploring the town hall, the Notre Dame cathedral and other historical sites. The afternoon offers a chance to join the madding crowd of the Benh Thanh Market. Enjoy a farewell dinner and your last night stay. (BLD)

### Day 15 Sunday Departure - Hồ Chí Minh City Airport transfer for flight from Hồ Chí Minh City Airport (B)



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**Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations:**

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