ALONG THE VIETNAM COAST: FROM HA LONG BAY TO HO CHI MINH CITY

14 Days | National Geographic Orion | 102 Guests | Expeditions in: | From $14,460 to $31,450 *

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DAY 1-2: U.S./Hanoi, Vietnam
Depart on your overnight flight to Hanoi. Check in to your Hotel. Meet your fellow travelers at our welcome reception. (D)

DAY 3: Hanoi/Hai Phong/Embark National Geographic Orion
This morning check out of our hotel and tour the beautiful capital city of Hanoi. We'll pass by an eclectic blend of architectural influences — Chinese, French Colonial and ultra-modern — as we make our way to the One Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature, the oldest building in Hanoi and Vietnam’s first university. Visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, modeled after Lenin’s tomb in Moscow, and Ho Chi Minh’s home. Choose to visit the National History & Ethnographic Museums, wander along Banner Street (the shopping mecca) or opt for stroll in the Park on the Lake. Following lunch drive through the scenic countryside to Hai Phong. Embark the National Geographic Orion, our home for the next 10 days. (B,L,D)

DAY 4: Ha Long Bay
Considered one of the most picturesque landscapes in Southeast Asia, Ha Long Bay is a watery wonderland of limestone formations that have eroded over time into fantastical shapes. We'll board traditional junk boats and spend the morning cruising through isolated coves, breathtaking grottos, and hundreds of islets named after real and mythical animals. Take an afternoon Zodiac cruise to Cua Van floating village, the largest fishing village in Ha Long Bay. Learn how they have built their lives around the sea. (B,L,D)

DAY 5: Vinh Moc
Zodiacs take us ashore to visit the infamous demilitarized zone (DMZ). Located on the 17th parallel, the bridge over the Ben Hai River marked the border between North and South Vietnam from 1954 to 1975. The Vinh Moc tunnels were dug by locals to not only endure the heavy bombing during the conflict, but to also protect them from the Viet Cong. Walking through the passageways you will experience the lengths they went to in order to survive. (B,L,D)

DAY 6: Chan May/Hue
Today we dock in the port of Chan May and head inland to the ancient imperial city of Hue, seat of Nguyen Dynasty from 1802 to 1945. Experience the hustle and bustle of the local market before moving into the tranquility of the Imperial City, modeled after the Forbidden City of Beijing with temples, palaces, an imperial library, and museums. Following lunch along the Perfume River, visit the impressive Khai Dinh Royal Tomb. Regally situated along a pine-covered mountain slope, it is noted for its staircase of dragons and ceiling murals and frescoes made from thousands of glass fragments. (B,L,D)

DAY 7-8: Da Nang/Hoi An

2021 Departure Dates:
15 Oct

Advance Payment:
$1,500

Cost Includes:
Accommodations; meals indicated; alcoholic beverages (except premium brands); excursions; services of Lindblad Expeditions’ Leader, Naturalist staff and expert guides; use of kayaks; entrance fees; all port charges and service taxes; gratuities to ship’s crew.

Cost Not Included:
Immigration fees are not included. Air transportation; personal items such as emails, laundry, voyage DVD etc.

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Historic Da Nang is where the French landed to begin their conquest and, a century later, where 3,500 American troops first arrived. Today it is Vietnam’s third largest city and is a mixture of its historic past and bustling present day. Our time here will allow you to choose how you would like to experience this vibrant city and the surrounding areas. Tour My Son, a UNESCO World Heritage site of Cham ruins dating from the 4th to 14th centuries; immerse yourself into Vietnamese cuisine with a chef lead cooking class; tour the ancient town of Hoi An before heading off on your own to wander through the shops and tailors; or opt for a trip to the Marble Mountains, five peaks which represent the elements of the universe, where we climb the path to see Huyen Khong Cave, and immense Buddhist sanctuary. (B,L,D)

DAY 9: Qui Nhon
Today we visit the quaint seaside town of Qui Nhon. Home to a large fishing fleet, the brightly painted boats provide a colorful backdrop to this authentically Vietnamese town. Head inland to Binh Dinh province and the Banh It tower, one of the oldest towers that preserves the architecture of the Cham dynasty. Continue to the Quang Trung Museum, a cultural space that includes artifacts from the Tay Son revolution and Emperor Quan Trung who brought peace to the region. The museum has also preserved the martial arts, music, and dance from the Vietnamese hill tribes, named an “intangible treasure” by UNESCO. (B,L,D)

DAY 10: Van Phong Bay/Port Dayot
Known as a natural masterpiece, Van Phong Bay is one of the most beautiful bays in central Vietnam. The bay is lined with a variety of terrains. We’ll spend the day hiking the dunes, birding amongst the mangroves and kayaking or swimming along the protected coastline. We will also visit the prosperous fishing village of Port Dayot. Vibrant blue boats dot the harbor, as fisherman paddle between vessels in large baskets. (B,L,D)

DAY 11: Con Dao National Park
Made up of an archipelago of 16 mostly uninhabited islands, Con Dao National Park is dedicated to preserving the diverse ecosystems of the islands and surrounding sea. Con Son is the largest and the only one that is inhabited. During the French Colonial era the island served as a political prison and later, the Saigon regime imprisoned dissenters, using the infamous “tiger cages.” Despite its difficult and harsh past, the islands are now thriving natural beauties. We will have opportunity for hikes on the inner island trails, Zodiac cruises and kayaking through the mangroves, photographing the vast array of plant and birdlife, and just soaking up the natural beauty. (B,L,D)

DAY 12: Con Dao National Park/Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)
Enjoy a morning Zodiac cruise or beach walk before we set sail towards the mainland. Be on deck to enjoy the views of lush deltas, rural villages along the Saigon River, as we sail towards
the modern skyscrapers of Ho Chi Minh City. Formerly known as Saigon, the city was officially renamed after the Americans left in 1975 – the name hasn’t quite caught on. Regardless of how you refer to it, the people here are wonderfully warm to visitors. (B,L,D)

DAY 13: Ho Chi Minh City
This morning we explore Ho Chi Minh City, the most important city in southern Vietnam. We view the former American Embassy and visit the Reunification Palace, as well as the excellent History Museum, with exhibits illustrating the evolution of Vietnam’s cultures, and the Saigon Central Post office, one of the most iconic buildings in the city. Then we stop at two important pagodas, the Jade Emperor and the 18th century Giac Lam, where Buddhists monks still live and worship.
Following lunch, we drive through the countryside to Cao Dai Holy See (Great Temple). This beautiful temple is the center of the Cao Dai sect, a Vietnamese religious movement that shares aspects of Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism and even Catholicism. Like the religion itself, the temple is a gracious and vibrant blending of styles and is the most important shrine to Cao Dai followers. Alternatively, you can choose to stay in the city and wander through the shops, enjoy a Vietnamese coffee or explore the beautiful parks on your own.
This evening we will celebrate our voyage and share the many amazing experiences we had in this wonderful country. Overnight aboard the ship in the heart of Ho Chi Minh City. (B,L,D)

DAY 14: Saigon/U.S.
Disembark this morning and transfer to the airport and homeward flights. (B)

* See our website at https://www.expeditions.com/ for the most up-to-date pricing, which may vary by departure date. Prices are subject to modification, and are not guaranteed until booking and required deposits are made. For best pricing, book early.

(1) Travel Protection Plan
We strongly recommend our guests to take advantage of our Travel Protection Plan. This plan offers comprehensive coverage to protect you from cancellation fees, costs incurred due to trip delays/interruption, damage or loss of baggage, medical assistance, and evacuation during your travels. Our Travel Protection Plan is available for U.S. residents only, and may be purchased any time prior to final payment due date, Travel Protection premiums are non-refundable once plan is purchased.
Learn more about our Travel Protection “Plus” Plan: https://www.expeditions.com/terms-conditions/travel-protection-plan/

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