

# Vietnam | CULTURAL EXPLORER

A FEAST FOR THE SENSES | 10 DAYS

February 23-March 4, 2021

November 2-11, 2021



## TRIP ITINERARY



**Boundless**  
JOURNEYS

1.800.941.8010 | [www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com)

*How we deliver*

# THE WORLD'S GREAT ADVENTURES

**A passion for travel.** Simply put, we love to travel, and that infectious spirit is woven into every one of our journeys. Our staff travels the globe searching out hidden-gem inns and lodges, taste testing bistros, trattorias, and noodle stalls, and discovering the trails and plying the waterways of each remarkable destination. When we come home, we separate wheat from chaff, creating memorable adventures that will connect you with the very best qualities of each destination.

**Unique, award-winning itineraries.** Our flexible, hand-crafted journeys have received accolades from the world's most revered travel publications. Beginning from our appreciation for the world's most breathtaking and interesting destinations, we infuse our journeys with the elements of adventure and exploration that stimulate our souls and enliven our minds. Whether you are looking for a challenging physical expedition or a leisurely cultural exploration, Boundless Journeys has exceptional itineraries to match your sense of adventure.

**Insider connections.** There is simply no substitute for traveling with a knowledgeable insider, and our expert local guides will open doors for you that other travelers miss, like dinner with their extended family in Peru's Sacred Valley, or meeting an art scholar in Florence. Relationships developed over many years allow you to experience our destinations through a well-connected friend.

**Small groups.** Although the camaraderie of a group of like-minded travelers often enhances the journey, there can be too much of a good thing! We tread softly, and our average group size is just 8–10 guests, allowing us access to opportunities that would be unthinkable with a larger group.

**Flexibility to suit your travel style.** We offer both scheduled, small-group departures and custom journeys so that you can choose which works best for you. Not finding exactly what you are looking for? Let us customize a journey to fulfill your travel dreams.

**Customer service that goes the extra mile.** Having trouble finding flights that work for you? Want to surprise your traveling companion with a bottle of champagne at a tented camp in the Serengeti to celebrate an important milestone? There is no request that is too big—or too small—for our staff to handle. From your first call, we guide you through choosing your trip, provide advice on preparing for your adventure, and hold your hand until you return home.



Multi-year recipient of *Travel + Leisure* magazine's "World's Best Tour Operator"; and recognized by the editors of *National Geographic ADVENTURE* magazine as one of the **Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth**.

# Vietnam | CULTURAL EXPLORER

Thank you for your interest in this fantastic journey to explore Vietnam. We have hand-crafted this tour from our own experience and hope you fall in love with the area—as we have!

## THE INSPIRATION FOR THIS JOURNEY

From the emerald green rice paddies of the countryside and the sounds of its cities' bustling markets, to the intoxicating flavors of its renowned cuisine with its blend of French and Asian influences, Vietnam is a feast for the senses. It is one of Southeast Asia's most captivating countries, and only recently emerged on the world's travel radar, now eager to share its natural beauty, rich culture, and long and storied history.

Our journey begins in the southern capital of Ho Chi Minh City, formerly Saigon. In the following days, we visit the Forbidden Purple City of Hué and the captivating 15th century trading port of Hoi An. We make our way north to explore Hanoi, the "Paris of the Orient", and cruise along the spectacular seascape of Ha Long Bay. On our exploration, we visit the highlights as well as escape the beaten path to explore hidden gems and dine on regional cuisine that mixes traditional and colonial influences, all while relaxing in deluxe hotels in ideal locations.

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Participate in a Vietnamese cuisine cooking class led by expert local chefs.
- View a traditional water puppet show, a performance art that dates back several centuries and is unique to Vietnam.
- Learn from a local artist how to make an iconic Vietnamese silk lantern.
- Overnight deluxe boat cruise on the gorgeous Ha Long Bay

TOUR OVERVIEW.....	4
THE JOURNEY.....	6
ACCOMMODATIONS .....	11
WHAT TO EXPECT.....	12
OUR VIETNAM TEAM .....	14
TRIP EXTENSIONS.....	15
NEXT STEPS .....	16
BOUNDLESS BEYOND.....	17



# TOUR OVERVIEW



## THE BASICS

Duration:	10-day trip
Tour start:	Ho Chi Minh City
Tour end:	Hanoi
Accommodations:	8 nights in deluxe hotels; 1 night aboard boutique cruise ship
Trip rating:	<b>1+</b> 2    3    4    5 Easy . . . . . Strenuous (See page 12 for more information)
Land cost:	\$4,995 per person
Single Supplement:	First two solo travelers: \$695* Additional solo travelers: \$1,195 <i>*Must reserve at least 120 days prior</i>
Internal Airfare:	\$295 per person <i>(subject to change)</i>
Optional flight:	\$425 per person scenic seaplane flight from Hanoi to Ha Long Bay



## WHAT'S INCLUDED

When you're on a Boundless Journeys adventure, every detail is taken care of for you, so you can relax and truly experience each moment. Your Boundless Journeys adventure includes:

- An expert private guide
- All accommodations, including an overnight on a deluxe boat on Ha Long Bay
- All meals as noted in the itinerary
- Local wine and beer with included dinners
- All on-tour ground transportation
- All gratuities except those for your guide, drivers, and cruise staff, which are at your discretion
- All activities as noted in the itinerary
- Explorers Club savings on your next scheduled, small-group trip *(conditions apply)*

International airfare is not included. Contact your local travel agency or the airlines directly to make your flight arrangements. If you would like assistance, contact Boundless Journeys directly for a referral to one of our partners who can best fulfill your needs.



## ITINERARY AT-A-GLANCE

### DAY 1

Meet your guide for lunch, followed by a city tour Ho Chi Minh.

### DAY 2

Head down the Saigon River by boat to explore the Ben Duoc Tunnels. Visit a local farm for lunch and then fly to Hué.

### DAY 3

After a visit to Hué's Imperial City, try your hand at the craft of making traditional paper flowers at Thanh Tien Village before a boat ride down the Perfume River.

### DAY 4

En route to Hoi An, we stop and visit Marble Mountain to explore its many Buddhist and Hindu temples and hidden grottoes. Upon arrival in Hoi An, enjoy a walking tour of the city.

### DAY 5

In the morning, try your hand at making a traditional silk lantern before an optional cycling tour on the outskirts of the city. Enjoy a boat ride back into Hoi An along the Thu Bon River.

### DAY 6

Gain insight into the ancient Cham civilization with an excursion to My Son Cham ruins. The afternoon is free to rest, relax, or explore Hoi An independently.

### DAY 7

In the morning, fly to Hanoi. and participate in a Vietnamese cooking class before watching a classic Vietnamese water puppet show in the evening.

### DAY 8

Explore more highlights of Hanoi including the Temple of Literature, the Presidential Palace, and Hoan Kiem Lake. Enjoy evening entertainment by the Lang Toi troupe which combines acrobatics with traditional music depicting rural Vietnamese life.

### DAY 9

Drive to Ha Long Bay and board a deluxe "junk" boat for an overnight cruise. (*Optional scenic seaplane flight is an additional cost.*) During the cruise take in the iconic scenery, visit Tien Ong cave, and participate in optional swimming and kayaking excursions.

### DAY 10

Enjoy sunrise Tai Chi on board before an optional Ti Top Island excursion. Return to Hanoi midday and transfer to airport or your post-tour hotel.

**PLEASE NOTE:** *This is a typical itinerary, and actual activities may vary to take advantage of weather conditions, local events and to allow serendipity to play a hand in your experience. Accommodations are as outlined in the itinerary, although we reserve the right to change these should the need arise. See our booking terms and conditions for more information about our change policy.*

# THE JOURNEY



## DAY 1: Ho Chi Minh City

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 1-2 hours

Our day begins with meeting our guide and fellow guests for lunch, our first introduction to delicious Vietnamese cuisine. After lunch and a tour briefing, we set out to explore some of the hidden highlights of the city.

First, we pay a visit to the Tan Dinh Market, one of the oldest markets in Ho Chi Minh City. The building which houses the many market stalls was built in 1926 by the French colonial government and is a fine example of the architecture of that time. The Ta Dinh Market continues to be a popular place for locals to buy food, clothing, textiles, and various household items, and allows one a glimpse of daily city life in Vietnam.

Next, we learn the story of a Saigon resident who played his part in the infamous Tet Offensive, a large-scale military campaign carried out by the North Vietnamese. In 1967 Tran Van Lai began digging a secret cellar beneath his home where he hid a large arsenal of weapons and explosives which were pivotal to the Tet Offensive. Gain an understanding of what life was like for local residents during wartime and learn how military weapons were covertly transported and hidden within enemy territory.

We then visit the home of a family of musicians trained in a variety of traditional Vietnamese instruments. Enjoy a demonstration of several of these unique Vietnamese musical instruments and perhaps try your hand at playing them.

We conclude our day in Ho Chi Minh at the Bitexco Building—a glittering example of modern architecture in the city. As the fifth-highest building in Asia, the city views from the rooftop café are unrivalled. Here, we enjoy a leisurely cocktail as the sun dips below the horizon.

This evening, we'll gather for a welcome dinner at an acclaimed restaurant featuring the best of traditional Vietnamese specialties.

**Accommodation:** Rex Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City

**Meals:** L, D

## DAY 2: Ben Duoc Tunnels; Transfer to Hué

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & walking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 2 hours walking; 1.5 hours speed boat; 2 hours driving

This morning we'll depart early for a journey down the Saigon River by speedboat, gaining a unique perspective of our surroundings and avoiding the congestion of the roads. Watching the city fade into the background, we enter the countryside and eventually reach the Ben Duoc Tunnels.

During the Vietnam War, the Vietcong dug an extensive tunnel complex in the fight against American forces. Two parts of the tunnel complex remain fairly intact and are known as the Ben Dinh Tunnels and the Ben Duoc Tunnels. Both tunnel systems are often collectively referred to as the Cu Chi Tunnels, due to their location in the Cu Chi district of Ho Chi Minh City. Today we explore the Ben Duoc Tunnel system, which is less visited by tourists and allows us the opportunity to learn about the history of the tunnels. The local villagers who had dug the vast tunnel systems by hand



and survived there during wartime is certainly an impressive feat of skill and ingenuity.

Following our visit to the tunnels, we travel through the countryside to a local organic farm and enjoy a lunch sourced right from the farm. After lunch, we depart southern Vietnam for the city of Hué.

From 1802 to 1945, Hué was the country's political capital under the Nguyen Dynasty's thirteen emperors. Hué was caught in the crossfire during the years of the Vietnam War; the educated populace did not support the North nor the South, but still they suffered due to their location between the two. Hué experienced great devastation when, during the 1968 Tet Offensive, the North Vietnamese held the city for nearly a month, using the ancient citadel as their base of operations. American soldiers fought to regain the city, but did so only after an estimated 10,000 people died (many of them Hué civilians) and the city's many important historic cultural sites were destroyed. Restoration is steadily underway, and today you will find Hué to be a rather small town, especially in comparison to the large cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Saigon Morin, Hué

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 3: Explore Hue

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & walking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 2 hours

This morning, we head to the ancient, walled Citadel and explore this former Imperial Palace of Hué. We learn about

the Citadel's intriguing architecture, inspired by Beijing's Forbidden City.

For lunch, we go to Lien Hoa Pagoda where the resident nuns prepare a special vegetarian meal for us. Over lunch we have the opportunity to learn about Buddhism in Vietnam and the nun's daily lives.

Next, we make our way to Thanh Tien Village, well-known for its tradition of crafting paper flowers for more than three centuries. Those who would like to can learn from a local villager how to make an ornate paper flower. Our visit today supports the Backstreet Academy, a social enterprise providing struggling artists, craftsmen, and home-based workers with additional income and recognition.

We return to Hué via boat, floating down the Perfume River. The evening is free to spend at your leisure. You may enjoy our accommodations and dine onsite, or perhaps explore Hué at night.

**Accommodation:** Hotel Saigon Morin, Hué

**Meals:** B, L

### DAY 4: Transfer to Hoi An

**Activity Overview:** Cultural touring & walking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 1 hour walking; about 3 hours driving

This morning after breakfast, we transfer to Hoi An. En route, we ascend Hai Van Pass, with incredible views over the Lang Co Lagoon and the South China Sea. Just south of Danang, a major commercial center of Vietnam and sight of the largest American military base during the Vietnam War, is Marble Mountain. Although Marble Mountain is no longer actively mined for its marble stone, it is still a popular

destination as it contains many enchanting holy shrines and limestone caves.

We continue on to Hoi An, a picturesque town along the Thu Bon River. This exceptionally well-preserved example of a Southeast Asian trading port, dating from the 15th century, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1999. Upon our arrival, we enjoy some regional specialties for lunch.

This afternoon we embark on a walking tour of Hoi An's charming old town with its numerous historic houses and pagodas. The buildings reflect varied influences—indigenous and foreign—that have combined to produce this charming city. Our stops may include the Tan Ky house, the Japanese Bridge, and the Fujian Assembly Hall. Hoi An is known for its talented tailors, so a visit to a local tailor shop completes our introduction to Hoi An.

**Accommodation:** Little Riverside Hotel, Hoi An

**Meals:** B, L, D

## DAY 5: Biking Exploration

**Activity Overview:** Cycling and walking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 1 hour walking; 1 hour cycling

This morning following breakfast, we have the opportunity to learn a popular local craft. Under the instruction of Hoi An craftsmen, we practice the art of making lanterns from bamboo and silk. During the experience, we also have time to share tea and conversation with our hosts. These lanterns are visible at night along the Tu Bon River, and make a wonderful (and collapsible!) souvenir.

In the afternoon, a cycling tour in the nearby countryside gives us a sense of rural life. We head out toward Cam Thanh Village, a small community located in the outskirts of central Hoi An. On the nearby river, we visit a water coconut forest by bamboo basket boat before returning to Hoi An by river boat.

The evening will be yours to explore Hoi An, which is very festive at night, and you may enjoy dinner at one of the many restaurants in the Old Quarter.

**Accommodations:** Little Riverside Hotel, Hoi An

**Meals:** B, L

## DAY 6: Excursion to My Son Cham Ruins

**Activity Overview:** Walking & cultural touring

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 1-2 hours - walking

We begin our day with a one hour drive outside of Hoi An, through the countryside to explore the ancient Cham ruins of My Son. The Champa people reigned over central Vietnam from the 2nd to 15th centuries and you can still see cultural influences of their kingdom today in pottery, fishing, and agricultural techniques, as well as in temple structures which embody influences from the Hindu traditions. Although the temples of My Son are in relative disrepair, the partially overgrown vegetation encroaching on the temples actually adds to the mystique of this alluring, archeological site. We will have the chance to walk around for about an hour to take in the tranquil setting and learn about these ingenious and spiritual people.

We return to Hoi An in time for lunch, which you may enjoy on your own. This afternoon, we have some time for independent exploration to perhaps stroll the local market, visit the local shops, or take in the charming ambience of Hoi An while enjoying drinks on one of the many balconies overlooking the Thu Bon River.

**Accommodations:** Little Riverside Hotel, Hoi An

**Meals:** B

## DAY 7: Fly to Hanoi; Cooking Class

**Activity Overview:** City walking tour

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 3-4 hours

This morning we fly to Hanoi and try our hand at making some of the delicious Vietnamese dishes we have indulged in while on tour. We learn about the various ingredients essential for traditional Vietnamese cuisine—the fresh herbs, spices, vegetables, and handmade noodles—while perhaps sampling some exotic fruits. We enjoy our final product for lunch.

This evening we witness a traditional Vietnamese water puppet show at the Thang Long Opera House. This uniquely Vietnamese performance art dates back as far as the 11th century and originated in the rural villages of northern Vietnam where the performances were held in the





## THE BOUNDLESS JOURNEYS DIFFERENCE

Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, calls for a relaxed exploration. Our overnight cruise on a small, luxury vessel allows for proper appreciation of this remarkable place.

flooded rice paddies. Stories from Vietnamese folklore are performed much the same now as they were in the past, using the lacquered wooden puppets accompanied by the music of a traditional Vietnamese orchestra.

**Accommodations:** Sofitel Legend Metropole, Hanoi

**Meals:** B, L

### DAY 8: Sights of Hanoi

**Activity Overview:** Walking on city streets

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Activity Length:** 2 hours

This morning following breakfast, we explore some of the many historic and cultural sites of Hanoi. We begin at the Temple of Literature, which is perhaps Hanoi's best-preserved ancient site. Built in the 11th century and dedicated to Confucius, it served as the national university for 700 years.

Next, we visit the Presidential Palace where Ho Chi Minh lived and worked from 1954 to 1969. Originally the home of the Governor General of Indochina, the immaculate grounds became the center of revolutionary activity once North Vietnam achieved independence in 1954. Ho Chi Minh opted not to move into the palace at that time, believing it belonged to the North Vietnamese people, and instead lived in the neighboring "House on Stilts." Here, the revered "Uncle Ho" worked amid the gardens, mango trees, and carp-filled pond. The whole structure has been preserved in perfect condition, a tribute to the well-loved leader.

Another notable site we visit is the One Pillar Pagoda. Built in 1049 after King Lý Thái Tông's vision of a bodhisattva

seated on a lotus flower, the lotus-shaped One Pillar Pagoda sits atop a pillar jutting out of a lily pond. Soon after the temple was built, the King's wife gave birth to a son, and today childless couples visit the pagoda to make prayer offerings.

This afternoon we have time to walk around Hoan Kiem Lake and enjoy some independent exploration or relaxation before our evening performance from the Lang Toi troupe which combines acrobatics with traditional music depicting rural Vietnamese life.

**Accommodations:** Sofitel Legend Metropole, Hanoi

**Meals:** B, L, D

### DAY 9: Transfer to Ha Long Bay

**Activity Overview:** Cruising aboard a traditional junk; optional swimming and kayaking

**Activity Level:** Easy

**Drive time:** 3-4 hours or optional seaplane transfer

Early today we transfer to Ha Long Bay, either by road (approximately 3-4 hours) or seaplane (optional at an additional cost). Ha Long Bay, in the Gulf of Tonkin, includes some 1,600 islands and islets, forming a spectacular seascape of limestone pillars. In 1994, this unique landscape was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Upon arrival board a deluxe Asian "junk" boat for a two-day trip through the bay.

We enjoy a lunch of Asian-fusion specialties on board while sailing into the bay, soaking up the scenic views and unwinding for the last leg of our journey. Various excursions are available including a visit to Tien Ong Cave. The Cave



is peppered with stalactites and stalagmites, formed out of ancient limestone karsts about 700,000 years ago. The voyage continues with an excursion to the floating fishing village of Cua Van, the largest and oldest fishing village in Ha Long Bay. Once we are back on board, there will also be an optional cooking demonstration by the ship's chef to reveal some of the secrets of Vietnamese cuisine.

This evening, we enjoy the sunset from the deck before an elegant five-course dinner in the restaurant. Afterward, you can relax on the deck and socialize with other travelers before retiring to your cabin.

**Accommodations:** Jasmine Cruise Boat, Ha Long Bay

**Meals:** B, L, D

**PLEASE NOTE:** *This is a typical itinerary, and actual activities may vary to take advantage of weather conditions, local events and to allow serendipity to play a hand in your experience. Accommodations are as outlined in the itinerary, although we reserve the right to change these should the need arise. See our booking terms and conditions for more information about our change policy.*

## DAY 10: Ha Long Bay

**Activity Overview:** Optional Tai Chi lesson, optional hike

**Activity Level:** Easy

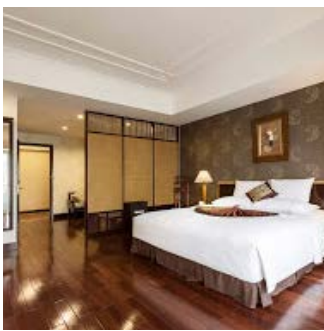
**Activity Length:** About 1 hour - Tai Chi; 30 minutes - hike

Early risers will be treated to ideal light for photographs, and perhaps join other guests on deck for a morning Tai Chi lesson. After breakfast, we continue our cruise through the unforgettable landscape, stopping at Ti Top beach – where we are free to disembark and hike up 400 steps for a panoramic view of the bay, or simply relax and enjoy the beach.

We disembark the cruise by midday, and return to Hanoi by road, where we will say farewell and depart for our onward journey.

**Meals:** B

# ACCOMMODATIONS



## NIGHT 1

### **Rex Hotel**

141 Nguyen Hue Blvd

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tel +84 8 38 292 185 | [rexhotel@rex.com.vn](mailto:rexhotel@rex.com.vn)

Rex Hotel offers a heritage of luxury dating back to the early 20th century. For over 80 years, the Rex has been a landmark of the city as well as a witness to the changing tides of history.



## NIGHTS 2, 3

### **Hotel Saigon Morin**

30 Le Loi Street

Huế, Vietnam

Tel +84 234 3846 410 | [res@morinhotel.com.vn](mailto:res@morinhotel.com.vn)

Located in the heart of Hue, the Hotel Saigon Morin was originally built in 1901, and it is now one of the oldest hotels in Vietnam with views of the Perfume River.



## NIGHTS 4, 5, 6

### **Little Riverside Hoi An**

09 Phan Boi Chau

Hoi An, Vietnam

Tel +84 235 3575 555 | [info@littleriversidehoian.com](mailto:info@littleriversidehoian.com)

This charming hotel and spa is well situated on a quiet spot along the Thu Bon riverfront, but still walking distance to the local restaurants and shops.



## NIGHTS 7, 8

### **Sofitel Legend Metropole**

15 Ngo Quyen Street

Hanoi, Vietnam

Tel +84 48 266 919 | [sofitelhanoi@hn.vnn.vn](mailto:sofitelhanoi@hn.vnn.vn)

Recognized by Condé Nast Traveler and readers of Travel + Leisure as one of the best hotels in Asia, this French-colonial style building has stood proudly in the heart of Hanoi since 1901. The hotel has a rich history and lovely rooms, a recently built spa, and swimming pool.



## NIGHT 9

### **Jasmine Luxury Cruiser**

Ha Long Bay, Vietnam

Emergency Tel +84-98-5144-144

This traditionally rigged Asian sailing vessel offers the highest standard of service and amenities on Ha Long Bay. This junk has 24 cabins, stylishly decorated with an antique Asian motif. There is also a restaurant, lounge, and sundeck offering uninterrupted views of the bay.

# WHAT TO EXPECT



## TRIP RATING

Boundless Journeys' trips are designed for energetic and flexible individuals who like to be active and have a spirit of adventure and a positive attitude. *Vietnam: Cultural Explorer* is rated 1+, easy with some moderate options on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being the most strenuous). The walks on this trip are day walks with some vehicle support. Much of the walking done on this tour will be on flat terrain, in and around villages, towns, and temples, 2-3 hours per day, broken up by rest and meals.

## PREPARING FOR THIS TRIP

It is important that you realistically assess your physical condition with regard to the demands of this trip. The more well-prepared you are for the activities on this trip, the more you will enjoy yourself! Please engage in moderate aerobic activities (walking, jogging, or cycling) for at least 30-45 minutes several times a week for 4-6 weeks before the trip. If you live in a flat area, try to incorporate some stairs into your workout, or use a treadmill with varying incline capability. Consult your doctor before undertaking any new fitness programs.

## WEATHER

During our trip, you will likely experience a range of weather conditions, as various locations fall within different climate zones. While Hanoi will be relatively cool, Ho Chi Minh City will be warmer. Rain is possible at any time, although most of the rain falls from May-September. You can obtain more detailed weather information at [www.weatherbase.com](http://www.weatherbase.com).

## AVERAGE TEMPERATURE °F (HIGH/LOW)

	FEB	MAR	NOV
Ho Chi Minh City	90/73	92/76	87/74
Hue	76/65	81/68	79/69
Hanoi	67/60	73/64	76/66

## WHEN TO GO

The cooler dry season lasts from October to March (although October can still see considerable rain). In November, arriving just after the rainy season, you'll have the benefit of being there for the newly greened trees and rice paddies, as well as the much clearer air quality that can be expected at this time of year. December through March remain much drier and a bit cooler than during the summer months. However, it is possible to have some rain at any time of year.

## SMALL GROUP TRAVEL

Small group travel affords us the opportunity to seek out the most remote and exotic destinations on the planet. Often we are exploring these locales with just 6-12 guests. The nature of active group travel is such that not all participants have the same ability level or interests. Traveling at a pace that is comfortable for the entire group, with a spirit of flexibility and adventure, are all part of this shared experience.

## TRAVELER'S RESPONSIBILITY

As a trip participant, you have responsibilities to Boundless Journeys, your fellow travelers and guide, and the local people you encounter. This includes understanding and preparing for the conditions described in the itinerary, ensuring it meets your interests and abilities, and following



the health and safety guidelines of Boundless Journeys, local authorities, and/or the CDC. At their discretion, a guide may ask a guest to leave the trip if further participation may be detrimental to the individual or other participants.

We strongly urge any guest feeling ill shortly before departure to cancel their trip. To help cover your investment, we highly recommend purchasing travel insurance with supplemental “Cancel for Any Reason” coverage. If you feel unwell during the tour, please immediately inform your guide, who can help take the appropriate next steps. We appreciate your cooperation.

### DRINKS WITH MEALS

At Boundless Journeys we believe group dinners are a time to celebrate our day, while enjoying the best of local cuisine, and good company. In keeping with this spirit, we typically include local beer and wine with group dinners. If you prefer premium wine, or liquor, please feel free to order what you like, and you may settle your tab at the end of the meal.

### DRINKING WATER

We provide clean drinking water to guests throughout this tour. In an effort to reduce waste, we strongly encourage you to bring a reusable water bottle to refill because we make every effort to provide purified water from larger containers, rather than using many small single-use plastic bottles. However, using single-use plastic water bottles may be our only safe drinking water option at times throughout the tour.

We strive to travel more responsibly and we appreciate your efforts in helping us to protect the extraordinary places we visit. Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and

encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge, too, and learn more about TAP’s efforts at [www.travelersagainstplastic.org](http://www.travelersagainstplastic.org).

### CUISINE

The ingredients and flavors of cuisine in Vietnam are complex and vary, as everything else does, according to its region of northern, central, or southern Vietnam. In Hanoi you may notice a bit of Chinese influence in the food, along with the inevitable French offerings. A bowl of pho in the Old Quarter is a must; this hot soup is hearty, with noodles and bean sprouts, chicken, pork, or beef, and fresh herbs and spices for flavoring. In central Vietnam, on the coast, seafood is abundant and the food tends to have a bit more chili-derived heat. To a large extent, you have the opportunity to dictate the flavors of your food, as dipping sauces and condiments are yours for the taking. Please note that everywhere we travel, you are likely to find some Western dishes that are familiar should you need a bit of comfort food.

Vegetarians and travelers with other dietary preferences or restrictions can be accommodated with advance notice.

### TRANSPORTATION

All on-tour transportation is provided in private, air-conditioned, passenger vans.

# OUR VIETNAM TEAM

## TRIP MANAGER



### **Kristen Bernarsky**

Originally from Pennsylvania, Kristen first came to Vermont for college. She then spent two years teaching in Asia before returning to Vermont permanently. Kristen joined the Boundless Journeys home team in 2015 as our guest services coordinator and moved into a destination manager role shortly thereafter. She is the manager for Palau and our Asia adventures, having developed our Japan and Nepal trek itineraries. Kristen enjoys sunset hikes and back-country skiing with her husband and their three dogs.

## GUIDES

With a Boundless Journeys guide, your experience is that of friend and local adventurer. We believe strongly in working with local guides, experts in the areas to which we travel, and they hold the keys to unlocking the hidden delights of your chosen destination. Although you will never know they are at work—the mark of a truly great leader—our guides make magical things happen and add a dimension to your trip that you could not experience on your own.

Over the years we have forged bonds with some of the best guides in the world, and we typically work with a small team of guides in each region. You will be informed of the guide for your trip one month prior to your departure.



### **Toan Van Hoang**

Despite being born in the Vietnamese countryside to a rice farming family, Toan in Ho Chi Minh City studying English and Tourism, due to his love of sharing his homeland with others and his passion for travel led him to a career in guiding.

Along with his deep knowledge of the various histories and cultures of all the regions of Vietnam, his light-hearted attitude and spontaneous spirit make him a joy to travel with. We love having him as a trusted partner in Vietnam!



### **Son To Laki**

Laki was born in southern Vietnam's Mekong Delta and pursued a career in guiding because he loves sharing and teaching about his homeland. Laki's deep knowledge of the various histories of South, Central, and North Vietnam, a keen sense of humor, and a love of adventure, have made him one of the most sought-out and highly-respected guides in the region for nearly a decade. In addition to leading active tours, Laki enjoys cycling and a good book. Guests love his friendly demeanor and ability to make each day of the tour unforgettable!

# TRIP EXTENSIONS

There are several options for extending your trip in Asia and we would love to have you join us! The following trip extension serves as a great addition to a journey to Vietnam. Please contact our home office for more details, or if you wish to reserve:

## CAMBODIA: TEMPLES OF ANGKOR

- Highlights:
- UNESCO World Heritage Site of Angkor Wat
  - Bustling streets and markets of Siem Reap
  - Boat cruise exploration of the iconic stilt villages
  - Visit an artisans cooperative or silk farm

Duration: 4-day trip  
Tour start/end: Siem Reap, Cambodia  
Accommodations: 3 nights in a deluxe hotel  
Trip rating: **1**    2    3    4    5  
Easy . . . . . Strenuous  
Land cost: \$1,495 - \$1,695 per person  
Single Supplement: \$365



Please contact Boundless Journeys with any questions about the above extension, to receive a sample extension itinerary, or to create your very own customized extension.

# NEXT STEPS



## TO MAKE A RESERVATION

You can call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, request a reservation online, or contact your travel agent. We will confirm your spot with a deposit of \$500 per person and the payment of internal airfare, payable by check or credit card.

## ONCE YOU RESERVE

As soon as you confirm your adventure, we will provide you with an extensive, detailed trip planner that includes arrival and departure instructions, a complete packing list, regional information, required documents, a reading list, and other details.

## CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY

Please check our Terms & Conditions page on our website for our comprehensive cancellation and refund policies: [www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com/terms-and-conditions).

## TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

In addition to your detailed trip planner, we will email you a quote for Travel Guard trip insurance. Please let us know if you would like us to purchase a policy on your behalf. Boundless Journeys strongly recommends purchasing Trip Insurance.

## QUESTIONS? WHICH TRIP IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Adventure travel may involve exotic destinations, unusual levels of physical exertion, and activities that may be new to you. If you have any questions about the level of comfort, difficulty, or activities included on your trip, please call Boundless Journeys at 800-941-8010, or email us at [info@boundlessjourneys.com](mailto:info@boundlessjourneys.com). Our travel experts look forward to helping you select the perfect adventure.

## VISIT US ONLINE

[www.boundlessjourneys.com](http://www.boundlessjourneys.com) for:

- additional departures
- special promotions
- detailed itineraries
- inspiring photography
- guide bios

## EXTEND YOUR TRIP...

Check out. . .

- BHUTAN: Hidden Kingdoms in the Himalayas
- JAPAN: Walking the Nakasendo Trail

## PREFER A PRIVATE TRIP?

The perfect option for alumni and family reunions, birthdays and anniversaries, or just to catch up with friends in fabulous destinations. Mark your calendar and leave the planning to us! Call our travel experts today: 800-941-8010.



# BOUNDLESS BEYOND



## RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

At Boundless Journeys, our goal is to create meaningful experiences that protect the delicate ecosystems and attributes of every location we visit. We aim to educate our guests on the best responsible travel practices for each destination.

## WE ARE COMMITTED TO

**Making connections.** Our local guides offer insider knowledge of their country, including tips on etiquette and customs. They facilitate meaningful interactions with the people and places we visit, such as dinner at the home of a local family. While you may arrive in a destination as a visitor, you leave with a deeper understanding and connection to each place.

**Going local.** Boundless Journeys' small group size stems from a desire to provide a more intimate traveler experience, giving us the freedom to move through the tight alleys of old towns on foot, eat and sleep at traditional guesthouses, participate in immersive cultural exchanges, and leave a smaller footprint on all of the locales we visit. This mobility allows us to support local economies directly, forging strong relationships with our partners and friends abroad as we return year after year.

**Respecting people and the environment.** We support organizations working to protect ecosystems and improve the livelihoods of local communities. On many of our trips, we explore stunning natural landscapes where conservation is of the utmost importance. As visitors, we practice Leave No Trace ethics and actively contribute to the conservation of parks and protected areas.

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

**Give back.** Instead of receiving a Boundless Journeys t-shirt or water bottle, you can opt to donate the value of your gift to our travel scholarship fund, which will be awarded to a local student for an educational or service-based travel opportunity.

**Learn more.** Visit [boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel](https://boundlessjourneys.com/responsible-travel) to read more about how our values are reflected in our trip offerings. We also offer a selection of Resources for the Responsible Traveler, which suggests ways to tread lightly and ensure your journey has a positive impact.

**Join us.** Boundless Journeys has taken the Travelers Against Plastic company pledge to promote sustainable travel and encourage travelers to avoid buying bottled water when they travel. You can take the pledge at [travelersagainstplastic.org](https://travelersagainstplastic.org).

## CONSERVATION IN ACTION

Boundless Journeys is a proud member of the Adventure Travel and Trade Association, a global network of adventure seekers who believe in the protection and promotion of local communities and wilderness areas.

