



FLY and BIKE
internationaal gezelschap

17 Days/16 Nights
Departure Dates:

2009
13 Dec – 29 Dec

2010
17 Jan – 2 Feb
7 March – 23 March
30 May – 15 June
22 Aug – 7 Sept
7 Nov – 23 Nov
12 Dec – 28 Dec

If these dates don't suit your travel schedule, please [contact us](#) to talk about operating a private tour or customizing a tour for you or your group.

Prices

USD 2295 Tour

USD 195 Fiets

€ 450 Single Supplement

De prijzen in Euro vindt u op de website www.flyandbike.be

Saigon to Hanoi

As Vietnam opens its doors to welcome the world at large, many people have no idea of the stunning visual beauty and traditional culture that lie beyond the threshold. To many, the name Vietnam brings to mind only haunting images of a war in Southeast Asia, an image that continues to be exploited on the big screen and in print. Beyond such images lies the real Vietnam, a unique and fascinating land of great physical and rich cultural diversity whose history spans over 4,000 years.

Picture a land of idyllic tree-lined beaches, tranquil bays dotted with the sails of junks and sampans, offshore coral islands, mountains, valleys, primal forests, plains crossed by countless rivers and emerald rice fields enriched with the varied scenes of everyday life. The traditional rural life, embodied in the villagers tilling the land with rudimentary tools under their conical hats in the patchwork paddy fields, and children riding their water buffaloes home from the fields at the end of the day, contrasts dramatically with the sights, sounds and pace of the cities whose busy streets overflow with humanity borne along on a rising tide of bicycles and motor scooters. Such are the images of present-day Vietnam.



The country's long history is an ever present companion; the land is imbued with it - sites of ancient battles, ancient civilizations and kingdoms which flourished in this enigmatic land long before the French colonialists, Communism and the tragic war of the more recent past.

The changing tides of fortune that have swept over this country and its people have left their mark, greatly emphasizing the contrast between past and present. Much of Vietnam's ancient past is shrouded in myths and legends of dragons and kings, heroes and heroines, gods and deities, brought to life in the present in the many colorful time-honored traditional festivals and rituals commemorating revered ancestors, who are worshipped alongside Buddhist, Taoist and Hindu deities in the thousands of temples and pagodas throughout the country.

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Trip Profile

Our biking adventure takes us the 1,700 kilometres from Saigon to Hanoi by bus, train, boat and bike. We cycle approx 700 km in 11 cycling days, enjoy a number of rest days and lots of time can be spent sight seeing and exploring Vietnam. The cycling is on a mixture of well-surfaced roads and good quality dirt tracks.

Biking Difficulty



(out of five)

This tour follows a mix of good asphalt roads and vehicle-width dirt roads, which may be smooth, gritty, stony, rocky, rutted, loose or hard-packed. No technical experience required.

Some of the days are quite long and experienced riders usually find it sufficiently challenging. Faster cyclists can ride at their own pace after consulting the guides on the route. However, the average rider will want to ride and take photographs and stop here and there to take in the magnificent sites. If you race through the country you don't see it.

Our route has been designed to explore the Vietnamese countryside which lies on either side of the main north-south artery, Highway 1. We spend no more than 20 km on this busy route. Away from the main roads, cycling in Vietnam is a wonderful experience; the bicycle is the most common form of rural transport and you will share the road and tracks with beautiful girls in flowing Ao Dais, school children and farmers. Such is the friendliness your voice may not be capable of saying 'hello' by the end of the day!

Our rest days allow us to explore all the main tourist sites and places of interest along the way. You decide where you wish to go and in your own time. You can take this time on your own in Nha Trang, Hoi An, Hue and Halong Bay so that you can really get to know and perhaps understand Vietnam and its people. Additionally, of course, our guides will give you a fabulous extra personal and first hand insight to their culture.

Suitability: This trip is suitable for anyone with a reasonable level of fitness. This trip is not too arduous, and so riders with less experience are more than welcome although the fitter you are the more you will enjoy it. An air-conditioned bus travels behind the group for support. On some occasions when it is impossible for the bus to follow on the dirt tracks, we arrange motorcycle back up with snacks and water.

Biking Conditions: This trip is mainly on good quality tarmac roads and some vehicle width dirt roads. A support truck is always available to help when required and participants can cycle as much or as little as they like and still enjoy the same views as the rest of the group.



Cycling Distance

700 kilometers

Cycling Days

7 full, 4 half

Day to Day

B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner

Day 1 – Ho Chi Minh City

We meet at Northern Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City (please contact us if you need assistance with flights). We spend the day preparing our bikes and give you some time to explore the city. In the evening we dine at the enchanting Temple Club Restaurant.

Northern Hotel. D

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Day 2 - Cu Chi Tunnels- Ho Chi Minh City

Today we transfer a short way out of town and then ride to the famous Cu Chi tunnels, where the North Vietnamese Army (NVA) lived and tormented their foreign enemies for decades. We return to Ho Chi Minh City by bus in time to visit the macabre museum of war crimes. Dinner is your choice.

Northern Hotel. Ride 25 km. B L

- **We have carefully chosen accommodation that is the best available for the location and offer a good mix, from home stays to luxurious lodges, on our tours.**

- **We love Asian cuisine, well-known for being hot and spicy and for its use of fresh ingredients, and will make sure you get to sample lots of it.**

Day 3 – Ho Chi Minh City – Dalat

We get up early to drive towards Dalat in the central highlands. Dalat was a favored retreat for the French, especially during the hot summers. It was once known as Le Petit Paris and is now a popular honeymoon destination for the Vietnamese. We have lunch at Phu An and then continue to Duc Trong where we begin cycling. We'll ride by the elephant waterfall, a vast coffee plantation, local hill tribe villages and the colorful flower beds which Dalat is well-known for. The route is paved all the way to Dalat and is a little hilly just before getting to town. We'll arrive at our beautifully converted French colonial hotel in the late afternoon.

Novotel Hotel. Ride 40 km. B L D

Day 4 – Dalat – Nha Trang

Setting off on our bikes from the hotel we commence our day with a relatively easy ride around Dalat passing by Xuan Huong Lake, some flower plantations, the Old French Railway station and Than Tho Lake. Once we leave Dalat the day will bring a mixture of ups and downs as we head towards Nha Trang. We'll tackle some big hills in the morning but we'll be rewarded by some dramatic mountainous scenery. We'll stop for lunch in Da Chay to give us more energy to tackle the challenging Hon Giao pass (2,062 m). Once we get to the other side of the pass we'll transfer our weary legs to Nha Trang. If we have time we'll stop to visit Po Na Gar Cham tower before driving to our resort town where we can enjoy a lively evening.

Asia Paradise Hotel. Ride 100 km. B L D

Day 5 – Nha Trang

Taking a rest from the bikes we offer a boat trip to the coral islands for swimming and snorkeling. Those who don't feel like a boat trip can relax and enjoy the beach or even go scuba diving.

Asia Paradise Hotel. B

Day 6 – Nha Trang – Tuy Hoa

Following breakfast, we cycle 15 km out of Nha Trang until we hit busy Highway 1. Here we'll transfer just over an hour to the fishing village of Vung Ro and stop for a break at Dai Lanh beach for anybody wanting a swim. Then we'll get back on our bicycles and ride 35 km along a newly paved coastal road. We'll ride in the shadow of Da Bia mountain, which will provide us with some small hills to climb. After lunch at a local restaurant we'll transfer to My Thanh and ride 30 km on quiet countryside lanes passing through rice paddies and local villages. The terrain is flat and the road is a mixture of tarmac and dirt. We'll end our riding at Phuong Hoa Tri hamlet and it's just a short transfer to our hotel.

Hung Vuong Hotel. Ride 80 km. B L D

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Day 7 – Dai Lanh - Quang Ngai

We transfer out of town to avoid the main highway and start today's ride along a remote, but well surfaced road, running alongside the railway. The terrain is gently rolling with beautiful views of the foothills of the highlands. We pass a mix of tribal and Viet villages. Ubiquitous potbellied pigs and bare foot children trot across your trail. Eventually we loop back to the main highway and transfer up the highway to Quang Ngai.

Central Hotel. Ride 62 km. B L D

Day 8 – Quang Ngai – My Lai – Hoi An

In the morning we'll visit the interesting Thien An pagoda on our way to see My Lai, the site of one of the worst massacres of the American/Vietnam War. After a guided tour of the site and museum, we'll transfer for a 1.5 hours to Tam Ky where we'll begin cycling. We'll loop to Ha Lam through the picturesque countryside of Quang Ngai province. After 35 km we'll stop for lunch in Hiep Duc, before we continue to cruise another 35 km to Ha Lam. We transfer the rest of the way to Hoi An and you'll be free to explore. Hoi An was known as Faifo to early western traders and was one of Southeast Asia's major trading ports during the 17th and 18th centuries. It was an important point of call for Chinese, Japanese and Portuguese traders and the architecture reflects its cosmopolitan past. More than anywhere in Vietnam, Hoi An retains the feel of the past. There are over 844 structures of historical significance and the shop-filled streets are inviting to wander around and enjoy the sights and atmosphere.

Vinh Hung 2. Ride 70 km. B L D

Day 9 – Hoi An – My Son – Hoi An

Staying another night in Hoi An, and after a short transfer to avoid busy Highway 1, we ride to visit My Son, the ancient centre of Cham civilization. We cycle along scenic country back roads past paddy fields and through eucalyptus forest passing many pretty villages. The road climbs away from the coast offering stunning views as we head to My Son, once Champa's greatest city. Although many of the temples were destroyed by American bombs, there is still enough of the archaeological site to impress most visitors. We take lunch before spending the afternoon visiting the site. We transfer by bus back to Hoi An. Dinner is your choice.

Vinh Hung 2 Hotel. Ride 54 km. B L

Day 10 – Hoi An - Hue

This is probably the toughest rides of the tour, but is also one of the best. We transfer beyond Danang to take on the Hai Van Pass, a steady and moderately difficult climb with beautiful views of the coasts. The downhill is a just reward. After lunch we turn off the main highway and take a coastal side road for 44 km almost all the way to our destination. Energetic riders will make it all the way into Hue, the old capital of the Ngu Yen Dynasty.

Festival Hotel. 100 km. B L D

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Day 11 – Hue

Today is another day off the bike. Our guide will be on hand to give a tour of the Forbidden City and also the Emperor's tombs, or you can go exploring on your own. Whatever you decide to do you must reconvene at the hotel in the early afternoon to transfer to the railway station for our overnight train trip to Nam Dinh.
Overnight Train. B D



A bowl of pho, a broth soup with beef or chicken and rice noodles, is a perfect lunch for bikers. A bowl comes with plates of fresh herbs, cut limes, hot chilies and bean sprouts to garnish your soup with.

Day 12 – Nam Dinh - Cuc Phuong National Park

We arrive in Nam Dinh around 4 am (time can vary according to the train timetable). We transfer to a hotel where we can catch up on some more sleep and then transfer to Ninh Binh from where we cycle through spectacular karst scenery. Soaring limestone mountains just straight out of the paddy fields. We ride amongst this extraordinary scenery to the ancient city of Hoa Lu. After touring the temples we continue to Cuc Phuong National Park where we visit the primate rescue centre before checking into our accommodation at the park.
Cuc Phuong National Park. Ride 60 km. B L D

Day 13 – Cuc Phuong National Park - Haipong

After exploring more of the park by bike we head east, riding some interesting back roads through many pineapple plantations. Today you'll likely notice some difference between North and South Vietnam, from the crops, to the villages to how people dress differently. The ride is a very pleasant meander and we pass through many rice fields and follow country back roads past friendly villages. We stop just before we reach Highway 1 and transfer to Haipong, one of Vietnam's major ports.

Huu Nghi Hotel. Ride 60 km. B L D

Day 14 – Haipong – Cat Ba Island

We'll transfer in the morning to the harbor to reach our fast boat to Fulong, on Cat Ba Island. The island is at the southern end of Halong Bay and contains one of Vietnam's most beautiful national parks. We disembark at Fulong and cycle 27 km taking the island's only road. We'll stop for lunch at Cat Ba town. In the afternoon we'll ride through some local villages to Gia Luan and then take a short transfer to our hotel.

Princess Hotel. Ride 50 km. B L D

Day 15 – Halong Bay - Hanoi

We spend a truly memorable day on a boat cruising through Halong Bay. The awesome limestone karst mountains rise dramatically out of the emerald sea. Halong Bay is one of the most incredible natural wonders of the world. Legend has it that it was formed by a great dragon that descended from the mountain into the sea. The boat trip is a fitting reward for all our exertions. We then transfer back to Hanoi.

Maison D'Hanoi Hotel. B L

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Day 16 - Hanoi

We have the whole day free to explore the many sites in the city. You can head off and visit Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, the Temple of Literature or explore the many alleyways of the charming Old Quarter. The real attraction lies in the beautiful architecture and relaxed atmosphere. We meet again in the evening at our hotel for a transfer to our farewell dinner at one of the many fine restaurants in Hanoi.

Maison D'Hanoi Hotel. B D

Day 17 – Onward Travel

The morning is free for last minute shopping or sightseeing. Anyone who would like to stay longer in Hanoi should contact us for hotel rates (we offer all our clients the best agent rates).

B



Halong Bay includes some 1,600 islands and islets, some of which provided the scenery in the 1997 [James Bond](#) film *Tomorrow Never Dies*.

Nuts & Bolts

Bikes: Rental Bikes included. The bikes are well-known makes of Hybrid or Mountain bikes (depending on the tour) with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes and Shimano components and front suspension.

Safety: Wearing a helmet is compulsory on all our biking adventures. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Support: We will be supported by air-conditioned vehicle that have been specially modified for cycle tours. The vehicles follow us the whole time and are always available for tired cyclists. It is very easy to get bikes on and off, so you can rest when you are tired and cycle whenever you feel like it.

Guides: You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 8 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history, culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

The Nitty Gritty

Arriving and Departing: This tour begins in Ho Chi Minh City and ends in Hanoi. International and domestic flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. If you need help or advice arranging flights please contact us.

Passports and Visas: All nationalities require a visa for Vietnam. Visas can be obtained from any Vietnamese embassy worldwide, but please allow up to three weeks for visa processing.

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Subject to Change

In remote destinations abnormal conditions can prevail at any time, and all adventurous holidays can therefore be subject to unexpected change and we will do our best to adhere to the original itinerary and cannot be held responsible for any last minute changes; in order to enjoy them you should be prepared to be flexible when necessary.

Health: Recommended vaccinations are typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. A certificate for Yellow Fever is required when arriving from an infected area within six days. Vietnam is a malarial area and you will need to take anti-malarial tablets. Please speak to your doctor for the most up to date information.

Weather: Weather in Vietnam can vary quite considerably according to distinct climate zones. Due to regional climate differences there are no good or bad seasons to visit Vietnam. The North of Vietnam experiences cool, damp winters between November and April with temperatures in Hanoi falling to around 15°C. The summer months from May to October are hot and dry. A pleasant time to visit is spring (March-April) or autumn (October-December). The best time to visit the north of Vietnam is from September to December when it isn't so humid. The weather turns quite cold and wet in January and this continues until March. The humidity can prove oppressive from May to the start of September and there's a danger of flooding.

Food: Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals are Vietnamese food and features noodles, rice curries and soups. Vietnamese cuisine is world famous and we make sure you sample as much variety as possible. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

Drink: Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit and soft drinks are included in the tour price. Beer is freely available everywhere in Vietnam, but is NOT included in the price.

Extra Expenses: We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$10, for incidentals. It is customary to tip local tour guides and drivers, however, the amount you give should be dependent on the level of service you receive. As a general guide we suggest US\$ 3-4 per person per day is appropriate.

Money: The official national currency is the Vietnam dong (d), but the US dollar is widely accepted in tourist centers. However, in smaller towns and villages the dong is preferred. ATMs are available in all major tourist destinations and big cities. Vietcombank has the best network with a limit a single withdrawal limit of 2,000,000d (about US\$125). Most major currencies can be exchanged at leading banks in Vietnam, but the US dollar is preferred away from the tourist centers. Changing US\$100 will make you an instant millionaire! You cannot legally take the dong out of Vietnam but you can reconvert reasonable amounts of it into US dollars on departure.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Where differences exist in the information between this and previous information, this document is the correct version and supersedes the brochure or website.

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