

## Delta Villages & Culture



Approximately 8 hours



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Board a motor coach for a journey through the rural areas of the **Red River Delta**. In the district of Thuy Nguyen, you'll leave the coach for a half-mile **walk** to a **local villager** renowned for its betel nut production. Enter via a series of small lanes and streets shaded by betel nut trees, the bulbs of which are cut open to reveal a red 'nut' that is chewed on by many elders throughout the country as a stimulant, in the same way that caffeine is used in the western world. Many of these betel nuts are transported throughout the north for consumption. In this local farming community, people spend the day tending their fields and livestock. You will notice a remarkable absence of mechanical assistance here—the work in the fields is mostly done by hand. At certain times of the year you may see people harvesting the rice, plowing the fields with buffalo or irrigating the intricate canal system by hand. Return to the coach for the journey to **Haiphong**, the main port city of the north. Visit the 17th-century **Du Hang Pagoda**, where you will find an impressive display of about 500 wooden relief sculptures.

## Halong Bay Cruise & Thien Cung Cave



Approximately 3½ hours



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Enjoyed it?



4.4 out of 5

Value

4.2 out of 5

14 out of 15(93%)reviewers would recommend this product to a friend.

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Bay of the Descending Dragon is the English translation for **Halong Bay**. This remarkable natural wonder and **UNESCO World Heritage Site** became famous in the West when it was featured in the French film *Indochine*. Halong Bay is dotted with an estimated 1,969 islands spread over 900 square miles. Some islands are covered in dense vegetation; others are bare and rocky. **Sail** gracefully past these imposing formations on a converted **fishing junk**. See tiny islands dotted with rock arches, sheer cliffs, innumerable white sand beaches and peaceful coves. You will stop at **Thien Cung Cave** and wander through the cavern to marvel at its **stalagmite and stalactite formations** (suitable only for the agile).

Notes:

Drinks and western-style restroom facilities are available on board. There are about 120 steep steps to reach the Thien Cung Cave, which is an optional visit.

### Halong Bay Cruise, Cave & Lunch



Approximately 5 hours



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Enjoyed it?



5 out of 5

Value



4 out of 5

1 out of 1(100%) reviewers would recommend this product to a friend.

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Notes:

Drinks and western restroom facilities are available on board. There are about 120 steep steps to reach the Thien Cung Cave, which is an optional visit. Guests do not disembark at the floating village.

## Hanoi Highlights



Approximately 12½ hours



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Enjoyed it?



5 out of 5

Value



5 out of 5

1 out of 1(100%) reviewers would recommend this product to a friend.

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Visit **Hanoi**—Vietnam’s capital and a remarkable city that will seduce you with its old-world charm. Boasting a romantic blend of ancient Asian and French heritage, Hanoi boasts that it is the jewel in Vietnam’s crown. It is a 3½-hour drive from the pier, and upon arrival in Hanoi you will visit **Ba Dinh Square**, also known as the Ho Chi Minh Quarter. Nearby you will find the **One Pillar Pagoda**, and step inside the **Temple of Literature**, built in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius. This is a serene retreat from the busy streets and was Vietnam’s first university. After **lunch**, enjoy a touch of old Hanoi as you visit the **Thirty-Six Streets**—an ancient district where the essence of Vietnamese culture is alive and well. Finally, re-board your motor coach for the return journey through the undulating countryside to Halong.

Notes:

Travel time to Hanoi is approximately 3½ hours each way.

### Hanoi: Past & Present



Approximately 13¾ hours



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Visit Hanoi—Vietnam's capital and a remarkable city that will seduce you with its old-world charm. Boasting a romantic blend of ancient Asian and French heritage, Hanoi holds that it is the jewel in Vietnam's crown. It is an approximately 3½-hour drive from the pier and, upon your arrival, **lunch** will be served. Afterwards, you will visit **Ba Dinh Square**, also known as the Ho Chi Minh Quarter. Nearby you will find the One Pillar Pagoda, and visit the **Temple of Literature**, built in 1070 and dedicated to Confucius. This is a serene retreat from the busy streets and was Vietnam's first university. Step inside the **Hoa Lo Museum**, known widely by the nickname of 'Hanoi Hilton'—so dubbed by the Americans during the Second Indochina War. Hoa Lo Prison was originally established by the French colonial government in 1896 for the purpose of detaining political prisoners and formed part of a northern network of 'unjust and cruel prisons'. You can view the original cells, complete with leg-irons, along with a selection of bilingual (Vietnamese and English) displays illustrating the horrors of life in the prison during the French colonial period. Before a Vietnamese **dinner** at a local restaurant, enjoy a touch of **Old Hanoi** as you visit the Thirty-Six Streets—an ancient district where the essence of Vietnamese culture is alive and well. Finally, re-board your motor coach for the return journey through the undulating countryside to Halong.

Notes:

Travel time to Hanoi is approximately 3½ hours each way. The information at the Hoa Lo museum is presented from a Vietnamese perspective.

### Yen Tu Monastery & Countryside Drive



Approximately 5 hours



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Enjoyed it?



3 out of 5

Value



3 out of 5

0 out of 1(0%) reviewers would recommend this product to a friend.

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After disembarking the ship, you'll set off by coach through the countryside of Ha Long. Along the way, you will see seemingly endless rice fields, and the daily activities of local people tending their farms along the highway. Upon arrival at **Yen Tu Monastery**, you can stroll around the main hall of the temple to explore the long history of Buddhism, which is presented through pictures on the walls and ceiling. At a typical **village** nearby, meet the locals for a chance to exchange culture and lifestyle information. You'll see their rice fields and learn about their daily lives. Leaving the village, you will re-board the coach to return to Ha Long, visiting the **local market** before returning to the pier.

Notes:

Wear comfortable walking shoes.