



# GAP ADVENTURE: VIETNAM (4 WEEKS)





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Embark on an extraordinary four-week journey through Vietnam. Explore the delicate balance between ancient traditions and rapid modernisation, while discovering the vibrancy of cultures that have endured centuries of transformation.

Learn from local communities during rural homestay experiences and discover the region's rich history with guided tours of ancient sites. Challenge yourself with adventurous activities and embrace authentic cultural experiences. Gain confidence traveling with a student led trip through the south of Vietnam. Travel as a team, embark on thrilling adventures, hone leadership skills, and foster collaboration.

This isn't a normal trip; it's a profound exploration of cultural resilience, environmental stewardship, and personal growth. You'll return home not only with unforgettable memories but also with a deeper understanding of Vietnamese history, a nuanced appreciation for the delicate balance between tradition and progress, and the confidence to navigate an increasingly interconnected world. Prepare to unleash your inner explorer, expand your comfort zone, and complete a life-changing adventure!

# Week 1

## VIETNAM'S CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

- Explore Hanoi
- Live in a traditional stilt homestay
- Cycle through rice fields
- Float on bamboo rafts and swim at waterfalls

### DAYS 1-3 | HANOI

Join a cultural orientation of Vietnam's capital city where you'll get to know your fellow travellers and practice some Vietnamese.

Learn about Vietnamese philosophy and religion during tours to the Temple of Literature and Temple of Jade. You'll explore Hoan Kiem Lake, Long Bien Bridge, the French Quarter, and then busy markets during a food tour. Try 'egg coffee' and watch a traditional water puppet show.

### DAYS 3-9 | MAI CHAU

Journey to the mountains and rice fields of Mai Chau. Live with, and learn from, 'White Thai', Muong and Hmong minority groups. Support a women's social enterprise creating sustainable and organic fabrics. Learn traditional methods for dyeing, weaving and crafting. You'll practice making chopsticks, bamboo fans, and baskets.

Cycle through rice fields, explore caves, kayak on the stunning Hoa Ban Lake, and travel downstream on bamboo rafts. Spend a day hiking along the terraced rice fields of Pu Luong Nature Reserve, swimming at Hieu Waterfall, and relaxing with views of giant water wheels in Tram village.

Play traditional games and practice bamboo dances at your homestay. In the evenings you'll also get involved in cooking classic Vietnamese dishes.





# Week 2

## LIMESTONE WONDERS

- Take an overnight cruise through Ha Long Bay
- Row through caves in Ninh Binh
- Marvel at limestone karst mountains on land and at sea

### DAYS 10-11 | HA LONG BAY

Board a boat and explore the vast maze of karst mountain islands in Ha Long Bay. Visit large caves and kayak in the bay while watching the sunset. Fish for squid in the evening or join a karaoke party before sleeping overnight on the boat.

Wake up in the bay and join a tai chi class on the boat deck. Hike to viewpoints looking across the bay and other islands. Join a cooking class as you sail back to the harbour.

### DAYS 12-13 | HANOI

Gain insights into the history of Vietnam by touring the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long - this complex of palaces, temples, and towers was home to Emperors and rulers of Vietnam for over 1,000 years. Then visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and the Military History Museum to learn about the many wars and conflicts that have faced Vietnam. Watch soldiers parade outside the Mausoleum in the evening.

Explore Hanoi independently on your last day in the city. Discover hidden sights with your group mates or go it alone.

### DAYS 14-15 | NINH BINH

Journey by bus to Bai Dinh Pagoda - a huge complex of Buddhist pagodas. Continue to Ninh Binh for a traditional paddle boat ride along the river and through caves. Cycle through rice fields and hike to viewpoints of the valley. You'll relax in hot springs and hike up to the stunning Mua Cave.

# Week 3

## CENTRAL VIETNAM

- Explore the Imperial Tombs of Hue
- Relax at the beach
- Release lanterns in Hoi An

### DAYS 16-17 | HUE

Tour the Imperial City of Hue. Learn about the role of monarchy in Vietnamese history.

You'll spend a day visiting the tombs of Nguyen Dynasty emperors who reigned from 1802 until 1945. Hue acted as the national capital during this time. Each tomb is elaborately decorated and was often used as a residence of the monarchs while they lived.

### DAYS 18-20 | HOI AN

Explore the ancient town of Hoi An in the morning. Visit traditional craft and art markets, colourful winding streets, and the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge. Cycle to a white sand beach and relax by the sea for the afternoon.

Visit lantern markets, galleries, and silk shops in the evening. Watch as the river fills with floating lanterns at night.

Visit the Marble Mountains. Five limestone peaks are named after the five elements: Kim (metal), Thuỷ (water), Mộc (wood), Hoả (fire) and Thổ (earth). Hike through caves, tunnels, and towers to explore shrines and pagodas built by Mahayana Buddhists and Nguyen Dynasty Kings. They blend harmoniously with the surrounding nature.

You'll have a free day to relax, explore independently or plan your student-led travel routes.





# Week 4

## SELF DISCOVERY: BACKPACK TRAIL TO SAIGON

- Travel in teams to Ho Chi Minh City
- Explore Cu Chi Tunnels
- Sail through the Mekong Delta

### DAYS 21-24 | STUDENT-LED TRAVEL CHALLENGE

Depart Hoi An with a set budget given to you by your Group Leader. Travel in small teams for the next four days as you head towards Ho Chi Minh City. Your travel plan will be reviewed before you depart and staff will monitor your progress along the journey.

This is your chance to explore! The route, transport, accommodation, and activities are chosen by members of each team. Popular attractions along the route include Bai Na Hills, Nha Trang, Da Lat, and the sand dunes of Mui Ne.

### DAYS 25-26 | HO CHI MINH CITY

Celebrate reuniting with your group and tour the bustling markets of 'Saigon'. You'll visit the War Remnants Museum to learn how Vietnamese people view the history and impact of the Vietnam War.

Head outside the city to see Cu Chi Tunnels — a large network of tunnels used by the Viet Cong to evade American and South Vietnamese troops. Learn how people survived here and see the traps they set in the jungle.

### DAYS 27-28 | MEKONG DELTA

Take boat rides through a vast maze of rivers, swamps, and bamboo forests. Cycle across delta islands and visit local farms. You'll be taken to the airport or bus station in Ho Chi Minh City on your final day.

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED?

- All activities and tours highlighted in the schedule
- Three meals per day and drinking water
- Accommodation - a mix of homestays, hostels, hotels, and lodges
- All transport from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City - a mix of public and private coaches, trains, and boat rides
- Airport pickup and drop-off
- A minimum of two Programme Leaders with the group throughout the journey
- Visa support and advice

## PROGRAMME DESIGN

Five Gap Components provide the focus for the development of this programme. They ensure the perfect blend of adrenaline, exploration, and meaningful travel:

- Adventure
- Community
- Exploration
- People & Planet
- Transformation

We pride ourselves on our ability to deliver authentic, unforgettable experiences — with safety, support, and the freedom to explore.

## HOW DO I BOOK?

Contact us to discuss dates and secure your place, or ask any questions: [info@projects-abroad.org](mailto:info@projects-abroad.org)

