



## **OPTIONAL TOUR DESCRIPTIONS**

### **HANOI TOURS**

#### **TOUR 1: COOKING CLASS AT LOCAL HOUSE WITH CHEF**

**Date: Tuesday 13 May**

**Depart time: 9.00am**

**Return time: 2.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$115.00 per person**

Eating Vietnamese dishes is a delightful experience, but learning to cook local specialties is a skill that lasts a lifetime. Join us for an insider experience during a cooking class in a local home, perfect for food lovers and cooking enthusiasts. This immersive tour offers a unique opportunity to delve into the heart of Vietnamese cuisine and culture.

First up head to a bustling local market, where you'll explore the vibrant stalls filled with fresh produce, aromatic herbs and exotic spices. Guided by your experienced English-speaking cooking instructor, you'll learn how to select the best ingredients and gain insights into the essential components of Vietnamese cooking.

After the market visit, you'll be welcomed into a local home, where the cooking class takes place. Under the expert guidance of your instructor, you'll learn to prepare a variety of traditional Vietnamese dishes. The hands-on experience is both fun and educational, allowing you to master the techniques and flavours that make Vietnamese cuisine so unique.

Once the cooking is done, you'll sit down to enjoy the delicious meal you've prepared, accompanied by seasonal fruits and a selection of beverages.

Included in the tour:

- Lunch featuring the dishes you've prepared
- Seasonal fruits after the meal
- Experienced English-speaking cooking instructor
- Free and unlimited local wine tasting
- Herbal tea, mineral water, and one complimentary beer or soft drink

## **TOUR 2: HANOI JEEP FOOD TOUR**

**Date: Tuesday 13 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 5.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$110.00 per person**

Experience the vibrant flavours and rich culture of Hanoi on a Hanoi Jeep Food Tour. This exhilarating journey takes you through the bustling streets of Hanoi in a vintage Vietnam People's Army Jeep, offering a unique blend of food, sightseeing and cultural experiences.

Cruise through the vibrant streets to sample a delicious Banh Mi, a traditional Vietnamese sandwich. Your guide will explain the ingredients and variations specific to Hanoi. Following this, you will savour a steaming bowl of Pho, the iconic Vietnamese noodle soup and discover what makes Hanoi's Pho unique.

The tour continues with a visit to Train Street, where you'll witness the train pass by while enjoying another local delicacy. This thrilling experience is a highlight of the tour, offering a glimpse into the daily life of Hanoi's residents.

You'll also have the opportunity to taste Bun Cha, a Hanoi specialty consisting of grilled pork served with noodles and fresh herbs, and Pho Cuon, a delightful dish of rolled rice noodles with various fillings. The tour concludes with a fresh seafood delight, showcasing the diverse culinary offerings of Hanoi.

Throughout the tour, you'll navigate the maze of backstreets and alleyways, exploring areas of Hanoi that are off the beaten path. You'll pass by many of the city's famous landmarks, including the French boulevards, the bustling Old Quarter, Westlake, Truc Bach Lake, Long Bien Bridge, the Opera House, Ba Dinh Square, and the historic Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum

This four-hour tour provides an immersive experience that captures the true spirit of Hanoi, blending food, culture and sightseeing in a way that only a Jeep tour can.

## **TOUR 3: BAT TRANG CERAMIC VILLAGE**

**Date: Tuesday 13 May**

**Depart time: 1.30pm**

**Return time: 4.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$65.00 per person**

Explore the Bat Trang Ceramic Village and learn about the lives and traditional handicraft of this ancient village in the Red River Delta. Located about 15 kms southeast of Hanoi's city centre, Bat Trang is renowned for its high-quality ceramics and rich history dating back to the 14th century.

The tour starts with a scenic drive along the Red River, providing beautiful views of the countryside. Start your tour by exploring the 500-year-old pottery kiln. This ancient kiln, preserved as a relic, provides a glimpse into the traditional methods of pottery firing used centuries ago. Walking inside, you'll see the beautifully glazed bricks that have witnessed countless ceramic creations over the years.

You'll also explore the village's unique blend of French and Vietnamese architecture, adding a historical and cultural dimension to your visit. Visit the Bat Trang House, a unique blend of traditional and modern architecture. Designed by VTN Architects, this house features a ceramic brick façade that reflects the village's pottery heritage. The interior is designed to be cool and airy, with large glass panels and green spaces that create a serene environment.

During the tour you will have the opportunity to watch skilled artisans at work and even try your hand at making your own ceramic masterpieces under their guidance.

## **HOI AN TOURS**

### **TOUR 1: WALKING TOUR OF HOI AN**

**Date: Thursday 15 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 4.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: Included**

Discover the charm and history of Hoi An on a 2-hour guided walking tour through its ancient streets. This tour offers a captivating glimpse into the vibrant past of this UNESCO World Heritage site, renowned for its well-preserved architecture and rich cultural heritage. Your journey begins at the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge, a symbol of Hoi An. This beautiful structure, dating back to the 18th century, is a testament to the town's historical connections with Japan. As you stroll through the town, you'll follow Tran Phu Street, one of the most picturesque roads in Hoi An, lined with traditional shophouses and historic buildings.

Next, you'll visit the bustling Hoi An Central Market, the oldest and largest market in the town. Here, you'll experience the vibrant atmosphere and see a diverse array of local products, from fresh vegetables and tropical fruits to spices and handmade goods. The market is a lively hub where you can observe daily life and perhaps even sample some local delicacies.

Continue to the Fujian Assembly Hall, the largest and most richly decorated Chinese temple in Hoi An. This grand structure, with its intricate wooden carvings and ornate architecture, reflects the wealth and cultural influence of the Chinese community in the town. The hall is dedicated to Thien Hau, the goddess of the sea, and is a place of worship and cultural significance.

You'll also explore the Museum of Folklore, housed in a well-preserved wooden shophouse. This museum offers insights into Hoi An's traditional intangible cultural heritage, showcasing artifacts, costumes, and exhibits that tell the story of the town's history and its people.

Throughout the tour, your expert guide will share fascinating stories and historical facts, helping you to understand the rich cultural tapestry of Hoi An. This walking tour provides an intimate and immersive experience, allowing you to connect with the town's heritage in a meaningful way.

## **TOUR 2: VESPA TOUR + COOKING CLASS**

**Date: Friday 16 May**

**Depart time: 1.15pm**

**Return time: 4.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$125.00 per person**

Embark on a unique and immersive experience with this Hoi An Culinary and Vespa Adventure. The tour combines the joy of cooking traditional Vietnamese dishes with the thrill of exploring the scenic rice paddy fields on a vintage Vespa.

Hop on a vintage Vespa from the hotel and ride through the picturesque countryside, passing by lush green fields and charming local villages. The Vespa provides a unique and exhilarating way to experience the scenic beauty of Hoi An's rural landscapes.

After arriving at the bustling local market in the serene Tra Que Vegetable Village, meet your cooking instructor and explore the vibrant stalls filled with fresh produce, aromatic herbs and exotic spices. Learn how to select the best ingredients and gain insights into the essential components of Vietnamese cuisine.

After a short walk from the market dive into your cooking class where you will learn to prepare a variety of traditional Vietnamese dishes. Under the expert guidance of your instructor, you will master the techniques and flavours that make Vietnamese cuisine so unique. Once the cooking is done, sit down to enjoy the delicious meal you've prepared.

*Note: the tour price has been subsidised by PSA for the lunch at the hotel that you will not be getting.*

## **TOUR 3: MONKEY MOUNTAIN & MARBLE MOUNTAINS**

**Date: Friday 16 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 5.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: \$50.00 per person**

A tour to Marble Mountains and Monkey Mountain offers a captivating blend of natural beauty, cultural heritage and breathtaking views. Travel approx. 45 mins to Monkey Mountain, where you will stand in awe at Central Vietnam's tallest Buddha Statue, Lady Buddha, which stands at an impressive height of 67 meters. The site offers stunning vistas of Da Nang city and the coastline. As you ascend the mountain, keep an eye out for the playful monkeys that inhabit the area.

Next visit the Marble Mountains, one of Vietnam's iconic pilgrimage sites. Here, you will uncover the rich religious history of Vietnam, learning more about Buddhism and Hinduism from your knowledgeable local guide who will share fascinating insights into the history and significance of these sites.

Visit the mysterious Am Phu Cave, famously known as the Vietnamese Hell Cave since the 19th century. This cave offers a unique and somewhat eerie experience with its intricate carvings and symbolic depictions of the afterlife.

## **HO CHI MINH TOURS**

### **TOUR 1: CITY HIGHLIGHTS TOUR OF SAIGON**

**Date: Sunday 18 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 5.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: Included**

**This is an INCLUSIVE tour, but attendance is optional. Please indicate if you plan on joining the tour as it's essential we have confirmed numbers.**

Enjoy a half-day sightseeing tour of Saigon (Ho Chi Minh City), exploring its rich history and vibrant culture. This tour takes you to some of the city's most iconic landmarks, offering a glimpse into its fascinating past and dynamic present. Throughout the tour, your knowledgeable guide will share fascinating stories and historical facts, enriching your understanding of Saigon's heritage.

Visit the Notre Dame Cathedral, an architectural masterpiece built between 1863 and 1880 by French colonists. This stunning cathedral, with its twin bell towers and neo-Romanesque design, stands as a symbol of Saigon's colonial heritage.

Next, you'll head to the Central Post Office, another remarkable example of French colonial architecture. Designed by Gustave Eiffel, this grand building, completed in 1891, features a beautiful interior with a vaulted roof and intricate details. It's not only a functioning post office but also a popular tourist attraction.

The tour continues to the Reunification Palace, also known as the Independence Palace. This historic site witnessed the end of the Vietnam War when a North Vietnamese tank crashed through its gates on April 30, 1975. Today, the palace serves as a museum, offering a glimpse into Vietnam's tumultuous history through its preserved rooms and exhibits.

Finally, you'll visit the War Remnants Museum, a poignant reminder of the Vietnam War's impact. The museum houses a vast collection of artifacts, photographs and exhibits that document the war's devastating effects. It's a sobering experience that provides deep insights into the country's struggle and resilience.

### **TOUR 2: CHINATOWN & MUSEUM OF TRADITIONAL VIETNAMESE MEDICINE**

**Date: Monday 19 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 6.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: \$75.00 per person**

A tour of Chinatown in Saigon, also known as Cho Lon, combined with a visit to the Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine offers a rich cultural and historical experience. Start your journey at Binh Tay Market, a bustling hub where you can immerse yourself in the local life, offering a wide variety of Chinese food, fresh produce and traditional goods. Next, visit the Thien Hau Temple, one of the oldest and most significant Chinese temples in Ho Chi Minh City, dedicated to the sea goddess Mazu and known for its intricate architecture and serene atmosphere.

Explore the hidden gem of Hao Si Phuong Alley, a narrow lane filled with traditional houses and vibrant street life, perfect for capturing memorable photos. Stroll down Lantern Street, where shops sell beautiful lanterns and other traditional Chinese crafts, especially

enchanting during festivals when it's lit up with colourful lights. Stop to sample some delicious and authentic Chinese cuisine such as Peking Duck.

Next, visit the Chinese Medicine Market to learn about traditional Chinese medicine and see a variety of herbs and remedies used for centuries. The museum, housed in a beautiful wooden building inspired by ancient architecture, features 18 exhibition rooms showcasing over 3,000 artifacts related to traditional Vietnamese medicine. Learn about the history, methods and tools used in this ancient practice, watch documentary films for deeper insights and discover various herbs and their uses. The museum also features a shrine dedicated to the founding fathers of Vietnamese traditional medicine, Tue Tinh and Le Huu Trac.

### **TOUR 3: VIETNAMESE CHOCOLATE WORKSHOP**

**Date: Monday 19 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 4.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$95.00 per person**

The history of cacao in Vietnam is relatively recent, yet the country is emerging as a notable player in the global cocoa market. Cacao was introduced by the French in the late 19th century, establishing a new source for the crop. By the 1990s, cocoa farming began to flourish in southern regions, especially in provinces such as Ben Tre, Tien Giang, and Dong Nai. This growth in cocoa cultivation has opened economic opportunities for local farmers and has positioned Vietnam as an up-and-coming star in the global cocoa landscape.

In this engaging and sensory experience, participants will delve into the world of cacao in Vietnam, learn about the chocolate-making process. There will be a comprehensive tasting of signature chocolates, guided by the host to highlight flavours, textures and techniques.

### **TOUR 4: COOKING CLASS AT HOA TUC**

**Date: Tuesday 20 May**

**Depart time: 1.30pm**

**Return time: 4.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$115.00 per person**

The afternoon cooking class at Hoa Tuc is a delightful experience for anyone interested in Vietnamese cuisine. Located within walking distance of the Sheraton Opera Grand Hotel, Hoa Tuc is a Michelin Guide featured restaurant which was remodelled from an old opium refinery. The cooking class offers a hands-on learning environment where participants can create their own unique Vietnamese dishes. You'll be greeted by friendly staff and skilled chefs who are passionate about Vietnamese cuisine. Under their guidance, you'll prepare a variety of authentic dishes, covering everything from selecting fresh ingredients to mastering cooking techniques.

All recipes are MSG-free, ensuring a healthy and authentic cooking experience. The class concludes with a seasonal dessert, adding a sweet touch to your culinary journey. You'll also receive detailed recipes at the end of the class, so you can recreate the dishes at home. The class is designed to be inclusive and engaging, catering to all skill levels, making it an enriching and enjoyable experience for both novices and experienced cooks alike.

## **TOUR 5: VIETNAMESE ART TOUR**

**Date: Tuesday 20 May**

**Depart time: 2.00pm**

**Return time: 4.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$105.00 per person**

Get a rare glimpse and insight into the Vietnamese art scene as you are personally guided by Gallery Owner and Director Quynh Pham through the latest exhibition, the private collection and the only temperature controlled storage room in Vietnam.

Explore the works and gain insight into the inspiration behind the show and learn more of what it takes to run a gallery in Vietnam and how the landscape has changed over the last 20 years since Quynh Pham opened Galerie Quynh.

### **About Galerie Quynh Contemporary Art Gallery**

Recognised as Vietnam's leading contemporary art gallery, Galerie Quynh has been actively promoting contemporary art practice in the country for over two decades. The gallery maintains a consistent and focused program promoting emerging, mid-career and established artists in Vietnam and internationally.

Operating in a country that lacks a strong art ecosystem, the gallery is a hybrid space that serves its community through its public programs and support of art education. The gallery regularly collaborates with artists, curators, museums, and cultural organisations locally and internationally to organise talks and lectures as well as produce publications in English and Vietnamese.

## **TOUR 6: CU CHI TUNNELS**

**Date: Wednesday 21 May**

**Depart time: 8.30am**

**Return time: 2.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: \$65.00**

A tour to the Cu Chi Tunnels offers a fascinating glimpse into Vietnam's history and the ingenuity of the Viet Cong during the Vietnam War. Located in the Cu Chi District of Ho Chi Minh City, this extensive network of underground tunnels stretches over 120 kms and served as a crucial military base and communication route.

During the tour, you'll learn about the history and significance of the tunnels, which were originally built in the 1940s to evade French colonial forces and later expanded during the Vietnam War. The tunnels include living areas, storage facilities, weapon caches, hospitals, command centre and trapdoors for surprise attacks.

You will have the opportunity to crawl through the tunnels, experiencing firsthand the tight and narrow spaces that the Viet Cong soldiers navigated.

Note: return transportation is by coach in both directions. Note, the travel time is approx. 2 hours in each direction and is dependent on traffic conditions.

**TOUR 6a: CU CHI TUNNELS with one way speedboat transfer****Date: Wednesday 21 May****Depart time: 8.45am****Return time: 1.00pm****Tour Grade: 2****Price: \$210.00 per person**

As per previous tour description, except you get to beat the traffic and return to HCMC by private speed boat for a one-hour ride.

**TOUR 7: MEKONG DELTA TOUR INCL LUNCH****Date: Wednesday 21 May****Depart time: 9.00am****Return time: 4.00pm****Tour Grade: 2****Price: \$125.00 per person**

Nestled within the heart of the Mekong Delta, Ben Tre has emerged as a captivating destination in its own right. This peaceful retreat offers a myriad of charming surprises beyond its lush vegetation, winding canals, and enchanting smiles.

After an approx. 2 hour drive from Saigon, you will embark on a boat trip along the Mekong Delta river, drifting through a vast network of canals and waterways. During the tour, you will visit various local villages and workshops along the river, where you can see traditional crafts and local life up close. Witness the age-old traditional techniques of brick and grass mat making and observe how various products are skilfully extracted from coconuts.

For lunch, you'll enjoy a delicious meal featuring local specialties, such as the famous Elephant Ear Fish, served at an ancient house in the area. This meal provides a taste of the rich culinary heritage of the Mekong Delta.

**PHNOM PENH TOURS****TOUR 1: SILK ISLAND VESPA TOUR****Date: Friday 23 May****Depart time: 12.00pm****Return time: 4.30pm****Tour Grade: 2****Price: \$135.00**

Head out of the city on a Vespa, accompanied by an experienced driver. After a scenic ride, you will board the ferry to Silk Island.

Once on the island, get ready for an exciting adventure through the countryside, where you will see farming villages, a local market and tofu skin production sites. Visit the Buddhist temple of Phnom Penh, offering a glimpse into local religious practices. Enjoy breathtaking views of the rural landscape, allowing you to experience the authentic Cambodian way of life.

The tour also includes a visit to silk weaving workshops, where local villagers will share their knowledge of this ancient craft that has been passed down through generations. This is a unique opportunity to learn about the history and cultural significance of silk weaving in Cambodia.

Expect to return to Phnom Penh around 4:30pm, after an unforgettable day of exploration.



## **TOUR 2: HALF DAY ROYAL PALACE, SILVER PAGODA & WAT PHNOM**

**Date: Friday 23 May**

**Depart time: 12.30pm**

**Return time: 3.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: \$70.00**

A tour of Phnom Penh's Royal Palace is a journey through Cambodia's rich history and architectural splendour. The French built Royal Palace, with its gilded roofs and manicured gardens, serves as the official residence of the King of Cambodia. Among various buildings within the walls of the palace, the intricate Throne Hall ranks as the most important. This Khmer-style building was erected only in 1917 and is used only on special occasions.

The Silver Pagoda (or the temple of the Emerald Buddha), formerly a wooden building, was rebuilt in 1962 in concrete. It is renowned for its floor covered with over 5,000 silver tiles, each weighing 1 kilo, and a life-sized gold Buddha adorned with 2,086 diamonds. The pagoda, also known as Wat Preah Keo, houses many national treasures, including a revered Emerald Buddha said to be made of Baccarat crystal.

Just a short distance away, Wat Phnom stands majestically atop a hill, offering a serene retreat from the bustling city. This historic Buddhist temple, founded in the 14th century, is steeped in legend and provides a peaceful atmosphere for reflection and exploration. Together, these sites offer a captivating glimpse into Cambodia's cultural and spiritual heritage.

Note: visitors visiting the Royal Palace and Silver Pagoda should wear clothes that cover the knee and shoulders.

## **SIEM REAP TOURS**

### **TOUR 1: APOPO – HUMANITARIAN DEMINING**

**Date: Tuesday 27 May**

**Depart time: 11.30am**

**Return time: 1.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$50.00**

Travel by tuk-tuk to the APOPO humanitarian demining facility for a unique and educational experience. The visit begins with an introduction to the history of landmines in Cambodia and the crucial role APOPO plays in humanitarian demining. You'll learn about the devastating impact of landmines and how APOPO's efforts are helping to reclaim land for safe use. One of the highlights is meeting the HeroRATs, African Giant Pouched Rats trained to sniff out explosives. Watching these rats in action as they demonstrate their skills in a controlled environment is fascinating.

The tour includes interactive demonstrations where you can observe the rats detecting buried items, with trainers explaining the training process and how the rats are rewarded for their work. Educational videos and displays throughout the tour provide deeper insights into APOPO's mission and the broader context of landmine clearance in Cambodia.

Knowledgeable and passionate guides lead each tour, offering detailed explanations and answering any questions. Visiting the APOPO Visitor Centre is not only educational but also deeply inspiring, offering a unique perspective on the challenges faced by landmine-affected communities and the innovative solutions being implemented to address these issues.

## **TOUR 2: CAMBODIAN COOKING CLASS**

**Date: Tuesday 27 May**

**Depart time: 12.00pm**

**Return time: 3.00pm**

**Tour Grade: 1**

**Price: \$80.00**

Experience an authentic Cambodian cooking adventure at Lum Orng Farm. This hands-on cooking class immerses you in the art of traditional Khmer cuisine while exploring the organic farm where fresh ingredients are grown.

The experience includes:

- Welcome briefing to introduce you to the local ingredients and cooking techniques.
- Organic farm tour with the Chef, where you'll learn about the farm's sustainable practices and hand-pick fresh ingredients.
- Refreshments to enjoy during the class.
- Three-course meal, where you'll prepare and cook traditional Cambodian dishes under the guidance of expert chefs.
- Degustation of the dishes you've created, enjoying a true taste of Cambodia.
- A recipe book so you can recreate the dishes at home.
- A gift as a memento of this unique culinary experience.

This immersive class offers a perfect mix of cultural exploration, cooking, and delicious food in a peaceful, picturesque setting.

## **TOUR 3: QUAD BIKE ADVENTURE**

**Date: Tuesday 27 May**

**Depart time: 12.30pm**

**Return time: 3.30pm**

**Tour Grade: 2**

**Price: \$120.00**

A quad bike adventure in Siem Reap offers an exhilarating way to explore the stunning Cambodian countryside and experience the authentic and unique beauty of Cambodia which is hidden and unexposed to the world.

The journey begins with a safety briefing and a quick lesson on handling the quad bikes. Once you're geared up, you'll set off on a thrilling ride through the rural landscapes, passing by lush rice paddies, traditional stilt houses and bustling local markets. As you navigate the off-road trails, you'll have the chance to visit remote villages and interact with friendly locals, gaining insights into their daily lives and customs.

Whether you're an experienced rider or a beginner, the quad bike adventure is designed to be accessible and enjoyable for all skill levels. It's a perfect blend of adrenaline, exploration, and cultural immersion, making it a must-do activity when visiting Siem Reap.

### **NOTE:**

When booking tours you must make your own decision regarding your physical capacity.

Please let us know in advance if you have problems with boarding coaches, walking or any other problems. Some excursions involve a fair amount of walking or activity. The following coding system has been used to assist you with this:

- **Tour Grade 1** – Easy - Short walking/touring distances
- **Tour Grade 2** – Moderate - Long walking/touring distances
- **Tour Grade 3** – Difficult - Walking longer distances or extra exertion