

## Vietnam & Laos: Homestays & Houseboats - AVSC

20 days: Ho Chi Minh City to Chiang Mai

### What's Included

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- Your G for Good Moment: Oodles of Noodles, Hoi An
- Your G for Good Moment: Mekong River Homestay & Baci Ceremony, Muang Pakbèng
- Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group
- Your Discover Moment: Ho Chi Minh City
- Your Discover Moment: Luang Prabang
- Halong Bay boat cruise with lunch
- Slow boat on the Mekong
- Temples of Luang Prabang
- Witness the giving of alms (Luang Prabang)
- Orientation walk around Hanoi's Old Quarter
- Three street food crawls in different cities
- Internal flight
- All transport between destinations and to/from included activities

The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and G Adventures. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

**VERY IMPORTANT:** Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

**VALIDITY:** Valid for all trips departing March 7th, 2016 - July 18th, 2017

### Itinerary

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**NOTE:** Accommodations vary per departure and are subject to change until tour start date; they are not final and should be used as examples only. Travellers may login to the G Adventures App to view accommodations specific to their departure.

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#### Day 1 Ho Chi Minh City

Arrive at any time.

Welcome to Ho Chi Minh City. Once the capital of South Vietnam, this sprawling metropolis is now the country's commercial centre.

Today is arrival day, so there are no activities planned. Relax, explore the city, and adjust to the frenetic pace and humid heat of Ho Chi Minh City.

Most nationalities require a visa to enter Vietnam. Please check with your travel agent or local Vietnamese Embassy regarding requirements.

Please note that this tour combines with other G Adventures tours. As such, the staff and some travel companions on your tour may have previously been traveling together with G Adventures, prior to Day 1 of your tour. Likewise, some staff and travel companions may be continuing together on another G Adventures tour, after your trip concludes.

#### **Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group**

Your opportunity to meet your CEO and fellow travellers, and learn more about your tour. Opt to join the group for a local meal afterwards. Don't forget to see the notice in the lobby (or ask reception) for the official time and place to meet up with the group.

**Accommodation**  
**Hoang Ngan Hotel (or similar)**  
Hotel

## **Day 2 Ho Chi Minh City/Nha Trang**

Discover the energy of Vietnam's biggest city on a CEO-led orientation walk and continue exploring with free time. Overnight train to Nha Trang.

During January/February, Tết (the Vietnamese Lunar New Year) sees millions of Vietnamese commute to be with their families and celebrate. While this is a fascinating time to travel through Vietnam, availability of transport may mean that we will replace the overnight train with an overnight bus.

### **Orientation With CEO**

30m-1h

Enjoy a brief walk with your CEO. He/she will give you some tips on finding things like supermarkets, main squares, and ATMs. For more specific or in-depth information, an official guided tour is recommended.

### **Basic Overnight Train (beds)**

Ho Chi Minh City – Nha Trang 10h-11h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

### **Your Discover Moment**

Ho Chi Minh City Full Day

There's plenty to see and do in Ho Chi Minh City, and we wanted to make sure that you had some time to take it all in. Feel free to relax or try optional activities like visiting the War Remnants Museum, checking out the Reunification Palace, and spending time at Thien Hau Pagoda. Your CEO has more ideas if you need them. Just ask!

### **Optional Activities - Day 2**

#### **War Remnants Museum Visit**

Ho Chi Minh City – Hanoi

2USD per person

Visit the War Remnants Museum, a gut-wrenching but worthwhile experience that includes three storeys of exhibits and military hardware. Learn about the devastation that occurred in Saigon during the Vietnam War, a period that greatly contrasts the joy and liveliness of the Vietnamese people today.

#### **Cu Chi Tunnels Guided Tour**

Củ Chi

23-27USD per person

Take a guided tour of the Cu Chi Tunnels, a complex network of tunnels that the Viet Cong lived in to protect themselves from opposing forces during the Vietnam War. Try crawling through some of the tunnels (if you're not claustrophobic). These tunnels stored ammunition, had underground hospitals, and served as a hidden base for attacking allied forces.

#### **Ben Thanh Market**

Ho Chi Minh City

Wander this bustling market for more insight into Ho Chi Minh City. Pick up souvenirs, sample local cuisine, and experience local living. Learn a little history along the way; Ben Thanh started as a cluster of street vendors selling wares by the Saigon River, and was formalized into a true market in 1859.

#### **Cholon Visit**

Ho Chi Minh City

Take in the busy rhythm of daily life in Cholon, the Chinatown of Ho Chi Minh City. Tour the area full of teahouses, pagodas, and people, and learn a little more about the unique culture within the city.

#### **Ho Chi Minh City Cyclo Tour**

Ho Chi Minh City

10USD per person

Take a city tour on a cyclo (cycle rickshaw) – a great way to absorb the sights, sounds, and smells of Ho Chi Minh City while keeping your hands free for that camera action.

#### **Dam Sen Water Park Visit**

Ho Chi Minh City

4USD per person

Get away from the hustle and bustle of Ho Chi Minh City at this nearby water park. A lush setting and refreshing water make Dam Sen the perfect place for the whole family to cool off and have some fun—splash around or take a ride down one of the slides.

### **Reunification Palace Visit**

Ho Chi Minh City

2USD per person

Wander the historic halls of the Reunification Palace (Independence Palace), a landmark in Ho Chi Minh City. This former home of the South Vietnamese president during the Vietnam War became the location of the end of the war when a North Vietnamese tank pushed through the palace gates on April 30, 1975.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Accommodation**

### **Ha Thanh Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 3 Nha Trang**

Arrive in Nha Trang in the morning with plenty of time to explore local shops and markets, relax on the beach or visit nearby historical sites.

Optional activities in Nha Trang include a boat trip to nearby islands for some snorkelling or, perhaps, a fun-filled all-day beach party.

### **Free Time**

Nha Trang Full Day

Spend your free time in this scenic resort town any way you want – go for a spa treatment, cycle around the city or just kick back and relax on a white sand beach.

### **Optional Activities - Day 3**

#### **Snorkelling**

Nha Trang

Book a snorkelling day trip near one of the local tropical islands. Grab a snorkel and explore Nha Trang Bay's underwater world.

### **Nha Trang Boat Tour and Snorkelling**

Nha Trang

29USD per person

Board a boat in the morning at Nha Trang's harbour for hours of fun. Begin with a visit to an island fishing village to take in daily life by foot, then take a ride in a basket boat. Afterwards, go for a swim or snorkel. Relax on the beach before heading back to Nha Trang.

### **Mud Bath Visit**

Nha Trang

20USD per person

Take a relaxing dip in the therapeutic mud baths of Nha Trang. Thought to possess healing properties, the mud baths are the perfect place to unwind.

### **Accommodation**

### **Sai Gon Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 4 Nha Trang/Da Nang**

Free time in Nha Trang. Overnight train to Hoi An.

In the evening, take an overnight train to Da Nang, then transfer to Hoi An.

During January/February, Tết (the Vietnamese Lunar New Year) sees millions of Vietnamese commute to be with their families and celebrate. While this is a fascinating time to travel through Vietnam, availability of transport may mean that we will replace the overnight train with an overnight bus.

### **Free Time**

Nha Trang

Spend your free time in this seaside resort town any way you want – go for a spa treatment, cycle around the city or just kick back on a white sand beach.

### **Basic Overnight Train (beds)**

Nha Trang – Da Nang 9h-10h

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

### **Optional Activities - Day 4**

#### **Snorkelling**

Nha Trang

Book a snorkelling day trip near one of the local tropical islands. Grab a snorkel and explore Nha Trang Bay's underwater world.

## **Nha Trang Boat Tour and Snorkelling**

Nha Trang

29USD per person

Board a boat in the morning at Nha Trang's harbour for hours of fun. Begin with a visit to an island fishing village to take in daily life by foot, then take a ride in a basket boat. Afterwards, go for a swim or snorkel. Relax on the beach before heading back to Nha Trang.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

## **Day 5 Da Nang/Hoi An**

Get your bearings with an orientation walk before free time in the afternoon. Go on an evening street food crawl with the group and CEO to get to know more about the delicious local specialties. Opt to take a cooking class, cycle to the beach, visit a tailor, or explore the old town.

From Danang, it is only a short drive to the picturesque port town of Hoi An. Once known as Faifo, it was an important trading town with strong south Chinese influence and connections.

### **Private Vehicle**

Da Nang – Hoi An 45m-1h28km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Hoi An Orientation Walk**

Hoi An

Join your CEO on a stroll through the winding streets of Hoi An's Old Town and spot Chinese assembly halls, historic homes, and well-preserved pagodas along the way. (Entrance fee to Hoi An's Old Town is not included)

### **Free Time**

Hoi An Afternoon

Get out and explore this beautiful city.

### **Street Food Crawl**

Bring your appetite and your wallet. The CEO will bring the group to the best spots to eat and teach everyone about the local street food. Yum!

## **Optional Activities - Day 5**

### **Tailor Shops**

Hoi An

Go home with some new (handmade!) clothes from one of Hoi An's famous tailor shops. Walk the streets lined with hundreds of local shops that turn out gorgeous suits, dresses, winter coats, shoes, purses – almost anything – in a day's time to create next season's wardrobe.

### **Cua Dai Beach**

Hoi An

Play in the surf at Cua Dai beach about 4km (2.5 mi) away from the Old Town. Make your own picnic of local food and rest under one of the palm trees lining the shore.

### **Accommodation**

#### **Bach Dang Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

## **Day 6 Hoi An**

Enjoy a noodle-making demonstration and local lunch at the G Adventures-supported Oodles of Noodles Project. Later, opt to take a cooking class, cycle to the beach, visit a tailor, or explore the old town with free time.

### **Your G for Good Moment: Oodles of Noodles**

Try some of the oodles of noodles (more than 26 types!) available in the city in this tasty cooking class. Run by our G for Good partners, STREETS International, this class was developed exclusively for G Adventures. Former street youth that are part of this hospitality training program, will help you prepare and cook a number of different types of noodles. This program helps these youth practice their English, increasing their skill-set and opportunities available to them in the tourism industry. Enjoy your yummy creations while learning more about the local cuisine and this initiative which empowers street youth through skills and employment training.

### **Free Time**

Hoi An Afternoon

Enjoy some free time in Hoi An any way you want. Check out the beach, take in some local culture or purchase some custom-made clothing from one of the talented tailors in town.

## **Optional Activities - Day 6**

### **Hoi An Walking Tour**

Hoi An 2h-3h

Stroll through the narrow winding streets of Hoi An's old town to see the Chinese assembly halls, ancestral homes, and well-preserved pagodas. Opt to stop for lunch and sample delicious local delicacies and fusion food at one of the restaurants for which Hoi An is becoming famous.

### **Tailor Shops**

Hoi An

Go home with some new (handmade!) clothes from one of Hoi An's famous tailor shops. Walk the streets lined with hundreds of local shops that turn out gorgeous suits, dresses, winter coats, shoes, purses – almost anything – in a day's time to create next season's wardrobe.

### **Hoi An Bike and Boat Tour**

Hoi An

Enjoy a peaceful exploration of the villages around Hoi An, cycling through rice paddies and along narrow country lanes. Take advantage of this tour – it includes a boat trip through the water palm forest and a visit to the farming village of Tra Que.

### **Thu Bon River Boat Trip**

Hoi An

12USD per person

The Thu Bon River plays an important part in Hoi An's history and culture. Take a trip down the Thu Bon by river boat for an alternative tour of the city.

### **Cua Dai Beach**

Hoi An

Play in the surf at Cua Dai beach about 4km (2.5 mi) away from the Old Town. Make your own picnic of local food and rest under one of the palm trees lining the shore.

### **Hoi An Cooking Class**

Hoi An

30USD per person

Take a cooking class to learn more about Vietnamese food and its distinct flavours. Tour the local market to buy fresh ingredients before preparing some popular regional dishes. Enjoy your creations when you're done!

### **Mỹ Sơn Excursion**

Mỹ Sơn

30USD per person

Travel approximately one hour from Hoi An to arrive at Mỹ Sơn. Tour these Hindu temples built between the fourth and 14th centuries; the site is widely accepted as one of the most important Hindu temple complexes in Southeast Asia. Learn about the architectural style and history of a site that's often compared to Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Bagan in Burma. Please note this optional activity is a half-day and includes a guide, transportation, the entrance fee, and lunch.

### **Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **Bach Dang Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 7 Hoi An/Huế**

Continue the journey north to the city of Hue. Opt to visit the Royal Citadel and tombs, take a Perfume River cruise or tour the countryside by motorbike.

### **Private Vehicle**

Hoi An – Huế 4h137km

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Free Time**

Huế Afternoon

Enjoy your free time in Hue any way you want. Shop, eat, wander or relax - whatever suits your fancy.

### **Optional Activities - Day 7**

#### **Imperial Citadel Tour**

Huế

7USD per person

Tour this one-time capital city and UNESCO World Heritage site. See the walled fortress and former palace, which has many palaces, gateways, courtyards, and gardens to explore. The Forbidden Purple City (modelled on China's Forbidden City) inside the citadel was once home to the imperial family and was significantly damaged during the Vietnam War.

### **Hue City Tour**

Huế

Take a tour of this imperial city to see the Thiên Mụ Buddhist pagoda, the tallest religious building in the country, the Japanese bridge, and the tombs of the emperors. Visit the Dong Ba Markets for local specialties such as banh khoai (savory pancakes) and banh bot loc boc tom thit (thin rice paper filled with meat and shrimp).

### **Perfume River Cruise**

Huế

10USD per person

Enjoy this scenic evening cruise down the Perfume River. Shoot some memorable photographs and, perhaps, enjoy a nice cool breeze off the water.

### **Tien Mu Pagoda Visit**

Huế

Visit Tien Mu, one of the tallest and, perhaps, most elegant pagodas in Vietnam, at seven storeys high. Take a step back in time touring this historic temple - built more than 400 years ago along the north shore of the Perfume River, it has been the site of many political protests.

### **Royal Tombs Entry**

Huế

5USD per person

Visit the Royal Tombs along the Perfume River in Hue. Embracing the concept of Feng Shui, these tombs are extremely ornate and provide fantastic insight into the lives of the former rulers.

### **Cycling**

Huế

10USD per person

Take to two wheels to see a true highlight of Hue - the countryside. See rural Vietnam, its villages, and cottage industries too.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **DMZ Hostel (or similar)**

Hostel

The spot in Hue where all travellers come to meet. Come for the vibes and stay for the pizza and beers. Super close to the river and situated between tons of shops, bars, and restaurants, this spot has something for everyone. Accommodations at this hostel are multi-share.

### **Day 8 Huế/Hanoi**

Free time in Hue. Overnight train to Hanoi.

### **Free Time**

Huế Full Day

Enjoy your free time in Hue any way you want. Shop, eat, wander or rest - whatever suits your fancy.

### **Basic Overnight Train (beds)**

Huế - Hanoi 14h-15h 673km

Experience overnight travel like a local. Sit back and get some well-earned (and likely much-needed) rest en route to your next stop.

### **Optional Activities - Day 8**

#### **Imperial Citadel Tour**

Huế

7USD per person

Tour this one-time capital city and UNESCO World Heritage site. See the walled fortress and former palace, which has many palaces, gateways, courtyards, and gardens to explore. The Forbidden Purple City (modelled on China's Forbidden City) inside the citadel was once home to the imperial family and was significantly damaged during the Vietnam War.

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### **Perfume River Cruise**

Huế

10USD per person

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### **Tien Mu Pagoda Visit**

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### **Cycling**

Huế

10USD per person

Take to two wheels to see a true highlight of Hue – the countryside. See rural Vietnam, its villages, and cottage industries too.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Day 9 Hanoi/Ha Long**

Visit Halong Bay for a seafood lunch cruise and cave visit.

Arrive early morning to bustling Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam. Transfer to a private bus and head to the beautiful and famous Halong Bay.

### **Private Vehicle**

Hanoi – Ha Long 4h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Hạ Long Bay Junk Boat Trip**

Hạ Long Bay

Come aboard a sailing junk to cruise past thousands of limestone islands and karsts that rise from the waters of Halong Bay. See the intricate caves and beauty of the islands up close. Enjoy a seafood lunch and a visit to one of the island's caves before transferring to the mainland for our overnight stay.

On rare occasion Halong Bay is closed to tourist vessels by the government authorities due to extreme weather conditions. Should this occur, an alternate activity will be provided.

### **Optional Activities - Day 9**

#### **Kayaking**

Hạ Long Bay 1h-2h

10USD per person

Transfer from boat to kayak in this guided water tour, giving you the chance to get even closer to the stunning natural surroundings.

### **Meals included: Lunch**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **Halong Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 10 Ha Long/Hanoi**

Relax and enjoy the scenery on the ride to Hanoi. Get to know the big city with an orientation walk through the Old Quarter. Opt to see Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, the Temple of Literature, and the Hoa Lo Prison, or shop in the Old Quarter.

### **Shared Van**

Hạ Long Bay – Hanoi 4h

Climb aboard and make friends with your seatmate en route to the next stop.

### **Old Quarter Orientation Walk**

Hanoi

Take an orientation walk through Hanoi's Old Quarter, a maze of streets, each one traditionally devoted to a different product or industry. Each street is named after the trade practiced on that street for several generations; it's an interesting glimpse into the life of a Hanoian in one of the oldest parts of town. Need a rest? Stop at Bia Hoi corner and pull up a plastic stool. Drink the local brew with the locals and make new friends.

### **Free Time**

Hanoi Afternoon

Enjoy free time in the afternoon to wander through the city.

### **Optional Activities - Day 10**

### **Hoan Kiem Lake Walk**

Hanoi

Take a break from city strolling and wander down by Hoan Kiem Lake. Walk along the water's vibrant shoreline for some prime people watching. See if you can spot one of the famous 100-year-old turtles, which may still live in the popular lake.

### **Tran Quoc Pagoda Visit**

Hanoi

Visit one of the oldest pagodas in Vietnam located on the eastern shore of Tay Ho. Learn about Tran Quoc's history from the 17th-century stela found on site. View it later in the day, if you can – the tall structure is striking against the setting sun.

### **Hanoi Foodie Culture Tour**

Hanoi 1-2km

Indulge your inner foodie with a street food tour through bustling Hanoi. Follow your guide through the back streets and markets of the city's old quarter, sampling local fare along the way. Mingle with city natives and experienced street food artists alike, as you taste a variety of Hanoi faves like "nem ran" and "banh goi." Stop at a streetside bar to savour a draught beer like Hanoians do. Cap off the tour at the Hanoi Food Culture restaurant, a G Values Fund Project, and try the city's signature specialty coffee.

### **Army Museum**

Hanoi 1h-2h

2USD per person

Visit Vietnam's famous Army Museum to learn more about the nation's struggle for independence. With exhibits featuring artifacts from China, France and the United States, this museum has a treasure trove of information to illustrate the country's spirit and determination.

### **Hoa Lo Prison Entry**

Hanoi 1h-2h

1.50USD per person

Independently tour the museum of Hoa Lo Prison, referred to as Hanoi Hilton by American prisoners, to learn more about the Vietnam War.

### **Temple of Literature Entry**

Hanoi 1h-2h

2USD per person

Visit this sprawling temple built to honour Confucius, sages, and scholars. Dedicated to learning, it housed the country's first university in 1076. Independently explore its five courtyards, containing various gates, altars, sanctuaries, shrines, the stelae of doctors, and the Well of Heavenly Clarity.

### **Vietnamese Women's Museum**

Hanoi

1.50USD per person

The Vietnamese Women's Museum highlights the significant contributions made by women in Vietnam. Take in an independent tour of the museum to gain an in-depth knowledge of women's role in Vietnamese culture, with a key focus on family, history and fashion.

### **Ho Chi Minh House on Stilts and Presidential Palace**

Hanoi 1h-2h

2USD per person

Tour the Presidential Palace grounds and learn more about Vietnam's former president Ho Chi Minh. After refusing to live in such opulent accommodations, he built a traditional Vietnamese stilt-house and garden on the grounds next to the palace.

### **Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum Visit**

Hanoi

Tour the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum built in the square where Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence in 1945. Get in line to tour the grounds; queues of visitors come to pay their respects daily.

### **Thăng Long Water Puppet Theatre Performance**

Hanoi

200000VND per person

Watch a traditional Vietnamese water puppet show with beautiful live music and intricate puppets dancing in a water stage. The price listed above is for a VIP seat.

### **Fine Arts Museum**

Hanoi

2USD per person

Wander through the Fine Arts Museum, where you'll find over 20,000 works of art housed in a former French colonial boarding school. Stand before some of Vietnam's National Treasures, immerse yourself in



traditional folk art, find sculptures inspired by deities or admire intricate lacquer and silk paintings you won't find anywhere else.

### **Museum of Ethnology Visit**

Hanoi – Luang Prabang

2None per person

Learn about Vietnam's various ethnic groups on this visit to the Museum of Ethnology – considered to be the finest modern museum in Vietnam.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Accommodation**

### **Hong Ngoc Tonkin (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 11 Hanoi**

Spend time exploring Hanoi. Included street food crawl.

### **Free Time**

Hanoi Full Day

Get out and explore Hanoi.

### **Street Food Crawl**

30m-2h

Bring your appetite and your wallet. The CEO will bring the group to the best spots to eat and teach everyone about the local street food. Yum!

### **Optional Activities - Day 11**

### **Tran Quoc Pagoda Visit**

Hanoi

Visit one of the oldest pagodas in Vietnam located on the eastern shore of Tay Ho. Learn about Tran Quoc's history from the 17th-century stela found on site. View it later in the day, if you can – the tall structure is striking against the setting sun.

### **Temple of Literature (Văn Miếu) Visit**

Hanoi

Visit this sprawling temple built to honour Confucius, sages, and scholars. Dedicated to learning, it housed the country's first university in 1076. Explore its five courtyards, containing various gates, altars, sanctuaries, shrines, the stelae of doctors, and the Well of Heavenly Clarity.

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### **Hoan Kiem Lake Walk**

Hanoi

Take a break from city strolling and wander down by Hoan Kiem Lake. Walk along the water's vibrant shoreline for some prime people watching. See if you can spot one of the famous 100-year-old turtles, which may still live in the popular lake.

### **Thăng Long Water Puppet Theatre Performance**

Hanoi

200000VND per person

Watch a traditional Vietnamese water puppet show with beautiful live music and intricate puppets dancing in a water stage. The price listed above is for a VIP seat.

### **Optional Welcome Meeting for Travellers on Combos**

You may be a seasoned pro at group travel by now, but there will likely be some new travellers joining the group. Sit in on the welcome meeting to meet the newest members of your group and learn about the next leg of your tour.

### **Accommodation**

### **Hong Ngoc Tonkin (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 12 Hanoi/Vientiane**

A short flight brings the group to the capital city of Laos. Opt to visit temples, see the golden stupa of That Luang, or scour the markets.

Explore a bit of Hanoi in the morning before an afternoon flight to Vientiane, the capital of Laos. There is a wealth of cultural delights to discover - on foot, by bicycle or, for the less energetic, by tuk-tuk.

Visit Laos' most important national monument, Phat That Luang, or meander down the dusty riverside tracks to find villages full of friendly children, dogs and chickens. A visit to Vientiane's vibrant, colourful morning market (which incidentally is open all day!) is worthwhile, to find plenty of local treasures. A great way to round off the day is to enjoy a spectacular sunset over the Mekong.

### **Free Time**

Hanoi Morning

Explore Hanoi on foot, by bicycle or by tuk-tuk.

### **Plane**

Noi Bai International Airport – Wattay International Airport 1h15m

Look! Up in the sky! It's a bird! It's a plane! It's... yup, it is a plane, actually.

### **Free Time**

Vientiane Afternoon

Set out and explore the capital of Laos.

### **Optional Activities - Day 12**

#### **Wat Pha That Luang Visit**

Vientiane

1USD per person

See Laos' national symbol and most important sacred monument, Pha That Luang (Great Stupa), completely covered in gold leaf. Every November, devoted Buddhists come here to celebrate Vientiane's most important festival, Bun That Luang, with parades, music, and religious ceremonies.

#### **National Museum Visit**

Vientiane

4USD per person

Learn about the history, culture, and people of Laos at the National Museum, including the story of the Pathet Lao. See exhibits containing ancient items ranging from dinosaur bones to early Khmer sculptures.

#### **Wat Sisaket Visit**

Vientiane

1USD per person

Visit one of Vientiane's oldest and most fascinating temples featuring a cloister wall filled with thousands of Buddha images.

#### **Buddha Park**

Vientiane

1USD per person

Travel approximately half an hour from the city to visit Vientiane's famous Buddha Park, or Xieng Khuan as it is otherwise known. Marvel at the scale and detail of the hundreds of religious statues that inhabit the park, including a 40 metre high statue of Buddha. Please note that transportation to Buddha Park will cost an additional \$50.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

#### **Accommodation**

#### **Vientiane SP (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 13 Vientiane/Vang Vieng**

Enjoy the beautiful limestone karsts surrounding Vang Vieng. Free time to hike, bike, swim or go caving.

A picturesque drive north takes us to beautiful Vang Vieng. This quiet town is set along the Nam Song river amidst rice fields and limestone karsts.

### **Private Vehicle**

Vientiane – Vang Vieng 3h-4h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Free Time**

Vang Vieng Afternoon

Set off and explore the beautiful Vang Vieng area, or relax to your heart's content.

### **Optional Activities - Day 13**

#### **Caving**

Vang Vieng

Explore some of the many caves in the area. Some have lagoons for tubing in the dark or smooth terrain perfect for walking through. Ask your CEO for recommendations on which cave to visit for the best time.

### **Hiking**

Vang Vieng

Set off along the banks of the river to explore nearby caves, countryside and meet local villagers to find out more about their way of life.

### **Swimming**

Vang Vieng

Head to the river for a dip. There are also tube rentals available in the area if you'd rather spend some time floating around.

### **Bike Rental**

Vang Vieng

2USD per person

Rent a bike and explore the countryside.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Accommodation**

### **Vilayvong Guesthouse (or similar)**

Guesthouse

## **Day 14 Vang Vieng**

Free time to explore Vang Vieng. Opt to explore some of the caves by bicycle or take an invigorating walk. In the evening, soak in the natural beauty of the countryside as the sun sets over the river.

Opt to pre-book the "Vang Vieng Adrenaline Bundle" on the checkout page ahead of time, to include this optional on your tour.

### **Free Time**

Vang Vieng Full Day

Set off and explore the beautiful Vang Vieng area, or relax to your heart's content.

## **Optional Activities - Day 14**

### **Hiking**

Vang Vieng

Set off along the banks of the river to explore nearby caves, countryside and meet local villagers to find out more about their way of life.

### **Vang Vieng Adrenaline Bundle**

Vang Vieng

Head North of Vang Vieng where you'll grab a kayak and depart downstream on the NamSong river. Passing greenery, mountain karst, and small rapids, you'll arrive at the Tham None cave. Adventure through the cave to the other side of the mountain where you will enjoy lunch before continuing on towards Vang Vieng. The last stop will be at the infamous Blue Lagoon; swim or hang out along the banks after an afternoon of adventure before heading back to the town.

### **Bike Rental**

Vang Vieng

2USD per person

Rent a bike and explore the countryside.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Accommodation**

### **Vilayvong Guesthouse (or similar)**

Guesthouse

## **Day 15 Vang Vieng/Luang Prabang**

This morning travel from Vang Vieng to Luang Prabang.

### **Private Vehicle**

Vang Vieng – Luang Prabang 7h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Meals included: Breakfast**

### **Accommodation**

### **Treasure Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

## **Day 16 Luang Prabang**

Witness the giving of alms to the Buddhist monks and visit the night market. Opt to take a cooking class, visit temples or cool off at Kuang Si Waterfalls.

Traditional Laotian culture is to give daily alms to monks. Monks are only allowed to eat food which has been donated to them before noon. On one of your mornings here, you may decide to rise with the sun, and watch one of the most important religious ceremonies in Laos. This is simply an unforgettable Southeast Asian experience.

### **Your Discover Moment**

Luang Prabang Full Day

There's plenty to see and do in Luang Prabang, and we wanted to make sure that you had some time to take it all in. Feel free to relax or try optional activities like learning about Laotian cuisine with a cooking class, getting a massage, and cycling around town.

### **Optional Activities - Day 16**

#### **Royal Palace Museum Visit**

Luang Prabang

5USD per person

The ornate rooms of this royal palace-turned-museum house the country's crown jewels, many religious artifacts, and a 50kg (110 lb) Buddha, cast of gold, silver and bronze. Gifts from visiting heads of state are on display, as are the beautiful silk screens crafted by the Queen.

#### **Wat Xien Thong Visit**

Luang Prabang

2.50USD per person

Once a royal temple where Kings were crowned, the importance of this 16th-century Buddhist temple as a religious monastery is not lost on visitors. Wat Xieng Thong stands resplendent among shrines, pavilions, chapels, towers and gardens, and its gilded wooden doors, mosaics, and ceiling displays are representative of typical Laos art and craft.

#### **Phousi Temple Visit**

Luang Prabang

2.50USD per person

Climb more than 300 steps to the top of Mount Phou Si for a panoramic view of the sunset over Luang Prabang. Ornate Buddhist shrines dot the pathway up and the glistening seven-tiered golden pagoda of Wat Chom Si awaits at the summit.

#### **Wat Visoun Temples Visit**

Luang Prabang

2.50USD per person

Originally built in 1513 and still operational, Wat Visoun is Luang Prabang's oldest temple. Over the years invaders stole many of its priceless Buddha images, but this temple still offers some unusual architecture like the domed lotus flower stupa, designed by a royal and affectionately called "The Watermelon Stupa."

#### **Kuang Si Waterfalls Excursion**

Kuang Si Falls - Luang Prabang

2.50USD per person

Journey to this magnificent tiered waterfall, where relaxing is highly recommended. Opt for a dip in the turquoise waters and explore multiple picture-perfect pools, framed by the jungle landscape.

#### **Cooking Class**

Luang Prabang

35USD per person

Enjoy the sights and smells of fresh produce, local spices and exotic ingredients and learn the secrets of Laotian cuisine.

#### **Royal Ballet Theatre**

Luang Prabang

15USD per person

Enjoy a traditional performance at the Royal Ballet Theatre and learn more about Laotian culture through the art of dance.

#### **Ock Pop Tok Living Crafts Centre Visit**

Luang Prabang

8USD per person

Visit Ock Pop Tok "East Meets West" Living Crafts Centre on the banks of the Mekong River to learn from artisans about Laos handicrafts and the importance of woven textiles in Laos culture. Opt to enjoy a drink in the cafe.

### **Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre Entry**

Luang Prabang

4USD per person

Take an independent tour of the Traditional Arts and Ethnology Centre (TAEC) to learn about the traditional arts and cultures of Laos's many diverse ethnic groups. Shop in the TAEC Boutique for authentic village-made handicrafts and relax with a drink at the museum café.

**Meals included: Breakfast**

**Accommodation**

**Treasure Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 17 Luang Prabang/Muang Pakbèng**

Cruise the Mekong on a long houseboat before arriving at a village homestay for the night.

We board our boat for the two-day journey up the mighty Mekong River making our way to Chiang Khong.

### **Mekong River Slow Boat**

Luang Prabang – Muang Pakbèng 8h-10h

Enjoy the ride down the Mekong River on our private boat (it's pretty comfortable and spacious, and there's a toilet on board). Have some fruit, tea, and coffee (free of charge); water and soft drinks are available for purchase.

### **Your G for Good Moment: Mekong River Homestay & Baci Ceremony**

G Adventures and the Planeterra Foundation have worked with two communities in the Mekong River to help develop their homestay programs, providing a unique cultural experience for travellers and the local community.

Here you have the chance to stay overnight in a Mekong village to get a glimpse into rural daily life. Experience a traditional Baci Ceremony, typically held to celebrate weddings, the Lao New Year, a housewarming or the arrival of guests. A village elder (called "mor phon") will lead our group through the experience, calling on local deities and spirits through chanting, with foods such as sweets, eggs, and sticky rice presented during the ceremony. As the Baci Ceremony ends, a symbolic white thread will be tied around travellers' wrists - a tradition which bestows good luck upon those who visit the Mekong River.

**Meals included: Breakfast | Dinner**

**Accommodation**

**Homestay Pakbeng (or similar)**

Hotel

Accommodations at this property are multi-share.

### **Day 18 Muang Pakbèng/Chiang Khong**

Mekong River travel day. Cross into Thailand.

This morning we re-board our boat and continue our leisurely cruise along the river before arriving at the Laos/Thai border and crossing to Chiang Khong in the late afternoon.

### **Mekong River Slow Boat**

Muang Pakbèng – Ban Houayxay 8h-10h

Enjoy the ride down the Mekong on our private boat (it's pretty comfortable and spacious, and there's a toilet on board). Have some fruit, tea, and coffee (free of charge); water and soft drinks are available for purchase.

### **Border Crossing (Laos - Thailand)**

Ban Houayxay – Chiang Khong

Ready for a little more ink in your passport? Grab your bags and get ready to check another country off your bucket list.

**Meals included: Breakfast | Lunch**

**Accommodation**

**Nam Khong Guesthouse (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 19 Chiang Khong/Chiang Mai**

Drive to Chiang Mai. Opt to visit Doi Suthep temple, catch a Thai boxing match or grab a bargain at the famous night market.

Departing Chiang Khong after breakfast, we drive to Chiang Mai where you have the afternoon free to explore this fascinating city, once the capital of the Kingdom of Lan.

### **Private Vehicle**

Chiang Khong – Chiang Mai 6h-7h

Settle in and scan the scenery from the convenience of a private vehicle.

### **Free Time**

Chiang Mai Afternoon

Get out and explore this bustling city in northern Thailand.

### **Optional Activities - Day 19**

#### **Doi Suthep Temple Visit**

Doi Suthep – Chiang Mai

2USD per person

Visit Wat Phra That Doi Suthep, a golden Buddhist temple outside of Chiang Mai on the Mt Doi Suthep. Climb 300 steps to reach the temple and be rewarded with an unforgettable view. Admire the many Buddhist relics at this sacred temple and visit the white elephant shrine. Legend has it that the location of the temple was chosen after a white elephant carried a relic to the mountain and trumpeted three times before dying on the spot. Also, with a little luck, you may witness the chanting of the monks.

### **Massage**

Lay back and soothe aching muscles with a famous local massage. Affordable and amazing, don't miss out.

### **Muay Thai Fight**

Chiang Mai

Watch a round of Muay Thai -- it's a sport unique to Thailand that's gaining popularity around the world. Muay Thai has many of the same principles as kickboxing. Learn more about this engrossing sport with a visit to a match -- don't worry, you're not expected to pick up your gloves and fight.

### **Street Food Walk at Chiang Mai Night Market**

Chiang Mai

Pick up a souvenir at this shopper's paradise. Wander through the market to find music, food, and local artists selling handmade crafts.

### **Accommodation**

#### **Chiang Mai Gate Hotel (or similar)**

Hotel

### **Day 20 Chiang Mai**

Depart at any time.

## **What's Included**

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Your G for Good Moment: Oodles of Noodles, Hoi An

Your G for Good Moment: Mekong River Homestay & Baci Ceremony, Muang Pakbèng

Your Welcome Moment: Welcome Moment - Meet Your CEO and Group

Your Discover Moment: Ho Chi Minh City

Your Discover Moment: Luang Prabang. Halong Bay boat cruise with lunch. Slow boat on the Mekong.

Temples of Luang Prabang. Witness the giving of alms (Luang Prabang). Orientation walk around Hanoi's Old Quarter. Three street food crawls in different cities. Internal flight. All transport between destinations and to/from included activities.

## **Highlights**

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Explore vibrant cities, shop in quaint Hoi An, float among the karsts of Halong Bay, explore Phong Nha's underground cave and river network, discover sleepy Laos, cruise the mighty Mekong River, learn how to make noodles at a G Adventures-supported enterprise, spend the night at a local village homestay, visit the stunning temples of Luang Prabang, Sample local fare on a street food crawl through Hanoi

## **Dossier Disclaimer**

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The information in this trip details document has been compiled with care and is provided in good faith. However it is subject to change, and does not form part of the contract between the client and the operator. The itinerary featured is correct at time of printing. It may differ slightly to the one in the brochure. Occasionally our itineraries change as we make improvements that stem from past travellers, comments and our own research. Sometimes it can be a small change like adding an extra meal along the itinerary. Sometimes the change may result in us altering the tour for the coming year. Ultimately, our goal is to provide you with the most rewarding experience. Please note that our brochure is usually

released in November each year. If you have booked from the previous brochure you may find there have been some changes to the itinerary.

VERY IMPORTANT: Please ensure that you print a final copy of your Trip Details to review a couple of days prior to travel, in case there have been changes that affect your plans.

## Itinerary Disclaimer

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While it is our intention to adhere to the route described below, there is a certain amount of flexibility built into the itinerary and on occasion it may be necessary, or desirable to make alterations. The itinerary is brief, as we never know exactly where our journey will take us. Due to our style of travel and the regions we visit, travel can be unpredictable. The Trip Details document is a general guide to the tour and region and any mention of specific destinations or wildlife is by no means a guarantee that they will be visited or encountered. Aboard expedition trips visits to research stations depend on final permission.

Additionally, any travel times listed are approximations only and subject to vary due to local circumstances.

## Important Notes

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### 1. COMBO TRIP

Please note that this trip is a combination of multiple G Adventures tours. As such, the staff and/or particular vehicles operating your tour may change between tour segments. You may also expect some group members to join or leave the tour, between tour segments. Also note that in some major cities in Vietnam, many hotel rooms do not have windows.

### 2. EXTRAS

Looking to add to your experience? Check out our Extras! Specially designed for travellers with unique interests, Extras are optional add-ons to your G Adventures trip that make your adventure more you-centric. Extras must be booked prior to departure, please see details in our optional activities field and ask your sales GCO or travel agent about booking.

### 3. BORDER CROSSING

Ban Houayxay, Laos to Chiang Khong, Thailand - Laos to Thailand

### 4. WEIGHT RESTRICTION

There may be a weight restriction for the internal flight on this tour. Each passenger is allowed to carry one checked bag with a maximum weight of 20kg (44lbs). Additional bags or excess weight charges may apply. These charges are the responsibility of the passengers.

### 5. PROOF OF EXITING VIETNAM

Important thing to note for our travellers arriving into Vietnam, and travelling onwards with G Adventures to neighbouring counties (i.e. Cambodia & Laos). When you are checking onto your international flight heading to Vietnam, you will often be asked by airline ticket counter personnel to provide a proof of exit from Vietnam.

In respect to this requirement, we encourage our travellers to print out a copy of their tour vouchers, along with a PDF copy of their Tour Details from the webpage. These references, along with entry and exit details on travellers Vietnam visa should be sufficient information.

## Group Leader Description

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All G Adventures group trips are accompanied by one of our Chief Experience Officers (CEO). The aim of the CEO is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible. They will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the countries visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We also use local guides where we think more specific knowledge will add to the enjoyment of the places we are visiting- we think it's the best of both worlds.

## Group Size Notes

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Max 18, avg 12.

## Meals Included

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13 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 1 dinner

## Meals

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Eating is a big part of traveling. Travelling with G Adventures you experience the vast array of wonderful food that is available out in the world. Generally meals are not included in the trip price when there is a

choice of eating options, to give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat. It also gives you more budgeting flexibility, though generally food is cheap. Our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. There is no obligation to do this though. Your CEO will be able to suggest favourite restaurants during your trip. Included breakfasts will usually be asian style consisting of noodles or congee (rice porridge) or bread and eggs. Vegetarians will be able to find a range of different foods, although in some areas the choice maybe limited. While trekking in remote regions food is included, plentiful and made of fresh local ingredients. For all trips please refer to the meals included and budget information for included meals and meal budgets.

## **Transport**

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Local bus, air-con bus, train, walking, tuk tuk, local boat, junk boat, plane.

## **About our Transportation**

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Train travel in Vietnam is very basic and train cleanliness is often not a priority for train staff. Sleeper trains normally have 4 seats per compartment, which convert into sleeping bunks (two upper and two lower). A sheet, pillow and blanket are provided, although many people prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. At times, passengers of different genders may be required to share a sleeper train berth and/or share a compartment with people not travelling in your group.

Simple food is available on the train but many people like to stock up on freshly baked bread, cheese and fruit prior to departure. Water should also be bought before the journey.

Train journeys in Vietnam are an experience and allow you to get a real taste of Vietnam.

## **Local Flights**

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All local flights are included in the cost of your tour unless otherwise noted. It is important that we have your passport information at the time of booking in order to process these tickets. Internal flight tickets are issued locally and will be given to you prior to the flight departure.

## **Solo Travellers**

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We believe single travellers should not have to pay more to travel so our group trips are designed for shared accommodation and do not involve a single supplement. Single travellers joining group trips are paired in twin or multi-share accommodation with someone of the same sex for the duration of the trip. Some of our Independent trips are designed differently and single travellers on these itineraries must pay the single trip price.

## **Accommodation**

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Simple hotels (15 nts), sleeper trains (3 nts), local homestay (1 nt).

## **About Accommodation**

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A variety of styles of hotels/guest houses are used on this trip. In many instances they might not be like what you are used to back home as service and efficiency can vary. In some areas we stay in simple local guest houses in stunning locations - rooms are small and simple and there may only be shared toilet facilities and showers.

Multi-share Accommodation: Multi-share same-sex accommodation is used on this tour, as such, if you are travelling with someone of a different gender you will not be in the same room. For private accommodation please see tours in our Classic Travel Style.

## **Joining Hotel**

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For details of your joining hotel please refer to your tour voucher, G Account, the G Adventures App or contact your travel agent.

## **Joining Instructions**

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When arriving at Tan Son Nhat Intl Airport in Ho Chi Minh City you can get a metered taxi from just outside of the arrival hall. The taxis are lined up outside in an orderly queue and the fare is roughly 100,000 Dong (approx 7 USD) to get to your starting point hotel. DO NOT GO WITH TAXI TOUTS AS THEY WILL TRY TO RIP YOU OFF. The airport is only 7km from the downtown District 1 so taking taxis is easy and cheap if the meter is on.

If you have paid in advance for an arrival transfer, a G Adventures representative will be at the airport to meet you. There is a common scam at the airport for non-G Adventures' drivers to pretend they are working for the company. It is very important to confirm your name and booking number with your airport



transfer representative. If for any reason you are not met at the airport, please call our local support line. If you are unable to make contact for whatever reason, please make your way to the joining point hotel via taxi.

Please note that Day 1 is an arrival day and no activities have been planned for that day other than your welcome meeting in the evening, so you can arrive at any time.

A G Adventures Representative will organize a short meeting soon after arrival, during which you will meet other tour participants and receive information about general and specific aspects of the trip. A welcome note will be left for you in the hotel so you have all the necessary information regarding the meeting time. If you arrive late, s/he will leave you a message detailing what time and where you should meet the next morning.

## **Arrival Complications**

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We don't expect any problems, and nor should you, but if for any reason you are unable to commence your trip as scheduled, as soon as possible please contact your starting point hotel, requesting that you speak to or leave a message for your CEO (if you are not on a group tour please refer to the emergency contact details provided in this dossier). If you are unable to get in touch with your leader, please refer to our emergency contact details. If you have pre-booked an airport transfer and have not made contact with our representative within 30 minutes of clearing customs and immigration, we recommend that you make your own way to the Starting Point hotel, following the Joining Instructions. Please apply to your travel agent on your return for a refund of the transfer cost if this occurs.

## **Emergency Contact**

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Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call either the G Adventures Local Representative (if one is listed below) and then our G Adventures Local Office. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please leave a detailed message and contact information, so they may return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

### **AIRPORT TRANSFER**

If you have purchased an arrival through G Adventures or if an arrival transfer is included in the cost of your tour, please note that:

Your arrival transfer has been arranged based on flight information provided to us. If you are advised of a flight schedule change within 48 hours of your scheduled arrival time, we will do our best to rearrange your arrival transfer however we cannot guarantee this. If your arrival transfer does not arrive within 30 minutes after you have exited the arrivals area please take a taxi to your start point hotel.

If you are experiencing complications with your Ho Chi Minh City AIRPORT TRANSFER that was booked through G Adventures please call: +84 91 204 0262

### **EMERGENCY CONTACT NUMBERS**

G Adventures Office Bangkok, Thailand  
During Office hours (Weekdays, 9am-5pm Local Time)  
From outside Thailand: +66 2 508 8630  
From within Thailand: 02 508 8630

After hours emergency number  
From outside Thailand: +66 87 049 6074  
From within Thailand: 087 049 6074

G Adventures Local Representative (Vietnam)  
Ms.Nhung  
Emergency number: +84 91 204 0262

If you are unable for any reason to contact our local office, please call the numbers listed below which will connect you directly with our Sales team who will happily assist you. Hours of operation by region can be found [here](#).

Toll-free, North America only: 1 888 800 4100  
Calls from UK: 0344 272 0000  
Calls from Germany: 0800 365 1000  
Calls from Australia: 1 300 796 618  
Calls from New Zealand: 0800 333 307  
Outside North America, Australia, New Zealand, Germany and the UK: +1 416 260 0999

## What to Take

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What you need to bring depends on the trip you have chosen and the countries or regions you are planning to visit. We suggest that you pack as lightly as possible as you are expected to carry your own luggage. As a rule we try not to have to walk more than 15-20 minutes with your bags which is why we recommend keeping the weight of your bags between 10-15kg/22-30lb. Suitcases are not recommended for G Adventures trips! Most travellers carry a backpack or rolling bag of small to medium size (no XXL ones please!) as they need to fit under the beds when travelling on sleeper trains. You will also need a day pack/bag to carry water, cameras and other electronics like ipods and mobile phones. If your trip involves overnights in homestays, villages or camping then you usually have the opportunity to rent sleeping bags if need be instead of bringing them with you.

## Packing List

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Conservative Dress:

- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Documents:

- Flight info (required) (Printouts of e-tickets may be required at the border)
- Insurance info (required) (With photocopies)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Vouchers and pre-departure information (required)
- Visas or vaccination certificates (With photocopies)

Essentials:

- Toiletries (required) (Shampoo, bodywash, soap, etc.)
- Binoculars (optional)
- Camera (With extra memory cards and batteries)
- Cash, credit and debit cards
- Day pack (Used for daily excursions or short overnights)
- Ear plugs
- First-aid kit (should contain lip balm with sunscreen, sunscreen, whistle, Aspirin, Ibuprofen, bandaids/plasters, tape, anti-histamines, antibacterial gel/wipes, antiseptic cream, Imodium or similar tablets for mild cases of diarrhea, rehydration powder, water purification tablets or drops, insect repellent, sewing kit, extra prescription drugs you may be taking)
- Flashlight/torch (Headlamps are ideal)
- Fleece top/sweater
- Footwear
- Hat
- Locks for bags
- Long pants/jeans
- Moneybelt
- Outlet adapter
- Personal entertainment (Reading and writing materials, cards, music player, etc.)
- Reusable water bottle
- Shirts/t-shirts
- Sleepwear
- Small travel towel
- Sunglasses
- Swimwear
- Watch and alarm clock
- Waterproof backpack cover
- Windproof rain jacket

Warm Weather:

- Sandals/flip-flops
- Shorts/skirts (Longer shorts/skirts are recommended)
- Sturdy water shoes/sandals
- Sun hat/bandana
- Swimwear

Note: Please pack clothing for the season in which you will be travelling. From Nov-Feb weather can be cold, so please pack warm clothing. From May-Oct it is the wet season, so please bring waterproof clothing.

## Laundry

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Laundry facilities are offered by some of our hotels for a charge. There will be times when you may want to or have to do your own laundry so we suggest you bring non-polluting/biodegradable soap.

## Visas and Entry Requirements

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All countries require a valid passport (with a minimum 6 months validity). Contact your local embassy or consulate for the most up-to-date visa requirements, or see your travel agent. It is your own responsibility to have the correct travel documentation. Visa requirements for your trip will vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. We keep the following information up to date as far as possible, but rules do change and sometimes without warning. While we provide the following information in good faith, it is vital that you check the information yourself and understand that you are fully responsible for your own visa requirements.

Visa information specific to your destination and nationality can be found in our Important Pre-Departure Information page [here](#)

**THAILAND** - Most nationalities do not need a visa for Thailand for stays of 30 days or less but if you do they are available on arrival at Bangkok Airport. If staying in Thailand for more than 30 days, you will be required to obtain a tourist visa in advance. Only 15 day tourist visas are issued when entering Thailand overland.

**VIETNAM** - If you require a visa for Vietnam, they need to be arranged ahead of time (BEFORE your trip) as the processing time varies and they are not available upon arrival.

If you are entering Vietnam by land border, please apply for a regular visa for Vietnam. Many of the land borders we travel through do not accept the Vietnam E-Visa.

**LAOS** - Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx \$50. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. Please bring lots of visa photos with you.

## Detailed Trip Notes

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Border crossings  
Chiang Khong. Laos to Thailand

## Spending Money

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Every traveller is different and therefore spending money requirements will vary. Some travellers may drink more than others while other travellers like to purchase more souvenirs than most. Please consider your own spending habits when it comes to allowing for drinks, shopping and tipping. Please also remember the following specific recommendations when planning your trip.

## Money Exchange

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During this tour the local currencies you will use are the Vietnamese Dong, Laos Kip and Thai Baht. As currency exchange rates in South East Asia do fluctuate, we ask that you refer to the following website for the most up to date daily exchange rates: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) for each of the above mentioned currencies. The best way to carry your money is in debit cards, withdrawing cash in local currencies from ATM machines. ATMs are found throughout South East Asia and will generally accept cards on the Visa and Mastercard networks. It is a great idea to travel with both a Visa and Mastercard if at all possible in case of loss or problems with one card, you will have a back up. Please note, your bank will charge a fee for overseas withdrawals. USD Cash is recommended for times when ATMs are not accessible. You should bring some cash with you for emergency situations (please refer to our trip dossier) but carrying only cash is a high safety risk. ATM card/s and some cash is the ideal mix. Travellers cheques can be tricky, timely and expensive to exchange. While we do not recommend that you bring them as your primary source of funds, it is great to have one or two cheques in case of emergency. Thomas Cook or American Express travellers' cheques in US currency are the easiest to exchange. Cash advances can also be made with some banks but are time consuming and tend to have high fees attached. Credit cards can be used at some upmarket restaurants, and at some larger stores if shopping for big items. If you are bringing US Dollars, please make sure that the notes are new and in good condition. Notes older than 2003, or with any tears or blemishes may not be accepted. Be fussy with your bank when buying cash!

## Emergency Fund

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Please also make sure you have access to at least an additional USD \$250 (or equivalent) as an 'emergency' fund, to be used when circumstances outside our control (ex. a natural disaster) require a change to our planned route. This is a rare occurrence!

## Departure Tax

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Departure Tax is included in all International and Domestic tickets in Thailand & Vietnam.

## Tipping

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It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. You may do this individually, or your CEO will offer to collect the money and tip as a group. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$1.5-\$3.5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service; ask your CEO for specific recommendations based on the circumstances and culture. Also at the end of each trip if you felt your G Adventures CEO did an outstanding job, tipping is appreciated. The amount is entirely a personal preference, however as a guideline \$20-25 USD per person, per week can be used.

## Optional Activities

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Optional Activities: USD300 for optional activities not included in the trip.

Approximate costs (per person) for popular optional activities taken in free time are -

- Bicycle tour (Chiang Mai) - USD15-30 for Half Day
- Kan Toke Traditional Dinner (Chiang Mai) - USD30
- Thai Cooking school (Chiang Mai) - USD30 for Half Day
- Wat Doi Suthep (Chiang Mai)- USD2 plus transport USD5
- Bamboo rafting (Chiang Mai) - USD15 plus transport
- Kuang Sii Waterfalls (Luang Prabang)- USD2 plus transport USD5-10
- National Museum/Royal Palace (Luang Prabang)- USD5
- Royal Theatre (Luang Prabang) - USD6-15
- Cooking Class (Luang Prabang) - USD30 for Full Day
- Wat Xieng Thong (Luang Prabang) - USD2.50
- Arts and Ethnology Centre (Luang Prabang)- USD2
- Wat PhuSi and other Temples (Luang Prabang)- USD1-2
- Half day cottage industry tour (Luang Prabang)- USD5-8
- Bike Rental (Vang Vieng)- USD2
- Kayaking Trip (Vang Vieng)- USD15-20
- Visit one of the many temples (Vientiane) - Most entry fees USD1
- Buddha Park (Vientiane) - USD1 plus transport
- National Cultural Museum (Vientiane)- USD2
- Kayak Rental for 1 person (Halong Bay)- USD10
- Water Puppet Show (Hanoi) USD4-6
- Ho Chi Minh House on Stilts and Presidential Palace (Hanoi) USD2
- Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (Hanoi)- free (Closed Oct-Nov & July-Aug)
- Hoa Lao Prison- aka 'Hanoi Hilton' (Hanoi)- USD2
- Museum of Ethnology (Hanoi)- USD2 plus transport
- Temple of Literature (Hanoi)- USD2
- Fine Arts Museum (Hanoi) - USD1
- Women's Museum (Hanoi) - USD2
- Army Museum (Hanoi)- USD1
- Taxi to each museum - approx USD2
- Bicycle Hire (Hue) - USD1
- Royal Citadel (Hue)- USD7
- Royal Tombs (Hue)- USD5
- Perfume River Boat (Hue)- USD5-10
- Cooking Class (Hoi An)- USD25 for Half Day
- My Son Cham Ruins including car transport (Hoi An) - USD25
- Tu Bon River Boat Trip (Hoi An)- USD12
- Day trip to Islands (Nha Trang)- USD15
- Visit to Mudbaths (Nha Trang)- USD15 plus transport
- Water Sports: parasailing, Jet Skiing- USD25-35
- Cu Chi Tunnels Guided Tour(Ho Chi Minh City)- USD10-20 plus transport USD5-15
- Cyclo tour (Ho Chi Minh City)- USD10
- War Crimes museum (Ho Chi Minh City)- USD1
- The Reunification Palace (Ho Chi Minh City) - USD2
- Saigon Water Park (Ho Chi Minh City) - USD4
- Lifestart Lantern Making — a G Adventures-supported project (Hoi An) - USD 15

Address: 77 Phan Chu Trinh, Hoi An, Vietnam

Spend an hour learning how to make your own traditional lantern and support local Vietnamese with chronic disabilities

All prices are per person (unless stated otherwise), and are subject to change as services are provided by third party operators.

## Health

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Please note inoculations may be required for the country visited. It is your responsibility to consult with your travel doctor for up to date medical travel information well before departure.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information well before departure. We recommend that you carry a First Aid kit and hand sanitizers / antibacterial wipes as well as any personal medical requirements. Please be aware that sometimes we are in remote areas and away from medical facilities, and for legal reasons our leaders are prohibited from administering any type of drug including headache tablets, antibiotics, etc. In Asia pharmacies tend to stock the same western drugs as you get at home but they are usually produced locally so please bring the full drug name with you when trying to purchase a prescription drug. When selecting your trip please carefully read the brochure and itinerary and assess your ability to cope with our style of travel. Please refer to the Physical and Culture Shock ratings for trip specific information. G Adventures reserves the right to exclude any traveller from all or part of a trip without refund if in the reasonable opinion of our CEO they are unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group.

## Safety and Security

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Many national governments provide a regularly updated advice service on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure. We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes, which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage. When travelling on a group trip, please note that your CEO has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it is deemed necessary due to safety concerns. Your CEO will accompany you on all included activities. During your trip you will have some free time to pursue your own interests, relax and take it easy or explore at your leisure. While your CEO will assist you with options available in a given location please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your itinerary, and we offer no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgment when selecting an activity in your free time. Although the cities visited on tour are generally safe during the day, there can be risks to wandering throughout any major city at night. It is our recommendation to stay in small groups and to take taxis to and from restaurants, or during night time excursions.

Protests and Demonstrations- Protests and demonstrations, even those that are well intended, have the potential to turn violent with no warning. Counter protests can also turn violent. Action by security forces to disperse demonstrators and protesters may occur at any time. If you are in an area where demonstrators or protesters are gathering, avoid the temptation of staying for a good photo opportunity and leave the area immediately.

Water based activities have an element of danger and excitement built into them. We recommend only participating in water based activities when accompanied by a guide(s). We make every reasonable effort to ensure the fun and adventurous element of any water based activities (in countries with varying degrees of operating standards) have a balanced approach to safety. It is our policy not to allow our CEOs to make arrangements on your behalf for water based activities that are not accompanied by guide(s).

Swimming, including snorkeling, is always at your own risk.

We take all prudent measures in relation to your safety. For ways to further enhance your personal safety while traveling, please visit:

[www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/](http://www.gadventures.com/travel-resources/safety/)

## Trip Specific Safety

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We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Be aware that petty theft can be an issue in some Vietnamese towns and cities especially late at night. A common tactic is opportunists on motorbikes that drive by and snatch bags. Please always leave valuables and passports etc in your hotel, in safety boxes if available, and only carry with you enough cash to spend for the day. Bags should always be carried over the neck and not left to sit on your shoulder.

We do not recommend passengers to jump or dive into Kuang Sii Waterfalls in Luang Prabang, this may result in injury.

## **A Couple of Rules**

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Illegal drugs will not be tolerated on any trips. Possessing or using drugs not only contravenes the laws of the land but also puts the rest of the group at risk. Smoking marijuana and opium is a part of local culture in some parts of the world but is not acceptable for our travellers. Our philosophy of travel is one of respect towards everyone we encounter, and in particular the local people who make the world the special place it is. The exploitation of prostitutes is completely contrary to this philosophy. Our CEOs have the right to expel any member of the group if drugs are found in their possession or if they use prostitutes.

## **A Word of Warning**

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As Vietnam embraces capitalism with open arms it is also falling victim to some of the problems of the West. Some parts of city centres are now a favourite hangout for pickpockets. If doing some exploring on your own carry only the necessary minimum with you and use a well-hidden money belt. Valuables, including your passport, should be left in the hotel safe - organize this at reception. There is no need to get paranoid, just be cautious.

## **Travel Insurance**

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Travel Insurance: Travel insurance is compulsory in order to participate on any of our trips. When travelling on a group trip, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance has been sighted by your CEO, who will take note of your insurance details. When selecting a travel insurance policy please bear in mind that all clients must have medical coverage and that we require a minimum coverage of USD 200,000 for repatriation and emergency rescue. We strongly recommend that the policy also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects. If you have credit card insurance we require proof of purchase of the trip (a receipt of credit card statement) with a credit card in your name. Contact your bank for details of their participating insurer, the level of coverage and emergency contact telephone number.

## **Planeterra Foundation - the non-profit partner of G Adventures**

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Planeterra International Foundation is a non-profit organization committed to turning travel into impact by helping local communities earn an income from tourism. Planeterra connects underserved local communities to the benefits of tourism by developing and supporting small community-owned businesses. These businesses support Indigenous people, empower women, grant youth access to employment opportunities, and protect the environment. Planeterra also works to ensure these businesses have a thriving customer base by integrating their projects into G Adventures' itineraries globally.

G Adventures is Planeterra's largest corporate donor, covering all operating costs, so 100% of your donation will bring opportunity to people in need.

G Adventures Dollar-a-day Program - Make Every Day Count - Turn your travel into impact with [Planeterra Foundation](#).

Did you know? Most communities around the world do not benefit from tourism. Give back to the places you visit on your travels by creating opportunities for local people to earn an income, and protect the environment.

Make every day count by donating \$1/day for the length of your trip, and join us in empowering the communities you will visit when you travel. 100% of your donation goes directly to Planeterra projects.

## **Local Dress**

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In Asia the dress standard is more conservative than it is back home. When packing try to pick loose, lightweight, long clothing that will keep you cool in the usually hot and humid climate of Asian summers. In predominately Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim countries we ask that you dress respectfully and avoid very short shorts/skirts and singlets/tanktops when visiting temples or mosques or other holy sites. In Pakistan we recommend a head scarf for women while walking around.

## **Feedback**

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After your travels, we want to hear from you! Your feedback information is so important to us that we'll give you 5% off the price of your next G Adventures trip if your feedback is completed on-line within 30 days of finishing your trip. Your tour evaluation will be e-mailed to you 24 hours after the conclusion of your trip. If you do not receive the tour evaluation link in the days after your tour has finished, please drop us a line at [customersolutions@gadventures.com](mailto:customersolutions@gadventures.com) and we will send it on to you.

## Newsletter

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Our adventure travel e-newsletter is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from G Adventures, subscribe at [www.gadventures.com/newsletters/](http://www.gadventures.com/newsletters/)

Stay current on how our company invests in our global community through our foundation - Planeterra. Sign up for [Planeterra's monthly news](#) to learn more about how to give back and support the people and places we love to visit.

## Minimum Age

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Minimum age of 18 years for this trip.

## International Flights

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Check-in times and baggage allowances/restrictions vary by airline and can change at any time. For the most up-to-date information for your flight, please contact your airline. We recommend checking in online in advance to avoid potential delays at the airport.