



VIETNAM ADVENTURE



HIKING HOLIDAYS WITH ZANNA VAN DIJK
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **INTREPID TRAVEL**

Local Expertise With a Global Presence

Our core purpose is to: Create, Innovate and Deliver Sustainable, Experience Rich Travel. This means we offer immersive experiences designed by our partners such as Zanna Van Dijk & local experts that not only will you will love, but that are socially and environmentally responsible as well..

Safe and responsible travel, always.

As you look to get back on the road, we continue to ensure our trips are safe for everyone. That includes our travellers, our leaders and crew and the people we visit along the way. Our health and safety policies follow recommendations from the World Health Organization and the World Travel & Tourism Council's (WTTC) Safe Travel protocols for tour operators. Before we resume trips in any destination, our itineraries undergo a comprehensive risk assessment and audit, while leaders and suppliers will complete COVID-19 health and safety training. We have also introduced specific policies around testing and vaccination for your safety.

Who we are

For over 30 years we've been taking travellers around the globe, on small group tours with like-minded Intrepid people. Our extensive COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines ensure your wellbeing is looked after during your travels.

Safe travels

We're with you every step of the way through our value chain - from our suppliers, to our on ground operations and leaders.

Certified B Corp

When we became certified as the world's largest travel B Corp in 2018, it was not only our official pledge to be a responsible business, but also a promise to be the best travel company for the world.

Vietnam Adventure

10 days / 9 nights

About Your Trip

Start Location

Hong Ngoc Cochinchine Hotel,
Hanoi

Accommodation

5 nights Hotel
4 nights homestay

Rooming Requirements

Twin Share
Single Rooms available - excluding
homestay

Included Meals

Breakfast x 9
Lunch x 5
Dinner x 5

Transport

Air-conditioned vehicle transfers
throughout

Leader/Guide

1 English Speaking Leader
throughout

Included Activities

Refer to day by day itinerary below.

Entrance/Admission Fees

Where applicable with
included activities

Airport Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are
Included based on group transfer.
(Group Basis)
Flight details are needed 30 days in
advance

**Please note the group transfer is
based on Zanna's flight timings
only.**

Exclusions

- International Flights
- Any visas required
- Services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Late check out at hotels
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks with included lunches and dinners
- Tips for leaders, guide and driver
- Expenditure of personal nature
- Personal Insurance
- Optional activities

Vietnam Adventure Itinerary

Day 1: 03rd January 2024

Arrival Hanoi

Meals Included: Dinner

Xin chao! Welcome to Vietnam.

The spectacular valleys and mountains of Vietnam were simply made for exploration. Put on your hiking shoes and get ready for this immersive journey that gets away from the bright lights of Hanoi and under the skin of Vietnam's bucolic countryside. It's not all mountains and trails either, with an opportunity to kayak across the majestic waters from Cat Ba Island, prepare to be led off the beaten track.

Your welcome meeting will be at 18:00. We'll be collecting insurance details and next-of-kin information, so please ensure you bring these details to provide to your leader.

Then, enjoy dinner at KOTO restaurant. This organization is dedicated to developing the hospitality careers of disadvantaged youth.

Arrival Transfer

- Included on a group basis **Please note the group transfer is based on Zanna's flight timings only.*

Accommodation

Hong Ngoc Cochinine Hotel - ROH - <https://hongngochotels.com/cochinine> or similar

Special Information

It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.

Day 2 - 4th January 2024

Hanoi – Khau Pha

Meals Included: Breakfast

After breakfast escape the city and board a private minibus (approximately 5 hours) to the small village of Khau Pha, a community-based tourism project designed to empower and bring positive impact for Vietnam's ethnic minorities. Located just below the spectacular Khau Pha Pass in an area of inspiring natural beauty, this fascinating area that has all of the best features of Northern Vietnam – think emerald green terraced rice paddies, clear streams and towering hills - yet very few tourists.

After lunch you will take a relaxed walk around the village to experience firsthand the hospitality and rich cultural heritage of Khau Pha, including the process of creating a traditional Thai fabric and cloth. After the walk enjoy a traditional dinner then settle in for the evening in one of the four stilt houses that have been redesigned by local families in a comfortable nature-friendly manner while preserving the traditional cultural features – a truly unique way to spend the night!

Included Activities

- Traditional Thai Cloth making demonstration
- Khau Pha Community Village Walk
- Khau Pha Community Village Homestay
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Accommodation

Homestay – sharing

Special Information

Tonight's homestay is shared accommodation, usually with the whole group in a single room together. There are separate beds with clean linen, blankets and mosquito nets provided.

Day 3: 05th January 2024

Khau Pha - Sapa

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Start the day early and transfer by private vehicle (approximately 5 hours) to the iconic town of Sapa, start point for today's trek. Enjoy lunch and numerous photo stops along the way before arriving Lao Chai. From here you will join our local guide and start your hike into the heart of the Vườn Quốc gia Hoàng Liên State park, trekking through the dramatic landscapes and panoramic views of rural Vietnam on a trek from Lao Chai to Ta Van. Along the way you'll pass by terraced farms ripe with corn and rice, over bubbling brooks and through bucolic villages before arriving into this small village in time for a well-earned dinner and sleep in our local family homestay. The total trek today is around 10 kilometres (6.2 miles).

Included Activities

- Sapa - Lao Chai to Ta Van trek & Homestay

Accommodation

Homestay – sharing

Special Information

Tonight's homestay is shared accommodation, usually with the whole group in a single room together. There are separate beds with clean linen, blankets and mosquito nets provided.

You will need to pack overnight essentials into a smaller daypack, which you will carry on the trek, for your homestay tonight. You can store your main luggage in Sapa overnight.

Day 4: 06th January 2024

Sapa – Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast

This morning trek to Su Pan before taking some time to rest your feet on a bus ride back to Sapa. In the afternoon the group returns to Hanoi (approximately 5 hours). Maybe get a bird's eye view of the city from a rooftop bar and unwind with an iced coffee.

Included Activities

- Sapa - Ta Van to Su Pan trek 8km
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Accommodation

Hong Ngoc Cochinine Hotel - ROH - <https://hongngochotels.com/cochinine> or similar

Day 5: 07th January 2024

Hanoi – Pu Luong

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast, we will depart to Pu Luong Nature Reserve by road via a breath-taking mountain pass giving you a panoramic view of the whole valley. You arrive at your accommodation in time for a delicious lunch, followed by a short walk with your leader to explore your surrounding area! This should leave you a little free time to relax, with its captivating panoramic views and tranquil setting.

In the afternoon, you will have the chance to get close to village life and interact with locals living in the hills. Glimpse at daily life, walk around working farmland and rice fields, and get to know more about the local culture. Walking back for a very nice dinner.

Included Activities

- Pu Luong Nature Reserve & activities
- Short Hike in Pu Luong

Accommodation

Homestay – sharing (2 nights)

Special Information

Tonight's homestay is shared accommodation, usually with the whole group in a single room together. There are separate beds with clean linen, blankets and mosquito nets provided.

Day 6: 08th January 2024

Pu Luong

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

This is a common and easy walk around the most beautiful valley of rice terraces in front of the homestay. We start to descend into the beautiful valley facing the homestay where you walk around tumbling rice terraces. Then we will walk through small paths shrouded in vegetation to slowly reveal a picturesque Uoi village sitting at the base of a towering mountain. Your camera will not be able to sit still when you see the panorama view of the village from above.

Continue walk down hill to walk around Lan village. If time permits, we will visit a local family where we can learn about their traditional brocade weaving (not guaranteed). Walking through the rice paddies and village to village, bridge to bridge to explore more the scenic landscapes surround. You will end up at Hieu Village (the stunning village in the area), you will have a good chance to enjoy the Hieu waterfall, the sole one in the reserve. Then, back to the meeting point, where the car will transfer you back to the homestay for dinner.

Included activities

- Pu Luong Nature Reserve & activities
- Waterfall swim

Accommodation

Homestay – sharing

Day 7: 09th January 2024

Pu Luong – Ninh Binh

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch

No problem to make the hike longer, you have these choices:

1. As per below, it will take around 3 hours from Pu Luong to Ninh Binh, then lunch and then you have a short hike to Mua Cave. However, it's a hike on an incline and not flat.
2. Option 2 you walk from the home lunch to Mua Cave which is an extra 1km
3. Option 3 you don't use the bus from Mua Cave to the hotel and that would add on additional 6km of hiking to your day

After breakfast and free time to relax a little bit, we will say goodbye and head to Ninh Binh province. Once arrive, you'll be welcomed into a local home for a traditional Vietnamese lunch. Meet the family who live here and enjoy their Vietnamese delicacies... think everything from grilled beef wrapped with guise leaves, to spring rolls, to fried fish with tomato sauce. With a full belly and fuller heart, top off the day in this scenic spot with Mua cave. You walk up 486 stone steps to the top of the mountain, visit lovely stalactites and stalagmites inside, enjoy panoramic views of the countryside and Ngo Dong river.

You will have the choice of 3 treks, and will decide as a group which one suits you best!

Option 1: As per above, it will take approx 3 hours from Pu Luong to Ninh Binh, then lunch and then you have a short hike to Mua Cave. However, it's a hike on an incline and not flat.

Option 2: You walk from the home lunch to Mua Cave which is an extra 1km

Option 3: You don't use the bus from Mua Cave to the hotel and that would add on additional 6km of hiking to your day

Check in the hotel and enjoy the rest of the day at your leisure.

Included Activities

- Mua Cave

Accommodation

Thuy Anh Hotel – ROH - <http://www.thuyanhhotel.com/> or similar

Day 8: 10th January 2024

Ninh Binh – Trang An – Cat Ba

Meals Included: Breakfast

After breakfast, we will visit Trang An – an ecological tourist site where the rowing boat brings you through many amazingly nature blessed caves and rice fields.

Then, say goodbye and head to Hai Phong then jump on a ferry to Cat Ba Island, which sits at the southeastern edge of Halong Bay. Lan Ha Bay, where Cat Ba can be found, is part of Halong Bay with the additional attraction of numerous white-sand beaches. The total travelling time today is approximately five hours. Check in to your peaceful, hilltop accommodation and enjoy your free evening.

Included Activities

- Trang An

Accommodation

Cat Ba Ecolodge – ROH - <https://catbaecolodge.com/> or similar

Day 9: 11th January 2024

Cat Ba – Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Explore the waters and limestone karsts of Lan Ha Bay on a full-day boat trip. Get up close and personal kayaking beside the tree-clad outcrops, with lunch onboard also included. Halong Bay's World Heritage designation was extended to the Cat Ba Archipelago thanks to its similar aesthetic value, and the scenes of turquoise water and junk boats are quintessential Vietnam. No-one will judge you for taking a selfie here. Spend a second night on Cat Ba, Enjoy a farewell dinner with the group.

Included Activities

- Cat Ba Island – Kayaking
- Private Boat Experience
- Farewell dinner
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Accommodation

Hong Ngoc Cochinchine Hotel - ROH - <https://hongngochotels.com/cochinchine> or similar

Day 10: 12th January 2024

Hanoi - Departures

Meals Included: Breakfast

We recommend keeping a free day because international flights from Hanoi are departing from morning – evening so no-one feels like they are missing out on anything! You can always ask the Tour leader for a recommendation if you choose an evening flight

There is no plan today. Free at your leisure until the departure time for your flight home. Standard check-out time: 12:00. End of services!

Airport Transfer

- On a group basis **Please note the group transfer is based on Zanna's flight timings only.*

END OF SERVICES

Important Information

Joining point instructions

Intrepid can assist with pre-booking an arrival transfer from the airport - enquire with your agent. Please advise your flight arrival details at least 14 days prior to your departure.

For your confirmed arrival transfer, you'll be met as you exit the Terminal Hall by a transfer representative holding an Intrepid sign. If you cannot find your transfer representative, or if your flight is delayed, please call our hotline on +84 903 117 770. Neither the driver nor any representative should ask you for additional payment.

Alternatively, metered taxi ranks are available outside the airport entrance. Exit the Customs Hall and walk through the airport exit gates A4 and A5 on level 1. You will find Noi Bai Airport Taxis (+84 24 3886 8888) readily available. Noi Bai Airport Taxi drivers wear a yellow uniform shirt. Taxi fare to your hotel in town will cost approx. VND350,000.00 in total. These taxis won't use a meter, but generally charge a fixed fare. Please avoid taxi touts who tell you that they have a metered taxi parked outside the airport.

Instructions

Please make sure that you provide your flight details no later than 14 days before departure to book your arrival transfer with us.

For your confirmed arrival transfer, you'll be met outside Ho Chi Minh Airport by a transfer representative holding an Intrepid sign. In case of flight cancellations, changes, if you experience severe delays at immigration, baggage collection or customs, or if you are not able to find the driver, please contact our local office on the number in the 'Problems and emergency contact information' section.

Add any further instructions on how to reach the Joining Point eg taxi, public transport.

Problems and emergency contact information

While we always endeavour to provide the best possible holiday experience, due to the nature of travel and the areas we visit sometimes things can and do go wrong. Should any issue occur while you are on your trip, it is imperative that you discuss this with your group leader or our local representative straight away so that they can do their best to rectify the problem and save any potential negative impact on the rest of your trip.

We recognise that there may be times when your group leader/local partner may not be able to resolve a situation to your satisfaction - if this is the case, please ask the leader to speak to their direct manager.

You may also choose to provide details in your online feedback, which we ask you to complete within 30 days of the end of your trip. Please do be aware that it is very difficult for us to provide any practical help after the trip is completed, so informing us while still travelling will give us the opportunity to resolve the issue in real-time.

For general contact details please use the following page: <http://www.intrepidtravel.com/ourtrips/contact/>

In case of a genuine crisis or emergency, you can reach our local office on the number below:

Intrepid's Vietnam Office: +84 903 117 770

Passports, visas and entry requirements

PASSPORT

You'll need a valid passport to travel internationally and most countries require your passport to have a minimum of 6 months validity, so remember to check the expiry date.

We need your passport information to get everything ready for your trip so it's important that the information on your booking matches your passport exactly. Please take care to provide the correct details. We recommend carrying a copy of the photo page of your passport while travelling and leaving a copy at home with family or friends.

VISAS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Many countries require a visa and obtaining the correct visa for your trip and any countries you may transit through is your responsibility. We recommend you check your visa requirements as soon as you have booked your trip. This will ensure you have time to prepare your documents and for your visa application to be processed. You can check the entry requirements for your nationality on your government's foreign travel advisories, consular websites or on our page here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/au/visa-health-requirements>

VIETNAM E-VISAS AND APPROVAL LETTERS

Intrepid can arrange your E-Visa or provide an approval letter to obtain your visa from an embassy. Both services are at an additional cost and we will require the below information from you in order to process your request.

Turnaround time is 7-10 business days in Vietnam. Please contact your booking agent if you would like to utilize this service.

- Colour passport scan
- Portrait passport photo (4x6cm): White background, neutral expression and without glasses
- A copy of your confirmed travel details in and out of Vietnam

The E-Visa service is not available to passengers booking under the Standard Booking Conditions – UK or Standard Booking Conditions – Europe.

ADDRESS FOR VIETNAM VISA APPLICATIONS

If you require an address for your visa application, please use:

Intrepid Vietnam
Ground Floor, Ladeco Building
266 Doi Can St
Ba Dinh District, Hanoi
Vietnam
Ph +84 4 3715 0996

Medical and health information

GENERAL HEALTH

All travellers need to be in good physical health in order to participate fully on this trip. For the safety and wellbeing of yourself and others, if you are unwell prior to travelling, please stay at home and contact us to make alternative arrangements.

When selecting your trip please make sure you have read through the itinerary carefully and assess your ability to manage and enjoy our style of travel. Please note that if in the assessment of our group leader or local staff a traveller is unable to complete the itinerary without undue risk to themselves and/or the rest of the group, we reserve the right to exclude them from all or part of a trip without refund.

You should consult your doctor for up-to-date medical travel information or for any necessary vaccinations before departure. We recommend that you carry a first aid kit as well as any personal medical requirements in their original packaging as they may not easily be obtained while travelling. If you are carrying medication, ensure you check your government's foreign travel advice for any local restrictions or requirements.

COVID-19

The safety and well-being of our travellers, leaders, crew, staff, and suppliers continues to remain our highest priority as we travel. Intrepid has no specific vaccination, testing or vaccination requirements, however please be aware that

some parts of the world still require COVID-19 vaccination or testing as part of their entry requirements and may have their own quarantine or isolation protocols. Please check for any additional requirements on your government's foreign travel advice website or here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/au/visa-health-requirements>

MOSQUITO-BORNE ILLNESSES:

Mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis are widespread in South East Asia. Malaria is also prevalent in some regions, particularly along the borders in mountainous regions. Take preventative measures such as wearing long clothing, using repellent and being indoors particularly around dusk and dawn. Seek medical advice prior to travel for medication or vaccination advice.

ZIKA VIRUS:

There have been reports of transmission of the mosquito-borne Zika virus in this region and we advise all travellers to protect themselves from mosquito bites. Given possible transmission of the disease to unborn babies, and taking a very cautious approach, we recommend all women who are pregnant or trying to get pregnant to consult with their doctors before booking their trip.

Food and dietary requirements

While travelling with us you'll experience the vast array of wonderful food available in the world. Your group leader will be able to suggest restaurants to try during your trip. To give you the maximum flexibility in deciding where, what and with whom to eat, generally not all meals are included in the trip price. This also gives you more budgeting flexibility. As a rule our groups tend to eat together to enable you to taste a larger variety of dishes and enjoy each other's company. If you have dietary requirements and/or food allergies, please let your booking agent know prior to departure.

INCLUDED BREAKFASTS:

At hotels you'll often have a buffet with choices of Vietnamese and Western food. At homestays you will have more basic breakfasts of local foods, eggs, bread, jam, tea and coffee. Take away breakfasts for early starts may be very simple such as a piece of fruit and a bread roll.

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS:

Check out this guide to eating in Vietnam for vegan, vegetarian, gluten & peanut free travellers: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/vegan-vegetarian-gluten-free-v...>

FOOD ALLERGIES:

Travelling in South East Asia with a food allergy? We have some advice for you here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/adventures/travelling-food-allergies-sout...>

Money matters

SPENDING MONEY

When it comes to spending money on the trip, every traveller is a little different. You know your spending habits better than we do, so please budget an appropriate amount for things like optional meals, drinks, shopping, optional activities, and laundry. Make sure you have read the itinerary and inclusions thoroughly so you know what is included in the trip price and what you may need to pay for while travelling.

MEALS NOT INCLUDED

We recommend USD200 for meals not included.

VIETNAM:

You can use your credit/debit card in ATMs, which are common throughout Vietnam. These machines dispense cash in VND (Vietnamese dong). Credit/debit cards aren't accepted for small payments in Vietnam so please ensure you have VND cash to cover daily expenses. Clean banknotes in small denominations are most useful. There is no need to bring lots of cash with you unless you prefer not to use ATMs. You can obtain VND cash prior to arriving in Vietnam, through normal outlets such as banks and currency exchange offices.

TIPPING

Tipping can be an appropriate way to recognise great service when travelling. While it may not be customary in your home country, it is an entrenched feature of the tourism industry across many of our destinations and is greatly appreciated by the people who take care of you during your travels. It is always best to avoid tipping with coins, very small denomination notes, or dirty and ripped notes, as this can be regarded as an insult rather than the goodwill gesture it is intended to be.

OPTIONAL TIPPING KITTY

On Day 1 of your trip, your tour leader may discuss with you the idea of operating a group tipping kitty, whereby everybody contributes an equal amount and your tour leader distributes tips for drivers, local guides, hotel staff and other services included on your trip. This excludes restaurant tips for meals not included in your itinerary. The leader will keep a running record of all monies spent which can be checked at any time, and any funds remaining at the end of the tour will be returned to group members. We have found that this is easiest way to avoid the hassles of needing small change and knowing when and what is an appropriate amount to tip. Participation in this kitty is at your own discretion, and you are welcome to manage your own tipping separately if you prefer. Please note the tipping kitty excludes tips for your tour leader.

Optional tipping kitty for this trip: USD 28 per person (can be paid in VND).

YOUR LEADER

You may also consider tipping your leader for outstanding service throughout your trip. The amount is entirely a personal preference; however as a guideline US\$3-6 per person (in a currency relevant for your destination), per day can be used. Of course you are free to tip more or less as you see fit, depending on your perception of service quality and the length and involvement of your leader on your trip.

CONTINGENCY FUNDS

We try to plan for every eventuality, but there are still some things beyond our control. We reserve the right to change an itinerary after departure due to local circumstances or a Force Majeure Event. In such emergency circumstances, the additional cost of any necessary itinerary alterations will be covered by you. Please note we are not responsible for any incidental expenses that may be incurred as a result of the change of itineraries including but not limited to visas, vaccinations or non-refundable flights. Make sure you have access to an extra US\$500 for emergencies (e.g. severe weather, natural disasters, civil unrest) or other events that result in unavoidable changes to the itinerary (e.g. transport strikes or cancellations, airport closures). Sometimes these things necessitate last-minute changes to enable our trips to continue to run, and as a result, there may be some extra costs involved. The recommended amount is listed in USD for the relatability of universal travellers, however, local currency may be needed once in the country to cover these costs.

COMMISSIONS

Unfortunately, commissions in exchange for recommending particular shops or restaurants are an ingrained part of the tourism industry. Rather than turning a blind eye, we've tried to legitimise the practise with a centralised fund. Moneys are collected from recommended and fully vetted suppliers and funnelled back into our business. This keeps the trip cost low (for us and for you) and makes sure you only get the best experiences.

If you're unhappy with any places your leader recommends, or feel the quality of the trip is being compromised in any way, please let us know in your feedback.

Packing

What you need to bring will vary according to the trip style you have chosen, the countries you are visiting and when you are travelling. Generally speaking, we recommend you pack as lightly as possible and make sure that you are able to carry and lift your own luggage, and walk with it for short distances or up or down a flight of stairs. Our travellers usually find the smaller their luggage is, the more they enjoy the trip not having to worry about carrying heavy bags! Aim to keep your main luggage under 15kg.

Many travellers carry their luggage in a compact smaller suitcase or backpack with wheels. We recommend your bag has carry straps or handles so it is easy to lift and carry for the times you are unable to wheel it (ie. on rough surfaces or up steps).

If you are taking overnight trains, or primarily using public transport then the smaller your luggage the easier it will be to store under or above bunks. Large suitcases may not be able to be taken on board. A lockable bag or small padlock for your bag will be useful especially when travelling on public transportation as well.

You'll also need a day pack/bag to carry water, camera, swimming suit, hiking shoes and jacket etc. when you're exploring during the day. Below we have listed the essentials for this trip:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/packing-list>

WATER BOTTLE

Please bring your own water bottle to refill along the way. Although it can be difficult to avoid bottled water when travelling, please use the water dispensers which are provided on some of our vehicles and at some of our accommodation. Your leader will advise whether tap water is safe to drink in your destination and if it is you can simply refill with tap water. When unable to avoid bottled water it is better to buy the largest available and distribute into your smaller bottle for the day. If you are walking or trekking as part of your trip you will need to carry at least 2L of water with you.

INTERNAL FLIGHT LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE:

Checked luggage allowance is a maximum 20kg, with up to 7kg carry on luggage. Any excess luggage charges can be paid directly to the airline at check-in.

LOCAL DRESS:

When packing be aware that dress standards are conservative throughout Asia, especially outside major cities. To respect this and for your own comfort, we strongly recommend modest clothing. This means clothing that covers your shoulders and knees. Loose, lightweight, long clothing is both respectful and cool in the predominantly hot Asian climate. In many rural areas in Asia women will need to wear modest clothing even to swim. Singlets, tank tops and topless sun bathing are all unacceptable. When visiting religious sites men often need to wear long trousers and women a long skirt or sarong.

Climate and seasonal information

TET

21 - 27 January 2023, 9 - 15 February 2024

Tet is Vietnam's New Year festival which takes place in late January/early February based on the lunar calendar and is the most important celebration of the year. While this can be a fascinating time to be in Vietnam, you do need to be prepared for some businesses to be closed, tourist sites to be very busy and for transport to be packed as many Vietnamese are travelling around the country. Although we do our best to run trips during Tet as per the scheduled itinerary, it is likely that there will be some changes to transport, accommodation or order of destinations visited. Due to the high demand on tickets at this time, flights and overnight trains may on occasion need to be replaced with day buses. We will aim to communicate any known changes prior to your departure.

WEATHER IN VIETNAM

The most popular times to visit Vietnam are spring (February-April) and autumn (September-December) but because of the huge variations in latitude and altitude, there is no one best time to go to Vietnam. Temperatures vary from 4°C (39°F) in Sapa in winter to humid 36°C (97°F) days in Saigon in the middle of the dry season. The monsoons bring heavy rain to the south, and a cooler winter to the north. It's a good destination all year.

WET SEASON

Flooding is common across Vietnam during rainy season (June-December) and could also lead to landslides. Typhoons are also common during this period. During these months there may be disruptions to transport and some activities or destinations may need to be changed as a result at short notice.

Safety

Most national governments provide regularly updated foreign travel advice on safety issues involved with international travel. We recommend that you check your government's advice for their latest travel information before departure and ensure that your travel insurance covers you for all destinations and activities on your trip.

Please refer to our website's safety page for links to major travel advisories and updates on safety issues affecting our trips here: <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/travel-alerts>

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

Your leader will accompany you on all included activities, however, during your trip you'll have some free time to pursue your own interests or relax and take it easy. While your leader will assist you with the available options in a given location, please note that any optional activities you undertake are not part of your Intrepid itinerary, and Intrepid makes no representations about the safety of the activity or the standard of the operators running them. Please use your own good judgement when selecting an activity in your free time. Please also note that your Leader has the authority to amend or cancel any part of the trip itinerary if it's deemed necessary due to safety concerns.

Intrepid's operational safety policies can be viewed on our website at the link below. We recommend that you take a moment to read through this information before travelling, and would appreciate any feedback on how safety is being managed on our trips. <https://www.intrepidtravel.com/safety-guidelines>

FIRE PRECAUTIONS:

Please be aware that local laws governing tourism facilities in this region differ from those in your home country and not all the accommodation which we use has a fire exit, fire extinguishers or smoke alarms.

SEAT BELTS:

Please be aware that local laws governing transportation safety may differ from those in your home country and not all the transport which we use is able to provide seat belts.

PETTY THEFT AND PERSONAL SAFETY:

While travelling there is always the risk of pick-pocketing and petty theft, particularly in the more touristy cities. We recommend that you exercise caution when walking alone at night and encourage you to walk together and only on main, well-lit thoroughfares. Be particularly vigilant on public transport. Simple measures like carrying your day pack on your front, not hanging your bag over the back of your chair or on the floor and wearing a money belt will reduce any chance that your valuables should go missing.

MOTORBIKE BAG SNATCHING:

Be particularly aware of motorbike bag snatching, especially in the bigger cities.

A couple of rules

We like to think our Intrepid travellers are all connected by a love of adventure and passion for seeing the world in a different way. We've laid down a few non-negotiable rules to ensure everyone feels connected, comfortable and safe on our trips.

We ask that you respect your fellow travellers, group leader, and local people and places we visit in all circumstances. We don't tolerate any forms of violence and expect that you follow the local laws, customs and regulations in any destination we travel to. Any behaviour contrary to the above, including any behaviour that prevents our staff from performing their duty of care or continuing the itinerary as planned, may result in travellers being removed from the trip.

If you consume alcohol while travelling, we encourage responsible drinking and expect you to abide by local alcohol laws.

To ensure the well-being of everyone on the trip, all decisions made by group leaders and ground staff are final. Romantic relationships between travellers and group leaders are not permitted while on trip.

By travelling with us, you agree to comply with these rules and the laws and customs of all countries visited.

If something is concerning you during your travels with us, please speak to your group leader or local guide immediately. Alternatively, contact us on the emergency contact number detailed in your Essential Trip

Information's Problems and Emergency Contact section..

Travel Insurance

Travel insurance is compulsory on all our trips for those travelling internationally. We require that at a minimum you are covered for medical expenses including emergency repatriation. If you are travelling within your home country or region please confirm before travel that you are entitled to access the public medical system easily should an accident occur. We strongly recommend all travellers have a policy that also covers personal liability, cancellation, curtailment and loss of luggage or personal effects. For international trips, you will not be permitted to join the group until evidence of travel insurance and the insurance company's 24-hour emergency contact number has been sighted by your leader.

If you have credit card insurance your group leader will require details of the participating insurer/underwriter, the level of coverage, policy number, and emergency contact number rather than the bank's name and your credit card details. Please contact your bank for these details prior to arriving in-country.

For travellers who reside within the European Union, Switzerland or USA the requirement to purchase travel insurance cannot be compulsory. However the purchase of travel insurance is still highly recommended, and travellers from these regions who decline travel insurance when travelling outside of their home region must sign a Travel Insurance Waiver Form at the Group Meeting, recognizing personal responsibility for emergency medical and repatriation costs should they arise.

For assistance with travel insurance or other services, please visit the link below:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/booking-resources/our-services>

MOTORBIKE INCLUDED ACTIVITY:

Please note that for this particular trip, your travel insurance must also cover riding pillion on a motorbike. The motorbikes used are 125cc or less.

Responsible Travel

Our Responsible Travel Policy outlines our commitment to preserving the environment, supporting local communities, protecting the vulnerable, and giving back to the places we travel. All our trip leaders, suppliers, and staff are trained on these principles and are core to us delivering sustainable, experience-rich travel.

Explore the different parts of our Responsible Travel Policy by visiting:

<https://www.intrepidtravel.com/responsible-travel>

The Intrepid Foundation

We created our not-for-profit, the Intrepid Foundation because you – our travellers – told us you wanted to make an even greater impact in the communities you visit.

The Foundation works by teaming up with partners around the world so that together we can deliver greater positive impact at scale. Partners are identified by our local staff who live and work in our destinations. They harness their powerful community connections to determine the issues that matter most and select local partners who can deliver real solutions.

Since 2002, the Intrepid Foundation has raised more than 12.8 million dollars and supported more than 130 communities worldwide. Now, with almost 40 partners all over the world, your donations are helping to restore forests in Kenya, empower women in Honduras and promote elephant welfare in Laos, to name just a few. By simply being on this trip, Intrepid Travel will make a donation to the Intrepid Foundation on your behalf. If you choose to donate too, 100% of your donations will go directly to our partners on the ground – where they're needed most. For more information about the Intrepid Foundation, please ask your leader or visit our website: <http://www.theintrepidfoundation.org/>

This trip directly supports WildAct, who are engaging local communities to protect the migratory birds of Vietnam. Donations help WildAct run educational programs that aim to stop the illegal hunting of threatened migratory birds through knowledge-sharing in local communities.

To find out more or make a donation, visit: www.theintrepidfoundation.org/t/wild