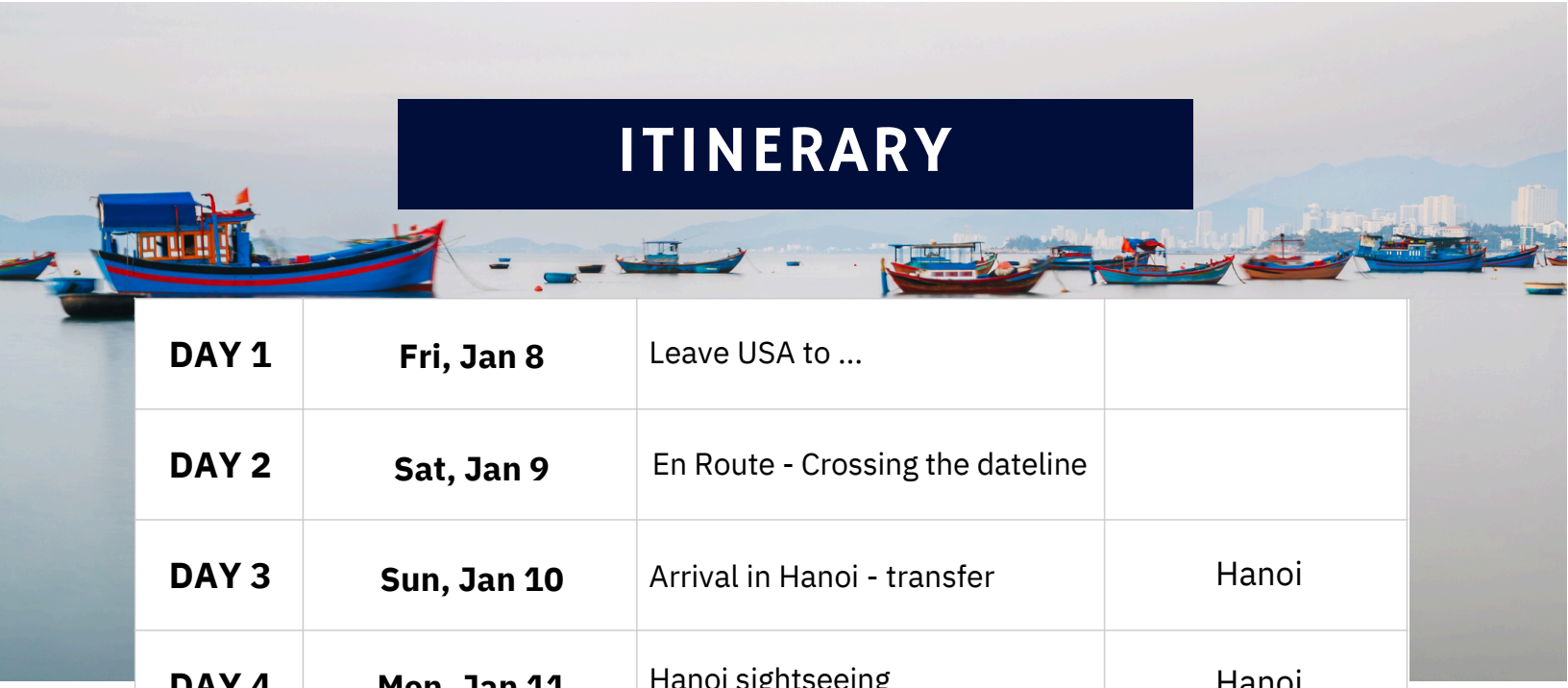
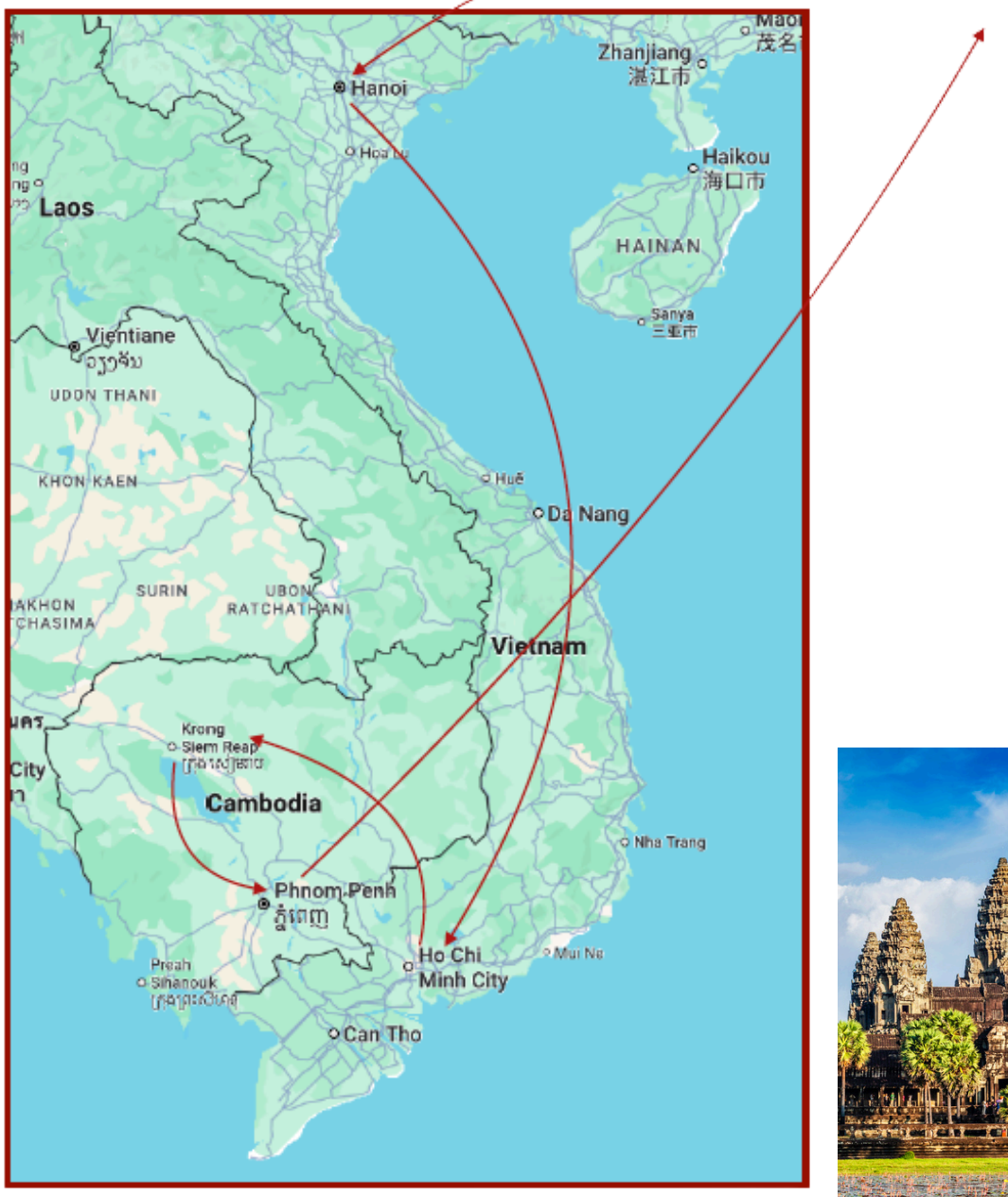

WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL
OF GREATER HOUSTON
Global Perspectives, Local Conversations
VIETNAM & CAMBODIA
Understanding Southeast Asia
JANUARY 8-22, 2027



ITINERARY

DAY 1	**Fri, Jan 8**	Leave USA to ...	
DAY 2	**Sat, Jan 9**	En Route - Crossing the dateline	
DAY 3	**Sun, Jan 10**	Arrival in Hanoi - transfer	Hanoi
DAY 4	**Mon, Jan 11**	Hanoi sightseeing	Hanoi
DAY 5	**Tue, Jan 12**	Hanoi sightseeing	Hanoi
DAY 6	**Wed, Jan 13**	Ha Long Bay cruise	Cruise
DAY 7	**Thu, Jan 14**	Ha Long Bay - Ho Chi Minh City	HCM City
DAY 8	**Fri, Jan 15**	HCM City sightseeing	HCM City
DAY 9	**Sat, Jan 16**	Mekong Delta excursion	HCM City
DAY 10	**Sun, Jan 17**	HCM City sightseeing	HCM City
DAY 11	**Mon, Jan 18**	Fly to Siem Reap - Cambodia	Siem Reap
DAY 12	**Tue, Jan 19**	Siem Reap sightseeing	Siem Reap
DAY 13	**Wed, Jan 20**	Siem Reap sightseeing	Siem Reap
DAY 14	**Thu, Jan 21**	Fly to Phnom Penh - sightseeing	Phnom Penh
DAY 15	**Fri, Jan 22**	Departure	

MAP TRAJECTORY







HIGHLIGHTS

Explore the historic capital of Hanoi, including the **Ho Chi Minh Complex, Temple of Literature, Hoa Lo Prison**, and the atmospheric Old Quarter.

Experience authentic rural life in northern Vietnam with visits to traditional villages, a family-hosted cooking class, and a scenic rowboat excursion to Galaxy Grotto.

Enjoy an overnight cruise through the breathtaking limestone seascapes of **Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

Discover the dynamic energy and complex history of **Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)**, including the Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum, and colonial-era landmarks.

Cruise the waterways of the Mekong Delta, visiting local cottage industries, river communities, and lush islands.

Explore the legendary **Cu Chi Tunnels,** one of the most remarkable engineering achievements of the Vietnam War.

Witness the **grandeur of Angkor Thom, including the iconic Bayon Temple** with its enigmatic stone faces.

Experience the **awe-inspiring beauty of Angkor Wat**, the world's largest religious monument and Cambodia's national symbol.

Visit the jungle-covered **ruins of Ta Prohm**, made famous by Tomb Raider, where giant tree roots intertwine with ancient temples.

Discover life on **Tonle Sap Lake** at the stilted **village of Kompong Phluk.**

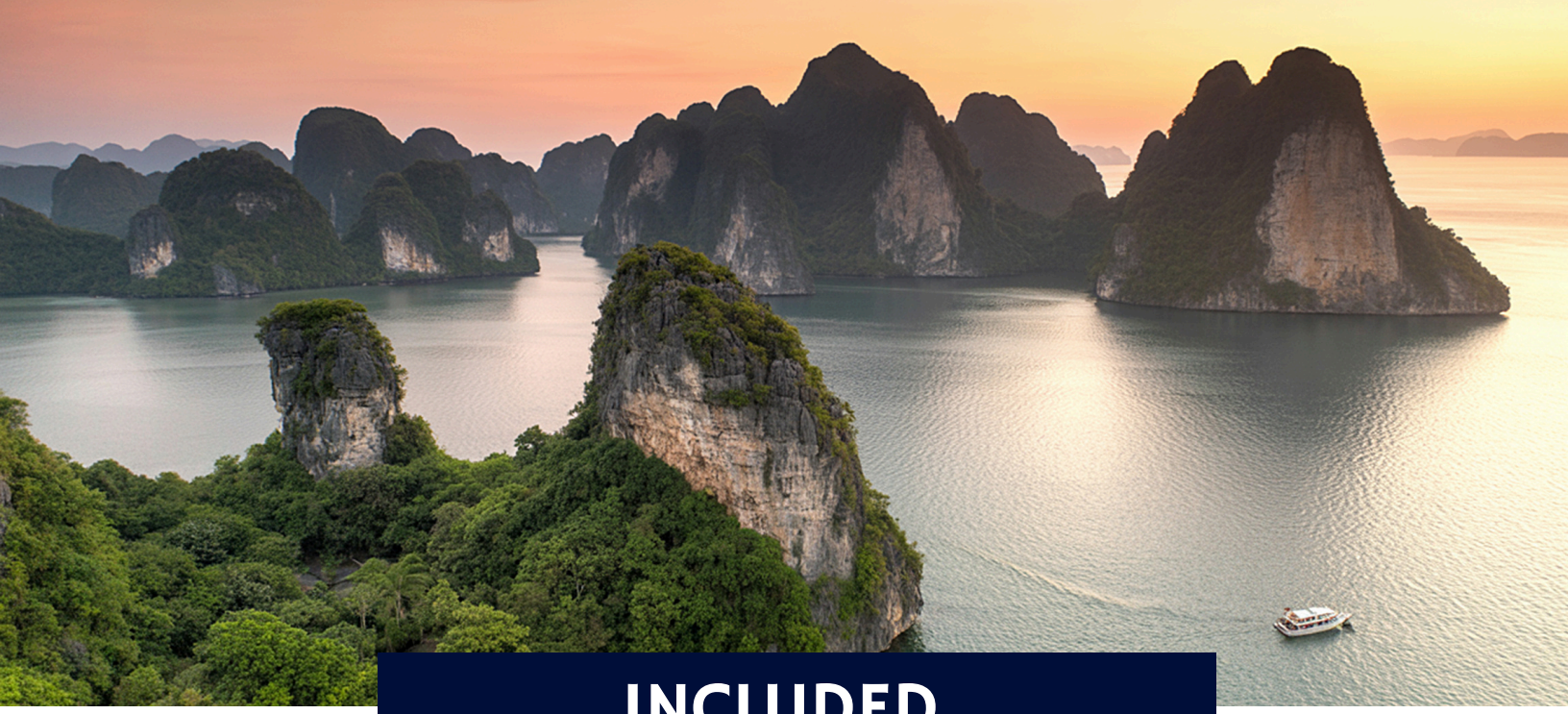
Admire the exquisite carvings of **Banteay Srei**, considered one of the finest masterpieces of Khmer art.

Reflect on Cambodia's recent history at **Choeung Ek (the Killing Fields)** and gain insight into the country's remarkable resilience.

Tour the highlights of **Phnom Penh, including the Royal Palace, Silver Pagoda, National Museum, and Wat Phnom.**

Enjoy a sunset cruise on the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers.

Attend memorable cultural performances, including a **traditional Water Puppet Show in Hanoi,** the acclaimed **Phare Cambodian Circus in Siem Reap**, and an elegant Apsara Dance performance in Phnom Penh.



INCLUDED

Hotel accommodation in deluxe hotels in double/twin room with daily breakfast.

Arrival and departure transfers for suggested flights.

Meals as indicated in the itinerary - bottled water for all included meals.

Two small bottles or water per person during the tour provided on the bus.

All entry fees for above-mentioned places and activities.

Deluxe quality transportation with AC (size of the bus will be determined by the size of the group).

Private, English speaking guide(s) for sightseeing.

Service charges for included meals and hotels.

Three regional/domestic flights.

NOT INCLUDED

International airfare.

Visa fees if applicable.

Drinks with included meals, except tea or coffee for breakfast.

Gratuities for guides & drivers.

Personal expenditures like phone calls, laundry, medical expenses.

Travel insurance.



SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

Suggested flights are on EVA Airlines and partner airlines:

08 JAN BR 51	**Houston to Taipei dep: 11:30 pm / arr: 06:20 am**
10 JAN BR 397	**Taipei to Hanoi dep: 09:15 am / arr: 11:35 am**
22 JAN BR 266	**Phnom Penh to Taipei dep: 12:45 pm / arr: 5:05 pm**
22 JAN BR 52	**Taipei to Houston dep: 9:20 pm / arr: 8:50 pm**

Economy class: Please call
Business class: Please call

Fares may change based on availability.

Preferred Travel Partner

UNITED

January 8-22, 2027
15 Days / 12 Nights



PROGRAM DETAILS

Day 1: Fri, Jan 8 **Leave USA**

We will leave USA for Hanoi,Vietnam.

Overnight en route

Day 2: Sat, Jan 9 **En Route**

Day 3: Sun, Jan 10 **Hanoi - A Day in the Countryside**

Arriving in Vietnam before noon, you will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel. En route, enjoy a panoramic drive through the city, offering a first glimpse of the vibrant streets, elegant colonial architecture, and energetic rhythm of daily life.

A light lunch at a local restaurant provides an opportunity to sample your first tastes of Vietnamese cuisine before checking in to the hotel in the early afternoon.

The remainder of the day is at leisure. Relax after your journey, settle into your surroundings, or take a gentle stroll in the neighborhood and begin soaking up the atmosphere of this fascinating country.

Overnight in Hanoi **Meals: D**

Day 4: Mon, Jan 11 **Hanoi - A Day in the Countryside**

Today we leave the bustle of Hanoi behind and journey into the peaceful countryside of northern Vietnam. A scenic drive through rural landscapes and traditional villages brings us to the area of Tho Ha Village and Dong Tam Hamlet, where daily life continues much as it has for generations.

Here, we gain a firsthand glimpse into Vietnam's agricultural traditions as local residents demonstrate activities such as fishing, crab catching, vegetable cultivation, and other aspects of rural life. This immersive experience offers a meaningful introduction to the communities that form the backbone of the country.

We are welcomed into the home of a local family for a hands-on cooking experience and a traditional lunch featuring regional specialties. Sharing a meal together provides a unique opportunity to learn about local customs and hospitality while enjoying authentic Vietnamese flavors.

In the afternoon, we board small rowboats at Nha Le Pier for a tranquil journey through the waterways to Galaxy Grotto, a remarkable cave renowned for its impressive stalactite formations that sparkle overhead like a star-filled sky. Surrounded by dramatic limestone scenery, this peaceful excursion showcases the natural beauty that has made this region one of Vietnam's hidden treasures.

Returning to Hanoi in the late afternoon, we gather for dinner at a local restaurant before overnighting in the capital.

Overnight in Hanoi **Meals: B - L – D**





Day 5: Tue, Jan 12 **Hanoi: History, Heritage, and Living Traditions**

A captivating blend of ancient traditions and modern energy, Hanoi is one of Asia's most fascinating capitals. With a history spanning more than a thousand years as Vietnam's political and cultural center, the city offers an extraordinary window into the nation's past and present.

Our day begins at the Ho Chi Minh Complex, where we explore key sites associated with the founding father of modern Vietnam, including the Presidential Palace grounds, Ho Chi Minh's modest stilt-house residence, and the Ho Chi Minh Museum. Together, these landmarks provide insight into the life and legacy of the revolutionary leader who shaped the course of Vietnamese history.

We continue to the Temple of Literature, founded in 1070 and regarded as Vietnam's first university. Dedicated to Confucius and generations of scholars, this beautifully preserved complex stands as a testament to the country's long tradition of learning and public service.

Next, we visit Hoa Lo Prison, a site that reflects several chapters of Vietnam's turbulent history. Originally built by the French colonial administration to hold political prisoners, it later became known to American prisoners of war during the Vietnam War as the "Hanoi Hilton." Today, the preserved section of the prison serves as a museum exploring both periods of its past. In the afternoon, we visit the Museum of Ethnology, one of Vietnam's finest museums. Its exhibits and outdoor pavilions showcase the diverse cultures, traditions, and architectural styles of the country's 54 officially recognized ethnic groups, offering a deeper understanding of Vietnam's remarkable cultural mosaic.

Returning to the city center, we experience Hanoi from a different perspective during a traditional cyclo ride through the atmospheric Old Quarter. This historic district, famous for its narrow streets and centuries-old merchant guilds, remains the vibrant commercial heart of the capital.

Following dinner at a popular local restaurant in the Old Quarter, we conclude the day with a performance of Hanoi's celebrated water puppetry. Originating in the flooded rice fields of the Red River Delta, this uniquely Vietnamese art form combines music, storytelling, and puppetry to bring scenes of rural life and folklore to life upon the water.

Overnight in Hanoi **Meals: B - L – D**

Day 6: Wed, Jan 13 **Ha Long Bay Cruise**

This morning we depart Hanoi and travel through the fertile landscapes of the Red River Delta to Tuan Chau Harbor, gateway to the legendary waters of Ha Long Bay. Recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ha Long Bay is one of Southeast Asia's most spectacular natural wonders, renowned for its emerald waters and thousands of limestone karst islands rising dramatically from the sea.

Upon arrival, we board our cruise vessel and settle into our cabins while enjoying a welcome drink and orientation. As the ship begins its journey through the bay, a leisurely lunch is served, offering an opportunity to admire the ever-changing scenery of towering limestone formations, secluded coves, and picturesque islets.

In the afternoon, we explore the enchanting Dark and Bright Cave, one of the bay's most beautiful natural attractions. Accessible by kayak or traditional bamboo sampan, this peaceful area is known for its striking limestone cliffs, tranquil waters, and rich ecosystem. Located within the protected waters bordering Cat Ba National Park, the cave and surrounding lagoon provide a serene setting to appreciate the extraordinary beauty of this UNESCO-listed landscape.

Back on board, there is time to relax on deck as the vessel cruises among the bay's iconic formations. As evening approaches, guests may join the ship's chef for a Vietnamese cooking demonstration before gathering for dinner in the elegant dining room.

After dinner, enjoy the tranquility of the bay from the upper deck, socialize in the lounge, or try your hand at traditional squid fishing with assistance from the crew. Spending the night amid the limestone peaks of Ha Long Bay is an unforgettable experience and one of the highlights of any journey through Vietnam.

Overnight on Board **Meals: B - L – D**





Day 7: Thu, Jan 14 **Ha Long Bay - Ho Chi Minh City**

Awaken to the peaceful beauty of Ha Long Bay as the morning light illuminates the limestone peaks rising from the water. Guests may begin the day with a traditional Tai Chi session on deck before enjoying breakfast while the vessel continues its gentle cruise through this remarkable seascape.

This morning we visit Trung Trang Cave on Cat Ba Island, an impressive limestone cavern shaped over millions of years. Hidden within the island's lush landscape, the cave reveals a fascinating world of stalactites, stalagmites, and naturally sculpted rock formations, offering yet another perspective on the geological wonders of the bay. Returning to the ship, we enjoy a final breakfast while cruising toward the harbor, savoring the last views of the spectacular karst formations and tranquil waters that have made Ha Long Bay one of Vietnam's most treasured natural landmarks.

Following disembarkation at Tuan Chau Port, we travel to Hanoi Airport for our flight south to Ho Chi Minh City. Formerly known as Saigon, Vietnam's largest city presents a striking contrast to Hanoi, combining French colonial heritage, modern skyscrapers, bustling commerce, and a dynamic energy that reflects the country's rapid transformation.

Upon arrival, we are met by our local guide and transferred to our hotel. The remainder of the evening is at leisure.

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City **Meals: B - L - D**

Day 8: Fri, Jan 15 **Ho Chi Minh City: History, Memory, and Modern Vietnam**

Today we explore Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest metropolis and economic powerhouse, where traces of colonial history, revolutionary struggle, and rapid modernization coexist side by side. Formerly known as Saigon, the city offers a compelling perspective on the events that shaped modern Vietnam and the remarkable transformation that has followed.

Our day begins at the Reunification Palace, one of the most significant landmarks in Vietnamese history. Preserved much as it appeared in 1975, the palace became internationally famous when North Vietnamese tanks entered its grounds on April 30, marking the end of the Vietnam War and the reunification of the country. The building provides a fascinating glimpse into the political history of South Vietnam during the Cold War era.

We continue to the War Remnants Museum, whose powerful exhibits document the human impact of decades of conflict. Through photographs, artifacts, and historical displays, visitors gain a deeper understanding of the Vietnam War and its lasting consequences for the country and its people.

The tour then turns to the city's colonial heritage with visits to the elegant Notre Dame Cathedral and the historic Central Post Office, two of the finest surviving examples of French architecture in Vietnam. We also visit Giac Lam Pagoda, the city's oldest Buddhist temple, founded in the eighteenth century, and the Southern Women's Museum, which highlights the important contributions of Vietnamese women throughout the nation's history.

To experience the city's vibrant contemporary culture, we conclude the day at Ben Thanh Market, one of Ho Chi Minh City's most iconic landmarks. The bustling market offers everything from handicrafts and textiles to local delicacies, providing an ideal opportunity to browse, shop, and observe daily life in the heart of the city.

This evening, we gather for dinner at one of the renowned restaurants in the city.

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City **Meals: B - L - D**

Day 9: Sat, Jan 16 **Mekong Delta: Life Along the River**

Today we journey into the fertile Mekong Delta, a vast network of rivers, canals, and islands often referred to as Vietnam's "rice bowl." This remarkably productive region supports millions of people and offers a fascinating glimpse into a way of life shaped by the rhythms of the river.

Upon arrival in Cai Be, we board our riverboat and begin cruising through the waterways of the delta. Along the way, we observe daily life unfolding on the water and visit local family enterprises where traditional products such as rice paper, rice snacks, coconut candies, and dried fruits are still made using techniques passed down through generations. These small-scale industries remain an important part of the local economy and provide insight into the resourcefulness of delta communities.

As we navigate the narrow canals and wider branches of the Mekong, we pass lush orchards, evergreen islands, and villages connected more by waterways than roads. The tranquil scenery and constant river activity reveal the unique character of a region where commerce, transportation, and daily life remain closely tied to the water.

Our cruise continues to Dong Hoa Hiep Island, one of the most picturesque areas of the delta. Here we enjoy lunch at an elegant colonial-style villa set amid tropical gardens. The restaurant's historic setting and refined cuisine provide a memorable opportunity to relax and appreciate the charm of the Mekong countryside.

Following our exploration of the delta, we return to Ho Chi Minh City in the late afternoon.

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City **Meals: B - L – D**



Day 10: Sun, Jan 17 **Cu Chi Tunnels and the Heritage of Saigon**

This morning we travel to the Cu Chi Tunnels, one of the most remarkable sites associated with the Vietnam War. Developed over many years by Vietnamese resistance fighters, this vast underground network served as living quarters, supply routes, hospitals, and command centers during the conflict. A short introductory film provides historical context before we explore sections of the tunnels and view exhibits that illustrate the ingenuity and determination required to sustain life underground during wartime. The site also features remnants of military equipment and bomb craters that testify to the intensity of the conflict in this region.

Returning to Ho Chi Minh City, we continue our exploration of Vietnam's rich cultural heritage at the Vietnam History Museum. Its collections span thousands of years, tracing the development of Vietnamese civilization from ancient kingdoms through the colonial period and into the modern era.

We then visit Cholon, the city's historic Chinatown and one of the largest Chinese communities in Southeast Asia. A fascinating blend of Vietnamese and Chinese influences, this vibrant district is known for its bustling markets, traditional medicine shops, ornate temples, and beautifully preserved pagodas. Walking through its lively streets offers a glimpse into the cultural diversity that has long shaped the character of Ho Chi Minh City.

The remainder of the day is at leisure. This is an excellent opportunity to relax, revisit favorite sights, or discover the city's renowned culinary scene at your own pace.

Overnight in Ho Chi Minh City **Meals: B - L**

Day 11: Mon, Jan 18 **Ho Chi Minh City - Siem Reap/Cambodia**

After a leisurely morning, we transfer to the airport for our flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap, gateway to the legendary temples of Angkor and one of Southeast Asia's most captivating destinations.

Upon arrival in Cambodia, we are met by our local guide and transferred to our hotel. Once a small provincial town, Siem Reap has grown into a vibrant cultural center while retaining its relaxed atmosphere and traditional Khmer character. The city serves as the ideal base for exploring the extraordinary monuments of the Angkor civilization, one of the greatest cultural achievements of the medieval world.

The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Guests may choose to relax at the hotel, explore the local markets, or take a stroll through the charming streets of Siem Reap in preparation for the remarkable experiences that await in the days ahead.

This evening, we gather for dinner and our first introduction to the warm hospitality and distinctive flavors of Cambodian cuisine.

Overnight in Siem Reap **Meals: D**





Day 12: Tue, Jan 19 **Siem Reap – Angkor Thom, Bayon and Angkor Wat**

Today we begin our exploration of the extraordinary temples of Angkor, one of the world's greatest archaeological and cultural treasures. The modern town of Siem Reap serves as the gateway to this remarkable legacy of the Khmer Empire, whose rulers created some of the most magnificent monuments ever built in Southeast Asia.

Our tour starts at Angkor Thom, the last great capital of the Khmer Empire, established in the late twelfth century by King Jayavarman VII. Entering through the monumental South Gate, we encounter the famous causeway lined with immense stone figures depicting the Hindu legend of the "Churning of the Ocean of Milk," one of the most important creation stories in Southeast Asian art and mythology.

At the heart of the ancient city stands the magnificent Bayon Temple, renowned for its soaring towers adorned with more than 200 serene stone faces. Believed to represent the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, these enigmatic smiles have become one of the enduring symbols of Angkor. We also explore other important monuments within the walled city, including the Baphuon, the Royal Enclosure, Phimeanakas, and the impressive Terrace of the Elephants, each reflecting the artistic sophistication and political power of the Khmer Empire at its height.

In the late afternoon, we visit the crown jewel of Angkor: Angkor Wat. Widely regarded as one of humanity's greatest architectural achievements, this vast temple complex is the largest religious monument in the world and the defining symbol of Cambodia. Built in the twelfth century, its soaring towers, intricate bas-reliefs, and harmonious design embody the pinnacle of classical Khmer art and architecture. Originally dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu before becoming a Buddhist sanctuary, Angkor Wat remains both a masterpiece of engineering and a living place of worship. As the day draws to a close, we experience the magical atmosphere of Angkor Wat in the soft light of late afternoon and sunset, when the temple's iconic silhouette creates one of the most unforgettable scenes in Asia.

Following dinner, we enjoy a performance by the acclaimed Phare Circus, an innovative Cambodian artistic troupe whose talented performers combine theater, music, dance, and acrobatics to tell stories inspired by Cambodian history, culture, and contemporary life.

Overnight in Siem Reap **Meals: B - L - D**

Day 13: Wed, Jan 20 **Siem Reap – Kompong Phluk - Banteay Srey**

An early start rewards us with one of Angkor's most atmospheric experiences as we visit Ta Prohm, one of the most evocative temples in the entire complex. Built in 1186 by King Jayavarman VII and dedicated to his mother, the temple has been left largely as it was found, with giant tree roots intertwining with ancient stone walls and towers. Made famous internationally as a filming location for Tomb Raider, Ta Prohm captivates visitors with its haunting beauty, where nature and architecture have become inseparably entwined. Wandering through its narrow passageways, crumbling courtyards, and jungle-covered ruins offers an unforgettable glimpse into the romantic era of Angkor's rediscovery.

We then travel to Kompong Phluk, a remarkable floating community on the shores of Tonle Sap, Southeast Asia's largest freshwater lake. The village is built on towering stilts that accommodate the dramatic seasonal fluctuations in water levels. Exploring this unique settlement provides valuable insight into the daily lives, traditions, and resilience of the people who have adapted to living in harmony with the rhythms of the lake.

After lunch, we venture into the Cambodian countryside to visit Banteay Srei, often regarded as the jewel of Khmer art. Built in the tenth century and dedicated to the Hindu god Shiva, this exquisite temple is celebrated for its remarkably intricate carvings, delicate proportions, and warm pink sandstone. Known as the "Citadel of Women" or "Citadel of Beauty," Banteay Srei is widely considered one of the finest achievements of Khmer architecture and sculpture.

Our final visit is to Banteay Samre, a beautifully restored twelfth-century Hindu temple distinguished by its elegant design and peaceful setting. Less visited than some of Angkor's more famous monuments, it offers an opportunity to appreciate the artistry and spiritual legacy of the Khmer civilization in a tranquil environment.

Overnight in Siem Reap **Meals: B - L - D**

Day 14: Thu, Jan 21 **Phnom Penh: Cambodia's Royal Heritage and Recent History**

After breakfast, we fly to Phnom Penh, Cambodia's capital and cultural heart. Situated at the confluence of the Mekong, Tonle Sap, and Bassac Rivers, Phnom Penh combines elegant royal monuments, colonial-era architecture, and vibrant modern life while bearing witness to some of the most profound chapters of Cambodia's history.

Upon arrival, we visit Choeung Ek, one of the most important memorial sites associated with the Khmer Rouge period. Known internationally as the "Killing Fields," this site serves as a solemn reminder of the tragic years between 1975 and 1979, when Cambodia endured one of the twentieth century's most devastating genocides. The memorial and stupa provide a place for reflection and remembrance while helping visitors understand the resilience of the Cambodian people in the years that followed.

Returning to the city center, we begin our exploration of Phnom Penh's rich cultural heritage. Our tour includes the magnificent Royal Palace, the official residence of Cambodia's monarch and one of the finest examples of Khmer-inspired architecture in the country. Within the palace grounds stands the celebrated Silver Pagoda, renowned for its priceless treasures, including crystal and gold Buddha statues and its floor once covered with thousands of silver tiles.

We continue to the National Museum, an architectural masterpiece housing one of the world's finest collections of Khmer art. Its galleries trace the development of Cambodian civilization through centuries of sculpture, religious art, and archaeological treasures from the Angkor period and beyond. Our final stop is Wat Phnom, the historic hilltop temple from which Phnom Penh takes its name. Founded in the fourteenth century, it remains one of the city's most important religious and cultural landmarks.

Later this afternoon, we embark on a relaxing sunset cruise along the Mekong and Tonle Sap Rivers. As the sun begins to set, we enjoy panoramic views of Phnom Penh's skyline, riverfront promenade, and traditional communities that continue to thrive along the waterways.

This evening, we experience a performance of classical Cambodian Apsara dance, one of the country's most treasured artistic traditions. Characterized by graceful movements, elaborate costumes, and stories drawn from mythology and royal history, the performance offers a beautiful introduction to Cambodia's cultural heritage. Dinner follows at the acclaimed Malis Restaurant, celebrated for elevating traditional Khmer cuisine with contemporary flair.

Overnight in Phnom Penh **Meals: B - L - D**

Day 15: Fri, Jan 22 **Departure**

After breakfast, there is time to relax and enjoy a final morning in Phnom Penh before transferring to the airport for your onward flight.

As our journey through Vietnam and Cambodia comes to an end, we depart with lasting memories of ancient temples, vibrant cities, breathtaking landscapes, and the warm hospitality of two remarkable nations. From the timeless beauty of Ha Long Bay and the waterways of the Mekong Delta to the grandeur of Angkor and the resilience of modern Cambodia, this journey has offered a fascinating exploration of the history, cultures, and peoples of Southeast Asia.


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