

December 2 – 21, 2006

Uncommon Journeys, LLC Heart and Soul of Viet Nam

A visit to Vietnam is an experience never to be forgotten. Photographs and descriptions have made it familiar, but to see the real sights is to enter a world beyond one's imagination. It is a deeply layered country, where natural beauty graces the landscape, history abounds, and centuries old traditions have had the good fortune to resist modern world intrusions. This is a dream trip for anyone inspired by gracious people, Buddhist spirituality or exotic tribal cultures. Surprise follows surprise, with beguiling attractions at every turn. You are sure to fall under the spell on this journey into the heart and soul of Vietnam.

Tour Highlights

- **Ho Chi Minh and Hanoi, blending tradition with a flurry of modern activity**
- **Stilted villages, floating markets and rice paddies of the Mekong Delta**
- **Picturesque seaport of Hoi An and nearby Champa imperial ruins of My Son**
- **Colorful markets of the northwestern highlands hill tribe communities**
- **Some of the world's most delectable cuisine**

Tour price: \$4200

Single supplement: \$975

The tour price, based on a minimum of 6 participants, **includes** 18 nights of hotel accommodations, all meals beginning December 4, domestic transportation, transfers, admission fees and tips of a group nature. The tour price **does not include** entry visa (currently \$70), international airfare, airport tax (currently \$14), beverages, tip to local guides and expenses of a personal nature.

A deposit of \$500 is required to register and secure a place on the tour. This deposit is fully refundable if notice is given 60 days prior to the departure date. The balance of the tour cost is due 60 days prior to departure date.

Passport and Visa Requirements

A passport with 6 months validity and visa are required to enter Viet Nam.

Tour Leader

Debbie Jefkin-Elnkave is a travel photographer and tour leader who specializes in remote and exotic cultures. Her interests include history, architecture and landscapes, but she finds the greatest rewards in discovering, visiting and photographing indigenous cultures. Debbie's knowledge of Viet Nam, profound appreciation for the people, and desire to share this amazing country, ensure a very rewarding journey.

Waiver of Liability

Uncommon Journeys, LLC assumes no responsibility for accidents or injury to participants in the Heart and Soul of Viet Nam tour. You will be required to read, accept and sign an agreement which releases Uncommon Journeys, LLC from any responsibility of liability.

Uncommon Journeys, LLC
Heart and Soul of Viet Nam
2006 Itinerary

Day 1: Friday, December 1 or Saturday, December 2 USA → Ho Chi Minh City
Depart USA for Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 2: Sunday, December 3 Arrive Ho Chi Minh City
Arrive Ho Chi Minh City and transfer to hotel. Dinner on your own.

Day 3: Monday, December 4 Ho Chi Minh City
Experience dynamic Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest city, where timeless traditions merge with modern day hustle & bustle. Attractions include Ben Thanh Central Market, Thien Hau Taoist Temple, Giac Lam Pagoda... and some of the world's best cuisine.

Day 4: Tuesday, December 5 Ho Chi Minh City → Chau Doc
Travel to the Mekong Delta, stopping along the way at Thi Tran Ben Loc Cao Dai Temple and Vinh Trang Buddhist Pagoda. By late afternoon we arrive at Chau Doc.

Day 5: Wednesday, December 6 Chau Doc
This morning we travel by bus to Tri Ton, then explore the waterways and stilted villages by boat. We continue our afternoon exploration on Vinh Te Canal.

Day 6: Thursday, December 7 Chau Doc → Can Tho
Our morning visits include the General Thoai Ngoc Hau mausoleum and Tayan Pagoda, then we continue to Can Tho.

Day 7: Friday, December 8 Can Tho → Ho Chi Minh City
Leisurely all day drive to Ho Chi Minh City, stopping along the way.

Day 8: Saturday, December 9 Ho Chi Minh City → Danang → Hoi An
Fly to Danang and drive to the picturesque seaport of Hoi An, where we visit the central market and tour this charming city on foot. Women won't want to resist a stop at a tailor shop for a custom-made Vietnamese *ao dia*.

Day 9: Sunday, December 10 Hoi An
This morning we visit the architectural ruins of My Son, the imperial city of the Champa Dynasty from the 4th to 12th centuries. Our afternoon exploration takes us to the Marble Mountains, site of the Tam Thai Temple and Dong Hoa Nghiem Cave.

Day 10: Monday, December 11 Hoi An → Danang → Hanoi
Fly to Hanoi, the intriguing capital city of lakes, temples and French colonial architecture. Enjoy a dazzling performance of the fantastic art form of water puppetry.

Day 11: Tuesday, December 12 Hanoi

This morning we explore the countryside between Bat Trang and Da Trach. This afternoon we visit the Temple of Literature, founded in 1070 to honor scholars and men of literary achievement. After that, our cyclo tour takes us through Hanoi's Old Quarter, a fascinating, chaotic, colorful maze of narrow streets named for the products sold there.

Day 12: Wednesday, December 13 Hanoi → Sa Pa

We drive 10 hours through mist-shrouded, lush mountain scenery to Sa Pa, where we start to explore the colorful markets and hill tribe communities of the northwestern highlands.

Day 13: Thursday, December 14 Sa Pa

The Binh Lu Market is attended by members of the Black Dzao tribe who practice ancestor worship and carries out elaborate rituals involving the sacrifice of pigs and chickens. The women wear elaborately woven costumes embellished with silver beads and coins, and a large red or embroidered turban.

Day 14: Friday, December 15 Sa Pa → Bac Ha

The Bac Ha region boasts some of Vietnam's most colorful, friendly tribes and fascinating weekly markets.

Day 15: Saturday, December 16 Bac Ha

Today we visit the market of the Flower Hmong, so called because of the embroidered flowers on the women's skirts. From there we visit a typical White Hmong village.

Day 16: Sunday, December 17 Bac Ha → Hanoi

At Bac Ha Market the action is fast and furious as Flower Hmong villagers trade their chickens, water buffalo, pigs and horses. After the market, we make the 10-hour journey to Hanoi.

Day 17: Monday, December 18 Hanoi → Halong Bay

Drive then trek to the famous holy land of Yen Tu, atop the highest mountain in northern Vietnam. Proceed to Halong Bay, one of Vietnam's natural splendors. Legend has it that the limestone grottos were carved by the thrashing tail of a dragon.

Day 18: Tuesday, December 19 Halong Bay → Haiphong

A five hour boat excursion takes us on an exploration through the majestic islands, fjords, inlets and caves of Cat Ba Island and Halong Bay.

Day 19: Wednesday, December 20 Hai Phong → Hanoi

Return to Hanoi

Day 20: Thursday, December 21 Departure

Depart for USA or onward destinations.