

Vietnam

Minorities and Marble Mountains



Travel with us through the spectacular scenery and waterscapes of Vietnam on a journey which allows us to meet with local women from every walk of life. We will discover the key roles women have had in Vietnam's fascinating history and try our hands at the traditions which still endure today. With a five day trek through the Pu Long Nature Reserve, a night aboard a traditional junk in Halong Bay and days spent exploring the cities, towns and villages of Vietnam, this adventure has it all. Experience this amazing country through the eyes of local women along the way.



Recommended itinerary:

Culture shock rating: 

Physical rating: 

Day 1 Arrive in Hanoi Upon our arrival in Hanoi, we will meet our Trip Leader at the airport and then transfer to our hotel to freshen up. This evening we will enjoy dinner at a local home where we will be able to begin learning about the role of women in everyday life in Vietnam.

Day 2 Hanoi Village This morning we will meet with the Women's Union in the village to connect with the locals. Afterwards, we will visit the local markets to find ingredients for a Vietnamese lunch and experience the fine art of haggling! In the afternoon we will take a visit to the Women's Museum which features fascinating displays on the history of women in Vietnam and their changing roles through time and ethnicity. Our final stop will be the Trung Sisters' Temple to learn about these fierce leaders.

Day 3 Cruise and Rowing in Bai Tu Long Bay (Halong Bay) with the Night on a Traditional Junk Boat Today we will embark on a cruise of Bai Tu Long Bay, rowing with the ladies of Bai Tu Long where we will learn about the lives of fisherwomen here. After what is set to be an excellent day we will be rocked to sleep on a traditional junk boat where we will spend the night.

Day 4 Bai Tu Long Caves After a day and night at sea we will have to get our land legs back as we spend today exploring the spectacular caves around Bai Tu Long. In the afternoon we will return to Hanoi.

Day 5 Street Vendors of Hanoi This morning we will rise early to visit the local market and see how local women start their working day. The rest of the morning will then be free to discover the city. After lunch we will explore the local street food (maybe we'll skip the live snakes!) and chat with the women working here about their lifestyle.

Day 6 Transfer to Mai Chau and Trek to Don Village Today we will leave the hustle and bustle of Hanoi and transfer to Mai Chau, nestled in beautiful rice paddy fields. Here we will meet with local Thai minority women to hear about their way of life and see how those of ethnic women vary. Afterwards we will trek through the beautiful scenery for around three hours to Don Village where we will work with the hill-tribe and join in a basket weaving class. We will spend this evening in a homestay in the village.

Day 7 Trek to Hieu Village Today we will stretch our legs once more with a 5-6 hour trek to Hieu village where we will spend time with the locals here and explore the village. We will spend the night in a homestay in Hieu Village.

Day 8 Trek to Nua Village Our 5-6 hour trek today will take us to Nua Village where we will meet more Thai minority women. Our group will be split into teams as we learn to cook some traditional Thai dishes and host a Thai MasterChef challenge, regardless of who wins, the outcome with undoubtedly be delicious! We will spend the night in a homestay in Nua Village.

Day 9 Hike to Son Village Today we will climb deeper into the Pu Long Nature Reserve, passing through several ethnic villages on our way to Son Village. On arrival, we will find our stop for the night which will be in a village homestay.

Day 10 Trek to Ton Village and Transfer to Ninh Binh After a few days trekking, we have an easy day through rice paddies and the Pu Long jungle, trekking for approximately 2.5 hours, before reaching our next stop of Ton Village. From here we will transfer to Ninh Binh, stopping to visit the town of Muong Khen on the way. Upon our arrival we will explore the sights of Ninh Binh.

Day 11 Boat Trip In Trang An and Night Train to Danang This morning we will enjoy a boat trip through Trang An, a UNESCO World Heritage site and visit the ancient Vietnamese capital of Hoa Lu. Afterwards we will visit a local embroidery store to see how the local women produce their wares here. This evening we will board the night train to Danang.

Day 12 Visit to the Marble Mountains Today we will have the opportunity to explore the stunning Marble Mountains of Danang and the cave entrances and Hindu and Buddhist sanctuaries which they are home to. In the afternoon we will enjoy another Vietnamese cookery class before transferring to Hoian.

Day 13 Visit to Huong Tra Que Village We will rise early this morning to visit the local fish market, an experience which is sure to wake us up first thing in the morning! After a late breakfast we will cycle to Huong Tra Que village. Aptly named after a type of local vegetable, we will join farmers in their daily work before stopping to join them on a well deserved lunch. Later, we will help the local women planting rice before returning to Hoi An for the evening.

Day 14 Meeting with a Local Teacher and Relax in Hoi An This morning we will have the opportunity to meet with a local female teacher to discuss her work and women's access to education in Vietnam. The rest of the day will be spent free at our leisure; after a busy few days an afternoon on the beach will be well deserved!

Day 15 Flight to Saigon and Walking Tour Today we will take a short flight to Saigon (1h40m). After checking in to our new hotel we will enjoy a walking tour of the city with its surprisingly French colonial style buildings and boulevards.

Day 16 Saigon Historical Sites and Business Woman Talk This morning we will visit some of the historical sites and countless temples of Saigon. After lunch we will meet with a local businesswoman to understand the pressures of working in business in the city and how it compares to the life of rural women.

Days 17 and 18 Off the Beaten Track in Vinh Long On the morning of day 17 we will travel to Vinh Long where we will spend the night in a local homestay. Over the course of the two days we will be able to work in a fruit garden with local women, visit the local markets and take a cruise around the canals of the Mekong Delta. On the afternoon of day 18 we will return to Saigon.

Day 19 Visit to Cu Chi Tunnels Today we will visit the sobering war memorial of the Cu Chi Tunnels to learn about the history of the Vietnamese war and life below the ground.

Day 20 Return Flight to the UK We wave farewell to our Trip Leader and Vietnam ready for our return to the UK.

Important Information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



DAYS FOR GIRLS This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls



The School
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