



12 Days

# Vietnam

## Northern Adventure

Good morning Vietnam! Greeting the sunrises and exploring until the sun sets, this action-packed expedition takes us across a truly unique and exotic country. Along the way, meet local people and witness the cultural differences of the southeast Asia: a world away from our own.

Sprawling jungles, and the many mystical caves that lie hiding beneath them, are just waiting for ambitious travellers to delve into their depths. Swim, cycle, climb, kayak; this trip offers multiple exciting ways to view the changing landscapes. With all that activity in a short space of time, a day relaxing on the beach is a welcome treat.



# Recommended expedition itinerary

Day  
1-2

## Arrive in Hanoi

Fly from the UK overnight to Noi Bai Airport, Hanoi, where we are met on arrival by our local STC Expedition Leader. We transfer first to our accommodation to freshen up and have a welcome briefing. The rest of the afternoon is ours to explore Hanoi and find a restaurant for our first traditional meal.

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Day  
3

## Cycle to Dong Ngac village, overnight train

Get set, go! Our northern adventure kicks off today with a cycling tour to Dong Ngac Village. This is a beautifully rustic place that remains untouched by modern urbanization. Our tour passes through flower villages and we stop to enjoy lunch with a local family in their home, a fantastic opportunity to learn about the unique culture and lifestyle of the people in northern Vietnam. Afterwards, we catch an overnight sleeper train to Dong Hoi—a must do when exploring south east Asia!

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Day  
4

## Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

Disembarking from the night train, we find ourselves in Dong Hoi. We enjoy breakfast here and then travel to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park. With the largest cave in the world, subterranean rivers and karst mountains, we enjoy some free time to explore this otherworldly area.

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Day  
5-6

## Tu Lan caving & jungle camp

Our day begins with a half-day hike through a lush green landscape of terraced crop fields, rugged jungles, beautiful waterfalls and karst mountains. We might even be lucky enough to meet a giant water buffalo, or two, on our way through. Having stopped for a picnic lunch, the next part of our Tu Lan adventure continues underground! This afternoon we explore three of the impressive Tu Lan caves. It is even possible to swim through parts of the caves, just watch out for the massive stalactites and stalagmites! Finally we reach our jungle camp for a well deserved BBQ dinner and fall asleep in hammocks listening to the sounds of nature.

Waking in the jungle, we spend another day climbing, squeezing, sliding and swimming through Tu Lan cave system. Finally emerging back above ground, we freshen up and catch an overnight bus to Ninh Binh.

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Day  
7

## Arrive Ninh Binh, explore by bike & boat

With an early arrival at Ninh Binh, we take time in the morning to relax and enjoy breakfast in a hotel. Feeling refreshed, we cycle on to our next destination: Trang An. Once here we will admire this spectacular World Heritage Site from the water as our guide row, row, rows the boat past limestone karst peaks submerged in rivers and rice paddy fields.

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Day  
8

## Ninh Binh to Cat Ba Island

Looking more like a location from the film Avatar, Cat Ba Island is a jungle and waterfall-clad paradise. The entire archipelago boasts similarly steep and rugged cliffs, with tropical beaches to lounge upon; which is exactly what we will do upon our afternoon arrival, occasionally taking a break from all this hard work to dip our toes in the azure-blue water.

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Day  
9

## Kayaking & rock climbing in Lan Ha Bay

After a relaxing day yesterday, today we continue our adventure and explore Lan Ha Bay by kayak or stand up paddle boarding. After drying off over lunch, we then try some rock climbing at Moody Beach. Whilst there are a variety of routes to suit all levels of climbers, this will be a fun introduction to climbing in stunning surroundings. Our guides will give us a full safety briefing and basic skills lesson before we get kitted out and climb up above the ocean's emerald water and jungle beaches! The views from the top over the beaches, jungle and sea are incomparable.

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Day  
10-11

## Bai Tu Long Bay overnight cruise

Take a ferry to Tuan Chau to start our two day cruise of picturesque Bai Tu Long Bay. We enjoy a fresh seafood lunch as we sail through the bay. There may also be opportunities to go kayaking, squid fishing and swimming for an even more immersive experience. A relaxing evening, watching an incredible sunset and settling down for a night on board the ship is in store for us.

To stretch our minds and sea legs, we begin the day with Tai Chi. Our cruise continues around the spectacular Bai Tu Long Bay and we visit Thien Canh Son cave before eventually heading back to shore. Tonight we enjoy our final evening in Hanoi.

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Day  
12

## Depart Hanoi

Sadly, we have reached our final day in this incredible country. There should be time for an early breakfast and last minute souvenir shopping before we catch our flight back to the UK.

# Further information

## Look what's included!

- International flights
- All accommodation
- All food
- All transportation and activities
- Bi-lingual, first-aid qualified local expedition leader
- Parent and student expedition launch evening
- Comprehensive pre-expedition training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Medical Emergency / Repatriation Travel Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Carbon offsetting of all flights
- Free t-shirt for every participant and teacher

## What's excluded?

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Cancellation and personal effects insurance

## Your expedition timeline



## Physical expedition rating:



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase in your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip.

## Culture shock rating:



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



# A journey of 1,000 miles...

Starts with a single step... Contact us now to start your expedition journey

## 1 Get your tailor-made proposal and further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your expedition itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an itinerary just for you. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk assessments and destination threat assessments to help you with your expedition approval process. Ask for posters and your pre-booking information pack too.

## 3 Arrange an expedition launch evening at your school

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the expedition with a comprehensive information evening with opportunity for questions.



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