# Southern Vietnam Exploration: Ho Chi Minh City, Mangroves & Culture – 4 Days

| 4D / 3N | Easy | Private | USD 440 / pax |
|---|---|---|---|
| Duration | Difficulty | Tour Type | Starting From |

*Experience the vibrant pulse of Ho Chi Minh City alongside the tranquil beauty of the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere. This 4-day private tour blends city exploration by vintage jeep with serene nature excursions and deep dives into Vietnamese culture and traditional arts.*

## DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

**Ho Chi Minh City**

## TOUR OVERVIEW

Overview: Ho Chi Minh City & Can Gio Cultural Retreat

This 4-day private journey through southern Vietnam offers a rich tapestry of experiences, from the energetic streets of Ho Chi Minh City to the peaceful ecosystems of the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve. Travelers will engage with local culture through culinary adventures, traditional medicine insights, and hands-on art workshops, providing a comprehensive understanding of the region's diverse appeal.

Tour Highlights

Experience Ho Chi Minh City's vibrant nightlife and street food scene from a vintage jeep.

Savor authentic Vietnamese dishes like crispy banh xeo and fresh seafood in District 4.

Explore the UNESCO-listed Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve with a guided hike.

Engage in traditional activities like mud creeper harvesting and crab catching with local fishermen.

Paddleboard through serene mangrove waterways, observing local life and nature.

Discover the history and practices of traditional Vietnamese medicine at a temple and museum.

Create a unique rice painting artwork under the guidance of local artisans.

Enjoy mindful vegetarian dining and a hearty bowl of pho at renowned local eateries.

Route Summary

The itinerary focuses entirely on the Ho Chi Minh City area. Guests arrive in the bustling metropolis, spending their first day exploring its dynamic nightlife and culinary scene. The second day is dedicated to a full-day excursion to the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve, a UNESCO-listed site, for nature and wildlife encounters. The third day delves into Saigon's cultural heritage through traditional medicine and rice painting. The tour concludes with departure from Ho Chi Minh City.

Who This Tour Suits

This private tour is ideal for families and individuals seeking a blend of urban excitement, natural beauty, and cultural immersion. It caters to those interested in Vietnamese cuisine, traditional healing practices, and ecological exploration, offering a relaxed yet engaging pace.

Practical Information

All accommodations are in hotels in Ho Chi Minh City for three nights. Transportation throughout the tour, including airport transfers, is provided. Meals include 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, and 1 dinner, ensuring a taste of local flavors. English-speaking guides and entrance fees are included for all specified attractions.

## TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

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## DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

### Day 1 — Ho Chi Minh Arrival & Night Jeep Food Tour

*Meals: Dinner | Stay: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City | Transport: Vintage jeep, private vehicle*

Upon arrival in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest urban center, travelers will feel the dynamic energy where French colonial architecture, bustling street life, and modern skyscrapers coexist. After checking into the hotel, the evening transforms into a unique culinary and cultural journey. Guests will board a vintage jeep for an exciting night tour, beginning with a scenic drive across the Saigon River, offering views of the city skyline illuminated against the twilight.

The jeep then navigates to District 4, a neighborhood renowned for its vibrant street food. Here, participants will indulge in a variety of fresh and flavorful seafood dishes. A highlight of the evening is a visit to a local spot to savor “banh xeo,” a crispy Vietnamese rice flour crepe generously filled with shrimp, pork, and fresh herbs. The guide will explain its origins and demonstrate the traditional way to enjoy it, wrapped in lettuce and dipped in homemade fish sauce.

As the tour continues, the jeep winds through narrow alleyways and backstreets, providing authentic glimpses into local life, with children playing and family-run shops bustling late into the night. A refreshing scoop of Saigon's signature coconut ice cream offers a sweet interlude. The night culminates on Saigon’s lively Beer Street, with a stop at a rooftop bar. Guests can enjoy a local craft beer while admiring the glittering city lights, soaking in the electric atmosphere of this unstoppable metropolis. This immersive jeep tour offers a genuine taste of Saigon's vibrant character, setting an exciting tone for the adventure ahead.

**Activities:**
Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City and check into your hotel.
Embark on a vintage jeep tour of Saigon by night.
Cross the Saigon River, observing the illuminated skyline.
Explore District 4's street food scene and taste fresh seafood.
Savor traditional "banh xeo" with local guidance.
Discover hidden alleyways and local life.
Enjoy Saigon's coconut ice cream.
Visit a rooftop bar on Beer Street for craft beer and city views.

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## Day 2 Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve Exploration

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City | Transport: Private vehicle, Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP)*

The morning begins with a transfer from Ho Chi Minh City to the UNESCO-listed Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve. This day promises an immersive experience in nature, wildlife, and riverine landscapes. Upon arrival, guests will embark on a guided hike through the verdant mangrove trails, enjoying the fresh air and the distinct sounds of the forest ecosystem.
Deep within the reserve, travelers will participate in local life by learning to harvest “oc len” (mud creepers) and catch small crabs in the soft, silty mud, an engaging activity often shared with local fishermen. Following this, the group will transfer to a tranquil riverfront area, where they can enjoy stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) amidst the stilt houses and dense mangrove roots. Depending on tidal conditions and group size, there may be an opportunity to try traditional fishing net casting, a practice passed down through generations.
Around midday, a delicious lunch awaits at a local restaurant, featuring fresh seafood and regional specialties, enjoyed with a gentle breeze from the water. The afternoon continues with a deeper exploration of the ecosystem at the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve Museum. Exhibits detail the rich biodiversity, from rare saltwater crocodiles to migratory birds and medicinal plants. The adventure concludes with a climb up the 36-meter-high observation tower, offering breathtaking panoramic views of the expansive green canopy stretching towards the sea, a powerful reminder of Vietnam's natural wonders.
The return journey to Ho Chi Minh City commences in the late afternoon, leaving guests with a profound connection to Vietnam’s wild side.

**Activities:**
Travel to the UNESCO-listed Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve.
Hike through lush mangrove trails.
Participate in harvesting "oc len" (mud creepers) and catching crabs.
Enjoy stand-up paddleboarding (SUP) among mangroves and stilt houses.
Experience traditional fishing net casting (optional, tide/group dependent).
Dine on fresh seafood and local specialties for lunch.
Explore the Can Gio Mangrove Biosphere Reserve Museum.
Ascend the observation tower for panoramic forest views.

## Day 3 Saigon's Traditional Medicine & Rice Art Workshop

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh City | Transport: Private vehicle*

This half-day cultural immersion in Ho Chi Minh City offers a journey into ancient healing traditions, artistic expression, and mindful living, designed to nourish both body and spirit. The morning begins with a warm welcome and a hearty bowl of pho at the renowned Pho Hung restaurant. Guests will savor the aromatic broth, rice noodles, and tender beef, experiencing one of Vietnam’s most iconic dishes in a bustling local setting.
Next, the exploration shifts to holistic wellness at Tan Hung Long Tu, a revered herbal medicine temple tucked away in a quiet city corner. Here, visitors will step into a traditional medicine clinic, explore a tranquil herbal garden, and may even receive a pulse diagnosis and personalized health advice from a local practitioner, gaining an intimate insight into Eastern medical wisdom. The historical journey continues at the Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine, where over 3,000 artifacts illustrate the evolution of herbal healing from prehistoric times to the present. Guests can engage with the past by grinding

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herbs with ancient tools or dressing in a traditional "ao dai" for a photo opportunity as a historical healer. An optional herbal foot bath is available for further relaxation (at own expense).

Creativity and tranquility converge at Quynh Vy Rice Painting Studio. Under the patient guidance of local artisans, participants will learn the meditative process of crafting unique artwork using grains of rice, creating a personalized keepsake that blends Vietnamese culture with individual artistic expression. The experience concludes at Ba Xa Vegetarian Restaurant, a hidden gem known for its elegant ambiance and plant-based cuisine. In this serene setting, guests will enjoy a thoughtfully prepared vegetarian lunch, learning about the benefits of a plant-based diet for health, balance, and environmental harmony. After lunch, a guide and driver will provide transfer back to the original pick-up point, concluding a day rich in Saigon's ancient roots and creative spirit.

**Activities:** Enjoy a traditional pho breakfast at Pho Hung restaurant.
Visit Tan Hung Long Tu herbal medicine temple and clinic.
Explore a herbal garden and receive optional pulse diagnosis/health advice.
Discover the history of herbal healing at the Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine.
Participate in interactive exhibits, including grinding herbs and dressing in "ao dai".
Opt for a relaxing herbal foot bath (additional cost).
Craft a personalized rice painting at Quynh Vy Rice Painting Studio.
Savor a mindful vegetarian lunch at Ba Xa Vegetarian Restaurant.

## Day 4 — Departure from Ho Chi Minh City

*Meals: NA | Stay: NA | Transport: Private vehicle*

As this memorable four-day journey through southern Vietnam concludes, guests have a final opportunity to absorb the dynamic atmosphere of Ho Chi Minh City. With vivid memories of its bustling streets, rich cultural encounters, and delightful cuisine, the morning offers a last glimpse into the city's unique charm.

Depending on individual flight schedules, there might be time for a leisurely stroll around the hotel's neighborhood, enjoying a final bowl of pho, or sipping Vietnamese iced coffee at a sidewalk café, observing the daily rhythm of local life. A private driver will ensure a comfortable transfer to the airport, facilitating a smooth departure from Vietnam. Travelers will carry with them the sights, flavors, and warmth of the experiences shared throughout the trip.

**Activities:** Enjoy free time in Ho Chi Minh City, depending on flight schedule.
Consider a final meal or coffee experience.
Transfer to the airport for departure.

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

| INCLUDED | NOT INCLUDED |
|---|---|
| v Accommodation in a hotel for 3 nights (twin/double sharing). | |

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- v All specified transport, including airport pick-up and drop-off.
- v Meals as indicated: 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 dinner.
- v All in-tour stationed local English-speaking guide.
- v Entrance fees for all Vietnam attractions mentioned in the itinerary.

## PRICE INCLUDES

- v Accommodation in a hotel for 3 nights (twin/double sharing).
- v All specified transport, including airport pick-up and drop-off.
- v Meals as indicated: 2 breakfasts, 2 lunches, 1 dinner.
- v All in-tour stationed local English-speaking guide.
- v Entrance fees for all Vietnam attractions mentioned in the itinerary.

## CANCELLATION POLICY

*Tour Code: IMP-96C8F6166866*