Vietnam & Myanmar Cultural Journey: Ho Chi Minh to Mandalay – 15 Days

15D / 14N	Moderate	Private	USD 2,349 / pax
Duration	Difficulty	Tour Type	Starting From

Explore the rich heritage and diverse landscapes of Vietnam and Myanmar over 15 days. From the bustling streets of Ho Chi Minh City and the serene Mekong Delta to the ancient temples of Bagan and the vibrant life of Mandalay, this journey offers deep cultural insights and breathtaking scenery.

DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

Ho Chi Minh City → Hoi An → Hanoi → Ha Long

TOUR OVERVIEW

Tour Overview: Vietnam & Myanmar Expedition

This comprehensive 15-day tour invites you to traverse two of Southeast Asia's most captivating nations: Vietnam and Myanmar. Begin your adventure amidst the dynamic energy of Ho Chi Minh City, delving into its historical depths and exploring the tranquil waterways of the Mekong Delta. Transition to the charming ancient town of Hoi An, known for its well-preserved architecture and vibrant artisan scene. Continue north to Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, where ancient traditions meet modern life, before experiencing the majestic limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay on an overnight cruise.

The journey then shifts to Myanmar, starting in the spiritual hub of Yangon, home to the revered Shwedagon Pagoda. From there, explore the awe-inspiring plains of Bagan, dotted with thousands of ancient temples and pagodas, offering spectacular sunrise and sunset vistas. Conclude your expedition in Mandalay, Myanmar's last royal capital, where you'll encounter grand monasteries, historical palaces, and iconic landmarks like the U Bein Bridge.

Highlights of Your Journey

Navigate the intricate canals of the Mekong Delta and observe local crafts.

Wander through the historic streets of Hoi An Ancient Town.

Experience an overnight cruise amidst the dramatic scenery of Ha Long Bay.

Witness the golden splendor of Yangon's Shwedagon Pagoda.

Marvel at the vast temple-studded landscape of Bagan.

Explore the cultural treasures and royal heritage of Mandalay.

Who Is This Tour For?

This tour is ideal for solo travelers seeking a flexible group experience, offering a blend of guided exploration and personal discovery. It caters to those with an interest in nature, diverse landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and authentic local life experiences. The itinerary balances historical sightseeing with opportunities for relaxation and independent exploration.

Practical Information

Travel between cities is facilitated by domestic flights and comfortable private transfers, ensuring efficient and relaxed transitions. Accommodation ranges from 3-star to 5-star hotels, with one memorable night spent aboard a cruise in Ha Long Bay. The tour includes 14 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 1 brunch, and 1 dinner, providing a taste of local cuisine throughout your journey.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

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* Explore the intricate waterways and local industries of the Mekong Delta.
* Discover the historical landmarks and underground network of the Cu Chi Tunnels.
* Stroll through the UNESCO-listed Hoi An Ancient Town, admiring its unique architecture.
* Experience an overnight cruise through the stunning limestone seascape of Ha Long Bay.
* Visit the majestic Shwedagon Pagoda and other spiritual sites in Yangon.
* Witness countless ancient temples and pagodas scattered across Bagan's plains.
* Observe monastic life and walk the iconic U Bein Bridge near Mandalay.
* Ascend Mount Popa to its dramatic shrine, enjoying panoramic views.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 Ho Chi Minh City Arrival and Leisure

Meals: NA | Stay: Hotel in Ho Chi Minh

Upon your arrival at Tan Son Nhat Airport in Ho Chi Minh City, a dedicated driver and guide will be waiting to transfer you to your luxurious hotel. After checking in, you'll have ample time to unwind and recover from your international flight. Standard check-in is typically at 14:00; should you require an earlier entry, arrangements can be made with an additional fee through your travel consultant.

The remainder of the day is yours to spend at your leisure. You might choose to relax at the hotel's amenities, or if your energy permits, begin your exploration of Ho Chi Minh City. The evening offers various options for experiencing the city's vibrant nightlife, from sampling local delicacies to enjoying cultural performances or a scenic dinner cruise on the Saigon River.

Day 2 Mekong Delta River Cruise and Local Crafts

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Transport: Car, Cruise, Xe Loi, Sampan boat

After breakfast at your hotel, your guide will meet you around 8:00 AM to commence a full-day excursion into the lush Mekong Delta. The journey takes you to Ben Tre Province, where you will board a cruise along the Ham Luong River. As you glide along the tranquil waters, observe the dense mangrove forests and the everyday lives of the local communities residing along the riverbanks.

The tour includes a visit to a coconut processing workshop, offering a firsthand look at how various coconut products are made. Following this, you'll enjoy a refreshing break with local fruits and tea at a traditional mat-weaving house, learning about this intricate craft. A unique experience awaits as you ride a 'xe loi' (motorized rickshaw) through verdant fruit orchards and agricultural fields, immersing yourself in the rural scenery.

Lunch will be a delightful experience at a riverside restaurant, featuring regional specialties. In the afternoon, prepare for a sampan boat trip through narrow canals, navigating through stunning mangroves for about 10-15 minutes. The day concludes around 17:00, as you are transferred back to your hotel in Ho Chi Minh City for relaxation.

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Day 3 Cu Chi Tunnels Exploration & Ho Chi Minh City Landmarks, Flight to Da Nang

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Transport: Car, Airplane

Your day begins with breakfast before an 8:00 AM pickup for an adventurous trip to the Cu Chi Tunnels. Here, you'll gain insight into the historical significance of the tunnels through an informative film and guide narration, detailing their construction and purpose during the war. Explore the jungle terrain to discover hidden traps, bunkers, and secret entrances.

Venture into the underground tunnels themselves, experiencing the challenging conditions faced by soldiers. You'll also have the opportunity to try out gun shooting (optional, at additional cost) and taste traditional green tea with cassava, a staple food during wartime. A light lunch will be provided on the return journey to Ho Chi Minh City.

The afternoon continues with a city tour of Ho Chi Minh's prominent historical sites. Visit the Independence Palace, a symbol of Vietnam's reunification, followed by the Old Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral, both showcasing impressive French colonial architecture (note: Notre Dame Cathedral is under renovation until 2027). Explore the War Remnants Museum for a poignant look at the Vietnam War, and conclude at Ben Thanh Market, a bustling hub for local life and culture. Later, you will be transferred to Tan Son Nhat Airport for your flight to Da Nang, followed by a transfer to your hotel in Hoi An for check-in.

Day 4 Hoi An Ancient Town Cultural Walk

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Hoi An

Your immersive Hoi An experience commences with a visit to Hoi An Market, a vibrant local hub where residents procure fresh produce and daily necessities. This offers an authentic glimpse into the town's culinary landscape and daily rhythm. The journey continues to the Phuc Kien Chinese Assembly Hall, a significant communal space for prayer and cultural offerings, highlighting the enduring Chinese influence in Hoi An's heritage.

Next, explore historic merchant residences such as Phung Hung Ancient House and Tan Ky Ancient House. These well-preserved homes provide a straightforward look into the lives of past traders, featuring traditional wooden architecture, serene courtyards, and ancestral artifacts. Delve deeper into local traditions at the Museum of Folk Culture, which showcases traditional crafts, fishing implements, and regional customs.

Nearby, the Hoi An Traditional Performing Arts House offers brief cultural performances, introducing visitors to the folk music and stage arts of central Vietnam. The walking tour culminates at the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge, a landmark symbolizing Hoi An's multicultural past. Conclude your exploration by browsing handicraft shops and art galleries, followed by a leisurely stroll through quieter alleys to observe daily life away from the main thoroughfares.

Day 5 Hoi An Free Day for Exploration

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Hoi An

After enjoying breakfast at your hotel, you have a full day dedicated to independent exploration of Hoi An. This provides a perfect opportunity to discover the town at your own pace, revisiting favorite spots or seeking out new experiences.

For those seeking structured activities, various optional excursions are available to deepen your understanding of Hoi An's

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culture and lifestyle. You might consider a half-day tour to the ancient My Son Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage site featuring impressive Hindu temples, or an engaging experience living like a farmer in Cam Thanh Village, participating in local agricultural practices.
Whether you choose to relax by the river, explore more of the ancient town's hidden gems, or embark on an organized tour, this day is designed for personal discovery and enjoyment.

Activities: Relax independently; Explore Hoi An on your own; Opt for a My Son Sanctuary tour (additional cost); Choose a Cam Thanh Village farming experience (additional cost)

Day 6 Hoi An Departure, Flight to Hanoi & Capital City Arrival

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Hanoi | Transport: Car, Airplane

Following breakfast, complete your check-out from the hotel in Hoi An. You will have some free time to enjoy the town or prepare for your onward journey until your driver arrives to transfer you to Da Nang Airport.
From Da Nang, you will board a flight to Hanoi, Vietnam's bustling capital. Upon arrival at Noi Bai Airport, please proceed to Pole 10, where your local representative will easily locate you amidst the busy airport environment. After a warm welcome, you will be transferred to your hotel in Hanoi.
Once checked in, the remainder of the day is at your leisure. You can take this time to rest and recharge after your travels, or begin a gentle exploration of the immediate vicinity around your hotel.

Day 7 Hanoi Historical City Tour

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Ha Noi | Transport: Car or Motorbike

Begin your day with a nourishing breakfast at your hotel, preparing for a comprehensive sightseeing tour of Hanoi's historical landmarks. Around 8:00 AM, your guide will meet you in the hotel lobby, ready to commence your exploration by car or motorbike, depending on your preference.
Your first stop is the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first national university, a significant symbol of Confucianism during the Ly Dynasty and a birthplace of many notable Vietnamese scholars. Continue to Ba Dinh Square, a site of immense historical importance where President Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence. Here, your guide will share insights into this pivotal moment in Vietnamese history.
Next, enjoy a stroll along the picturesque Thanh Nien road, leading to the Tran Quoc Buddhist Pagoda. This sixth-century temple, beautifully situated in the middle of West Lake, offers serene views and excellent photo opportunities of its distinctive architecture and tranquil surroundings. Please note that the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed on Mondays and Fridays, and undergoes renovation from June to August annually; during these times, visitors can view the exterior and surrounding areas only.
After a morning of sightseeing, you will enjoy a delicious lunch at an authentic Vietnamese restaurant. The afternoon is free for you to return to your hotel, refresh, and then perhaps venture out on your own to discover Hanoi by night, experiencing its unique evening atmosphere.

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Day 8 Hanoi to Ha Long Bay Overnight Cruise

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Stay: Overnight on cruise | Transport: Shuttle Bus, Speedboat, Cruise

Following breakfast at your hotel, a luxury limousine will pick you up between 8:00 and 8:30 AM for your transfer to the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Ha Long Bay. Enjoy a comfortable 2.5-hour journey, with a brief stop halfway, allowing you to relax before reaching your destination.

Upon arrival at the cruise's waiting lounge in Ha Long, you will receive a warm welcome from the cruise staff and complete a swift check-in process. A speedboat will then transfer you to your chosen cruise ship. The cruise manager will share fascinating stories about the bay during this transfer, setting the scene for your adventure. You'll embark on the cruise around 12:15 PM, greeted by the captain and crew with a welcome drink.

After checking into your cabin, a delectable lunch will be served in the restaurant. Savor your meal while admiring the breathtaking scenery of thousands of limestone karsts and islets emerging from the sparkling emerald waters. In the afternoon, with your energy fully recharged, engage in various water activities that bring you closer to the bay's natural splendor. Depending on your cruise's specific itinerary, you might conquer an island peak, explore caves, or kayak through hidden islets and grottoes. Return to the cruise for a short rest, then participate in a Vietnamese cooking class with the chef or enjoy cocktails during 'Happy Hour' (17:00 - 17:30), watching the charming dusk descend over the bay.

The evening culminates with a deluxe dinner served in the restaurant. The night on board is vibrant, offering activities such as squid fishing, movie screenings, board games, and a night bar for further enjoyment.

Day 9 Ha Long Bay Morning & Return to Hanoi

Meals: Breakfast, Brunch | Stay: Hotel in Hanoi | Transport: Cruise, Speedboat, Car

For early risers, the day begins around 6:00 AM with an optional Tai Chi class on the sundeck, or simply enjoy the fresh morning air from your cabin. A light breakfast will be served to energize you for the day's activities, which may include further exploration of Ha Long Bay, such as visiting a fishing village to understand local life or enjoying a refreshing swim in the bay's waters.

Return to the cruise for a final, hearty brunch as the ship begins its journey back towards the pier. Around 10:00 - 10:30 AM, you will complete the check-out process. A speedboat will then transfer you back to the pier, where you'll bid farewell to the captain and crew, arriving at the port around 11:15 AM.

In the afternoon, a driver will be waiting to transfer you directly back to your hotel in Hanoi. Upon arrival, you can check in and take the rest of the day to relax and unwind after your memorable cruise experience.

Day 10 Hanoi Departure & Yangon Arrival

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Yangon | Transport: Car, Airplane

Enjoy a final breakfast at your Hanoi hotel before completing the check-out process. A private transfer will then take you to the airport for your flight to Yangon, Myanmar.

Upon landing at Yangon International Airport, you will be warmly welcomed by your local tour guide. They will assist with your

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transfer to the hotel for check-in. Please note that hotel rooms are typically available from 14:00; early check-in can be arranged at an additional cost if desired.
The remainder of the day is yours to relax and settle in. You might choose to explore the immediate surroundings of your hotel, sample some delicious Myanmar specialties for dinner, or delve into Yangon's lively evening scene at your own pace.

Day 11 Yangon City Exploration: Pagodas & Markets

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Overnight in Yangon | Transport: Car

Start your day with a hearty breakfast at the hotel before meeting your guide for a deep dive into Yangon's historical core. Your exploration begins in the old colonial city center, where elegant architecture surrounds significant landmarks like the City Hall, Mahabandoola Park, and the Independence Monument.
Continue along the bustling Strand Road and the vibrant Yangon Jetty, offering a genuine glimpse into the city's daily life and riverine activities. Next, visit the Botahtaung Pagoda, a revered riverside temple with fascinating legends, including the story of Ahma Mya Nan Nwe, a guardian spirit. Afterward, browse the lively Bogyoke Aung San (Scott) Market, a treasure trove of handicrafts, jewelry, clothing, and local foods.
After lunch, your guide will take you to the impressive Chaukhtatgyi Pagoda, home to a colossal and exquisitely crafted reclining Buddha statue. The journey continues to the serene Royal Lake, with a photo stop at the iconic Karaweik Hall Royal Barge. Conclude your afternoon with a visit to the majestic Shwedagon Pagoda, Yangon's crown jewel and one of the world's most sacred Buddhist sites. Following a day rich in cultural discoveries, return to your hotel for a restful evening.

Day 12 Yangon to Bagan: Temple Plains Discovery

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Bagan | Transport: Airplane, Car

This morning, you will take a domestic flight from Yangon to Bagan. Upon arrival, your local guide will greet you at the airport and transfer you to your hotel for check-in. Your Bagan adventure begins at the bustling Nyaung U Market, one of Asia’s most vibrant local markets, providing an excellent introduction to daily life with its colorful stalls of fresh produce and handicrafts. Continue to the revered Shwezigon Pagoda, an important reliquary shrine known for housing images of the 37 Nats and exemplifying classic Bagan architecture. Explore Kyansittha Uhmin (Cave) and the nearby Gupaukgyi Temple, a 13th-century cave temple famous for its well-preserved Jataka frescoes.
After a local lunch, visit the elegant Htilominlo Temple, admired for its ancient murals and intricate plaster carvings. You'll then pass through the historic Tharabar Gate, the sole remaining gate of Old Bagan’s ancient city walls. Discover the magnificent Ananda Temple, a whitewashed architectural masterpiece housing four standing Buddha images. The journey continues to the towering Thatbyinnyu Temple and the massive Dhammayangyi Temple, renowned for its exceptionally tight interlocking brickwork. As the day draws to a close, head to Shwesandaw Pagoda to experience a magical Bagan sunset, offering an unforgettable panorama over the temple-studded plains.

Day 13 Bagan to Mount Popa & Mandalay Journey

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Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Mandalay | Transport: Private Car

After breakfast, embark on a scenic drive towards Mount Popa, an extinct volcano that dramatically rises 1,518 meters above sea level. Perched atop a volcanic plug, the Popa Taungkalat Shrine is a significant pilgrimage site, home to the 37 revered Mahagiri Nats (spirits). At the base of the shrine, you'll encounter colorful statues representing these Nats before ascending to the summit to enjoy sweeping, unforgettable views of the Bagan plains.

On your way towards Mandalay, you'll make a stop at a small local workshop. Here, you can observe the traditional process of making palm sugar and jaggery, gaining charming insight into rural life and even sampling freshly made treats. This cultural interlude offers a glimpse into local industries.

Following the workshop visit, continue your comfortable drive to Mandalay. Upon arrival, you will check into your hotel and have the evening to relax, preparing for further exploration of Myanmar's last royal capital.

Day 14 Mandalay & Amarapura Cultural Immersion

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Mandalay | Transport: Car

Following a hearty breakfast at your hotel, set out for Amarapura, historically known as the City of Immortality. Your first stop is the Mahagandayon Monastery, an important monastic college where you can respectfully observe the monks' serene lunch procession, a culturally rich experience.

Proceed to the iconic U Bein Bridge, the world’s longest teakwood bridge, stretching 1.2 km across Taungthaman Lake. This centuries-old walkway offers stunning views and a peaceful atmosphere. You'll also visit a traditional hand-weaving silk workshop, witnessing the intricate artistry of local textile production.

Return to Mandalay for an enriching city tour in the afternoon. Visit the revered Mahamuni Pagoda, famous for its massive golden Buddha image adorned with countless sheets of gold leaf. Continue to Mandalay Palace, the last royal residence of the Burmese monarchy, and explore its historic grounds. Next, discover Kuthodaw Pagoda, renowned for its 729 marble slabs inscribed with Buddhist scriptures, earning it the title of “the world’s largest book.” Conclude your sightseeing at the impressive Atumashi Monastery, once one of Mandalay's grandest religious structures. From here, ascend Mandalay Hill for a breathtaking sunset, casting warm hues across the city and distant mountains, before returning to your hotel for a relaxing evening.

Day 15 Mandalay Departure

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: NA | Transport: Car

Begin your final day with a leisurely breakfast at the hotel, allowing you to savor your last moments in Mandalay, Myanmar's historic former capital. Take in the city's unique charm one last time before completing your check-out.

At the appropriate time, you will be transferred to Mandalay International Airport for your departure flight. You will leave Myanmar carrying cherished memories of its rich culture, stunning temples, and the warm hospitality you experienced throughout your journey.

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WHAT'S INCLUDED

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- v Accommodation in shared Twin/Double room with air-conditioning at hotels.
- v All ground transportation in air-conditioned vehicles as per itinerary, including airport transfers.
- v Local English-speaking guides for all in-tour activities.
- v Meals as specified in the program (14 Breakfasts, 5 Lunches, 1 Brunch, 1 Dinner).
- v Entrance fees for all attractions listed in the itinerary.
- v Four domestic flights: Ho Chi Minh – Da Nang, Da Nang – Hanoi, Hanoi – Yangon, Yangon – Bagan.

NOT INCLUDED

- x International airfare.
- x Early hotel check-in and late check-out fees.
- x Peak season surcharges and compulsory gala dinners (if applicable).
- x Visa fees (passport must be valid for at least 6 months with a minimum of 3 blank visa pages).
- x Personal expenses (e.g., tips, laundry, gratuities).
- x Meals and drinks not explicitly mentioned in the itinerary.

PRICE INCLUDES

- v Accommodation in shared Twin/Double room with air-conditioning at hotels.
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- v Four domestic flights: Ho Chi Minh – Da Nang, Da Nang – Hanoi, Hanoi – Yangon, Yangon – Bagan.

CANCELLATION POLICY

Tour Code: IMP-DA272C520702