

6-Day Hanoi, Ninh Binh and Ha Long Bay

The opening Northern Vietnam section of our 14-day classic journey, available as a standalone regional module.

Duration	6 days / 5 nights
Route	Hanoi - Ninh Binh - Ha Long Bay - Hanoi
Journey type	Northern Vietnam regional journey
Relationship	Opening module of HAN-SGN-14-GE

Journey overview

This six-day journey follows the same Northern Vietnam programme used at the beginning of our 14-day classic route, HAN-SGN-14-GE. It can be booked independently or combined with Central and Southern Vietnam for a longer journey.

The itinerary begins with Hanoi's political, intellectual and commercial history before slowing down among the villages, waterways and limestone landscapes of Ninh Binh. An overnight cruise in Ha Long Bay provides a natural closing chapter before the group returns to Hanoi or continues onward.

Because this is a true regional module rather than a separate concept, the daily programme, pacing and service standard remain aligned with the first section of the longer classic journey.

Route and overnight stops

Hanoi: 3 nights | Ninh Binh: 1 night | Ha Long Bay cruise: 1 night

This is a sample itinerary, not a quotation or booking confirmation. Hotels, exact inclusions, pricing and booking terms are confirmed in a personalised proposal.

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 - Arrival in Hanoi

Arrive at Noi Bai International Airport, where a local representative will welcome the group and assist with the transfer into central Hanoi.

After checking in, the remainder of the day is intentionally left open for rest and recovery after the international journey.

Depending on the arrival time, guests may take a short independent walk near the hotel or enjoy a relaxed dinner.

Overnight: Hanoi

Day 2 - Hanoi: Political Memory, Education and the Old Quarter

Begin the morning in Ba Dinh, the political heart of modern Vietnam.

Visit the Ho Chi Minh historical complex, including the exterior or interior of the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum subject to opening conditions, the Presidential Palace grounds, Ho Chi Minh's stilt house and the One Pillar Pagoda.

Rather than presenting the area only through dates and official history, the visit considers the role Ho Chi Minh continues to occupy in Vietnam's national memory and public life.

Continue to the Temple of Literature, founded in the 11th century and closely associated with Vietnam's Confucian educational tradition. The visit provides an accessible introduction to the historic importance of scholarship, examinations and social advancement in Vietnamese society.

Lunch is served at KOTO, a social enterprise that provides hospitality training and employment pathways for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

After lunch, return to the hotel for a short rest.

In the mid-afternoon, explore the Old Quarter on foot. The walk focuses on a selected number of streets, trading traditions, communal spaces and the continuing tension between historic architecture, local commerce and tourism.

Conclude the day with a traditional water puppet performance.

The evening is free for dinner.

Overnight: Hanoi

Day 3 - Hanoi to Ninh Binh: Hoa Lu and Countryside Cycling

Leave Hanoi after breakfast and travel south through the Red River Delta to Ninh Binh.

Visit Hoa Lu, the capital of Vietnam during the Dinh and Early Le dynasties in the 10th century. Set beneath dramatic limestone formations, Hoa Lu provides useful historical context before entering the rural landscape of the region.

After lunch, continue to the countryside resort and check in.

Allow time to settle into the property before beginning a guided bicycle ride directly from the resort. Follow quiet village lanes through rice fields, limestone valleys and small communities.

The cycling is intended as an introduction to the everyday landscape of Ninh Binh rather than another sightseeing circuit. Guests return directly to the resort in the late afternoon.

The evening is free to enjoy the grounds and surrounding countryside.

Overnight: Ninh Binh

Day 4 - Rural Ninh Binh: Community, Religion and Trang An

After breakfast, travel by vehicle to the Ninh Van area for a visit to the Thien Dong Catholic community.

Catholicism has been present in parts of Ninh Binh for generations and remains a visible part of the region's social and cultural landscape. The visit introduces a living local parish and offers a different perspective from the better-known monumental churches usually included in visitor itineraries.

Where appropriate, the visit may also provide context on Ninh Van's stone-working traditions and the way local livelihoods have developed alongside agriculture and religious life.

Continue to Trang An, where a small rowing boat carries guests through a network of rivers, limestone cliffs, caves and valleys. Although the scenery shares geological characteristics with Ha Long Bay, the experience is more enclosed, intimate and closely connected to the surrounding agricultural landscape.

After lunch, return by road to Hanoi.

Arrive in the late afternoon or early evening and check back into the Hanoi hotel.

Overnight: Hanoi

Day 5 - Hanoi to Ha Long Bay

Depart Hanoi in the morning for the coast.

Board an overnight cruise and settle into the cabin as the vessel begins its journey through Ha Long Bay or a quieter neighbouring section of the wider bay system.

Lunch is served on board while the cruise passes limestone islands and sheltered waterways.

Afternoon activities vary according to the selected vessel and sailing route. These may include kayaking, a small-boat excursion, a cave visit or time on deck.

Return to the vessel for sunset, dinner and an evening on the bay.

The cruise is designed as a slower interlude after the walking and cycling experiences in Hanoi and Ninh Binh.

Overnight: Ha Long Bay cruise

Day 6 - Ha Long Bay Cruise Morning and Return to Hanoi

Begin the day with the quiet morning atmosphere of the bay. Guests may join an optional early activity before breakfast.

The cruise continues through the limestone landscape before returning to port in the late morning.

No formal evening programme is scheduled. Guests may have a light dinner and rest in preparation for the following day's cycling and cultural programme.

After disembarkation, return by private vehicle to Noi Bai International Airport or a Hanoi hotel according to the group's onward arrangements. Groups continuing on the full 14-day journey instead transfer to the airport for the flight to Central Vietnam.

End of regional journey: Hanoi / Noi Bai Airport

How this module connects

Groups continuing on HAN-SGN-14-GE use the same Northern Vietnam programme, then transfer from Ha Long Bay to the airport for the flight to Central Vietnam. Groups booking this regional journey independently return to Hanoi or Noi Bai Airport on Day 6.