



Vietnam War and Memory - 12 Days

Ho Chi Minh City - Hoi An - Hue - Hanoi

A private cultural-history journey through wartime cities, underground networks, civilian memory and the landscapes of central Vietnam.

Duration 12 days / 11 nights	Route South to north	Operation Private journey	Hotels Selected 4- and 5-star
--	--------------------------------	-------------------------------------	---

Journey overview

The journey begins in former South Vietnam, continues through the central region and concludes in wartime Hanoi. It connects government and underground networks in Saigon, rural warfare at Củ Chi, civilian memory at Sơn Mỹ, the Battle of Huế, Highway 9 and Khe Sanh, the former demarcation line and the underground community at Vĩnh Mĩ.

Military geography is present, but it does not dominate the entire journey. Hoi An and Huế restore the wider cultural and spiritual setting, while careful pacing gives difficult sites the time and seriousness they require. The core programme does not depend on guest speakers or private access.

Route and overnight stops

Ho Chi Minh City	Hoi An	Hue	Hanoi
3 nights	3 nights	3 nights	2 nights

Day-by-day itinerary

Day 1 | Arrive in Ho Chi Minh City

Meet the local team on arrival and transfer privately to the hotel. No sightseeing is scheduled, allowing the group to settle after the international journey. When arrival times are suitable, a welcome dinner introduces the route and explains how the programme will distinguish between documented history, official interpretation and personal memory without turning the journey into a political debate.

Overnight: Ho Chi Minh City - Meals: Dinner

Day 2 | Wartime Saigon: government, underground networks and 1975

Begin at the former presidential palace, where the architecture, command spaces and events of April 1975 provide a clear introduction to the Republic of Vietnam and the end of the war. Continue through selected downtown locations associated with the wartime city before visiting a preserved urban weapons bunker or command site linked to clandestine networks inside Saigon. After lunch, allow sufficient time at the War Remnants Museum, including the option to leave particularly graphic galleries. The day examines institutions, hidden logistics and civilian urban space rather than presenting Saigon only through military hardware.

Overnight: Ho Chi Minh City - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 3 | Củ Chi and the rural war

Travel to the Bình Đức sector of Củ Chi, selected for its broader historical setting and preserved landscape. Guided interpretation explains how tunnels, concealed kitchens, medical areas, communications and supply systems supported prolonged resistance close to Saigon, while also acknowledging the severe pressures experienced by rural communities living within a contested zone. Tunnel entry is optional and alternatives are available for travellers who prefer to remain above ground. Return to the city during the afternoon and keep the evening free after a physically and intellectually demanding visit.

Overnight: Ho Chi Minh City - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 4 | Fly to Da Nang and continue to Hoi An

Transfer to the airport for the flight to central Vietnam. On arrival in Da Nang, continue privately to Hoi An and check in for three nights. This is deliberately a transfer and orientation day rather than an attempt to add a major memorial visit after a flight. Depending on the confirmed schedule, take a short introductory walk through the riverside quarter or leave the remainder of the day free.

Overnight: Hoi An - Meals: Breakfast

Day 5 | S■n M■ and civilian memory

Travel south to the S■n M■ Memorial Site, internationally associated with the My Lai massacre. The visit is given its own day so that the museum, memorial grounds and surrounding landscape can be approached without haste or sensationalism. Interpretation focuses on civilian vulnerability, the circumstances of the operation, failures of command and responsibility, the aftermath for local families and the way the event has been remembered. Return to Hoi An after lunch, with no further scheduled sightseeing and the evening left open.

Overnight: Hoi An - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 6 | Hoi An beyond the twentieth-century conflict

Spend the morning in Hoi An's historic trading quarter, using merchant houses, community halls, religious buildings and the riverfront to place Vietnam within a much longer history of regional exchange. The programme looks at household organisation, Chinese, Japanese and Vietnamese influences, and the commercial life that shaped the town before the modern conflicts. After a local lunch, the afternoon remains free for rest, independent exploration or a quiet café. The day broadens the journey rather than treating the country solely as a landscape of war.

Overnight: Hoi An - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7 | Da Nang, the H■i Vân Pass and Hu■

Leave Hoi An and travel north through Da Nang, using selected viewpoints and route commentary to explain the wartime growth of the city, the role of airfields, ports and logistics, and the long-term urban transformation that followed. Continue over the H■i Vân Pass when road and weather conditions allow, linking the coastal plain with the geography of central Vietnam. Arrive in Hu■ during the afternoon and keep the balance of the day light.

Overnight: Hue - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 8 | Imperial Hu■, the 1968 battle and T■ Hi■u

Begin in the Imperial City, first understanding Hu■ as the Nguy■n dynasty capital and a major centre of architecture, ritual and learning. Within that setting, examine how the 1968 Battle of Hu■ affected the Citadel, surrounding neighbourhoods and civilian population, and how damaged monuments were later restored. After lunch and a hotel break, visit T■ Hi■u Pagoda. Its monastic landscape and association with Thích Nh■t H■nh introduce Buddhist responses to suffering, peace and social responsibility without relying on a private teaching or arranged encounter.

Overnight: Hue - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 9 | Highway 9, Khe Sanh, the DMZ and V■nh M■c

Depart early for the most geographically extensive day of the journey. Follow Highway 9 west toward the Khe Sanh area, using the corridor to explain supply routes, highland terrain, the western approaches to the demilitarized zone and the changing military importance of the region. Continue to the former division line at Hi■n L■ng Bridge and the B■n H■i River before visiting V■nh M■c, where villagers created a multi-level underground community to survive sustained bombardment. The day connects battlefield geography, national division and civilian adaptation, while also addressing the continuing postwar legacy of unexploded ordnance in Qu■ng Tr■. Return to Hu■ in the evening after a long but coherent circuit.

Overnight: Hue - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 10 | Fly from Huế to Hanoi

Transfer to Phú Bài Airport for the flight to Hanoi. Flight timing determines whether the morning is fully at leisure or allows a short additional stop in Huế; Tien Hoa is already protected within the previous day's programme and is not dependent on the flight schedule. On arrival, transfer privately to the hotel and keep the evening free or arrange a simple group dinner.

Overnight: Hanoi - Meals: Breakfast

Day 11 | Hanoi as revolutionary capital and city under air war

Begin around Ba Đình Square and the Ho Chi Minh complex, subject to official opening hours and visitor controls, to understand the institutions and political landscape of North Vietnam. Continue to Hoa Lo Prison, where the surviving site presents both colonial incarceration and the later POW narrative. After lunch, visit one carefully selected air-war location, such as Huu Tiep Lake or the B-52 Victory Museum, placing bombing, air defence and neighbourhood life within the wider history of wartime Hanoi. The programme avoids adding a generic sightseeing checklist; the evening is reserved for a farewell dinner or independent time.

Overnight: Hanoi - Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 12 | Departure

Check out according to the international flight schedule and transfer privately to the airport. Late departures can be supported with luggage storage and free time, but no fixed sightseeing is promised on the final day. The operating team confirms airport timing, vehicle arrangements and any early breakfast requirements in advance.

End of journey - Meals: Breakfast

Practical details

Private operation and guide continuity

Private vehicles and experienced regional guides are coordinated as one programme, with a national escort available when group profile and budget support it.

Hotels and selected dining

Central four- and five-star hotels provide reliable rest after field days. Included meals are selected for quality, hygiene, pacing and dietary requirements.

Flights and luggage

Ho Chi Minh City-Da Nang and Hue-Hanoi flights are confirmed around the operating sequence, with baggage allowances and airport transfers checked before proposal sign-off.

Graphic and emotionally difficult content

Son My, the War Remnants Museum and some prison or battlefield displays require advance briefing. Guests may bypass selected galleries without disrupting the group.

Tunnels, walking and long road days

Tunnel entry is optional. Above-ground alternatives, rest stops and vehicle-supported access are planned for older travellers or limited mobility.

Opening hours and site conditions

Official closures, flight schedules, weather and road conditions may change the order of visits while preserving the core route and themes.

Tailoring options

Australian and New Zealand groups: add Long Tan and Nui Dat with an additional southern night and suitable local interpretation.

Deeper military geography: extend the central section for A Luoi, the A Shau Valley or additional Highway 9 locations rather than overloading the core day.

Academic or alumni groups: add curated readings, archival material or a confirmed specialist visit while keeping the published itinerary operationally complete.

This sample itinerary is designed for private groups and is adjusted to confirmed flight schedules, hotel availability, group mobility and operating conditions.