

Vietnam Food Discovery with Intrepid



Proudly offered by Helloworld Travel Ponsonby in collaboration with Lazy Sunday Club.

Our Travel Style

Our global network of local experts delivers the types of experiences that can't be Googled. Immersive trips that enable you to explore authentic local culture in a sustainable, experience-rich way. We love the highlights, but the real magic for us happens well away from a beaten path, the real-life experiences you won't find in a search engine.

Premium: higher-end adventures, done right

With handpicked accommodation, exceptional included experiences, led by our most knowledgeable leaders or guides, Premium trips are the sustainable choice for higher-end, locally led adventures.



Accommodation

Handpicked for location and quality. All itineraries include a feature stay at an unforgettable and unique accommodation.

Transport

Primarily uses private transport, sustainable where possible. Use first class trains where we can, or carbon-offset internal flights where necessary, as well as comfortable 4x4s in Africa.

Inclusions

More included activities and extras than any other Intrepid trip, including tipping and an arrival transfer. Breakfast is included every day, as well as many lunches and dinners. You'll be led by our most experienced local leaders and food experts.

Vietnam Food Discovery 12 days / 11 nights

About Your Trip

Start Location

Ho Chi Minh, Vietnam

Finish Location

Hanoi, Vietnam

Accommodation

Hotel x 10 nights

Cruise x 1 night

Flights

Ex Auckland with Singapore Airlines/Air New Zealand in Economy Class

Included Meals

Breakfast (11)

Brunch (1)

Lunch (6)

Dinner (5)

Refer today by day itinerary below

Transport

Air-conditioned vehicle transfers throughout, flights, boat, cruise

Leader/Guide

Local English-speaking tour leader throughout the trip

Included Activities

Refer to day by day itinerary below.

Entrance/Admission

Fees Where applicable with included activities

Airport Transfers

Arrival and departure transfers are included based on individual basis

Flight details are needed 30 days in advance.

Support

24-hour support from our local office

Group size

Maximum 18 people

Exclusions

- Any visas required
- Services not mentioned in the itinerary
- Late check out at hotels
- Meals and drinks not mentioned in the itinerary
- Drinks included lunches and dinners
- Tips for leaders, guide and driver
- Expenditure of personal nature
- Personal Insurance
- Optional activities

Costing:

Cost: \$5955 per person based on twin sharing

Single Supplement: Add \$1250

Additional Pre-Night: \$260/night

Additional post-night: \$220/night

Deposit: \$2600 per person

Final Balance Due: 1st August 2026

Flights:

We are happy to assist with any additional stopover arrangements. We can book your preferred airline and cabin class. Please speak with our friendly team to discuss your flight preferences.

About Your Driver/Driver Guide/Tour Leader

On this trip you will be accompanied by one of our tour leaders. The aim of the tour leader is to take the hassle out of your travels and to help you have the best trip possible.

Your leader will provide information on the places you are travelling through, offer suggestions for things to do and see, recommend great local eating venues and introduce you to our local friends. While not being guides in the traditional sense you can expect them to have a broad general knowledge of the places visited on the trip, including historical, cultural, religious and social aspects. We aim to support local guides who have specialised knowledge of the regions we visit.

If you were interested in delving deeper into the local culture at a specific site or location then your leader can recommend a local guide service in most of the main destinations of your trip.

About Your Hosts

Leanne Kitchen & Antony Suvalko

Leanne Kitchen and Antony Suvalko are seasoned food and travel writers, authors, and the culinary minds behind The Lazy Sunday Club, one of New Zealand's most popular food websites.

Between them, they've spent countless months exploring the street markets, home kitchens, and vibrant dining scenes of Southeast and Eastern Asia. They are the authors of acclaimed cookbooks including **EAST: Culinary Adventures in Southeast Asia** and **The Real Food of China**, as well as the **In 12 Dishes travel guide** series, which delves into the food, culture, and stories of cities across Asia.

Vietnam, with its **incredibly fragrant, fresh, and varied cuisine**, holds a special place in their hearts. From bustling street food stalls to hidden local favorites, Leanne and Antony bring their curiosity, expertise, and appetite for discovery to every corner of the country.

On this tour, one of them will guide you through the tastes, smells, and stories of Vietnam's most memorable dishes – sharing insider knowledge, travel tips, and, of course, plenty of culinary inspiration along the way.

Note: This departure will be hosted by Leanne Kitchen.



Antony



Leanne

Vietnam Food Discovery Itinerary

Day 1 / Thursday, 15th October 2026

Ho Chi Minh City

Meals Included: Dinner

Xin chao! Welcome to Vietnam. Your adventure begins in Ho Chi Minh City – a French-infused city with a frenetic atmosphere. If you arrive early, maybe head to Pham Ngu Lao Street to see the local open-air market or visit Vinh Nghiem Pagoda. You'll have a welcome meeting at 6 pm tonight, where you'll meet your local leader and fellow travellers. After your meeting, make your way out for dinner as a group for the fresh flavours and rich sauces that make up the delicious Vietnamese cuisine.

Arrival Transfer

Included on an individual basis

Accommodation

Silverland May Hotel – Khaya or similar

Special Information

It's very important that you attend the welcome meeting as we will be collecting insurance details and next of kin information at this time. If you are going to be late please let your travel agent or hotel reception know. Ask reception or look for a note in the lobby for more information on where the meeting will take place.



Day 2 / Friday, 16th October 2026

Mekong Delta

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

This morning head out to explore the Mekong Delta. Board a private boat to Ben Tre to visit the coconut gardens and stop at a local home to sample tropical fruits and coconut jams. Afterwards, paddle in sampans (small rowing boats) past coconut trees along the Mekong Delta. Take a tuk-tuk tour around the villages and learn about rural life and the industry created around coconut products like coconut candies, coconut oil, coconut shell bowl, etc. Eat lunch at a restaurant in the heart of the Delta, sampling regional specialties such as the famous elephant ear fish. Cruise the major waterways to Ben Tre boat pier, and head to Long Xuyen for the overnight.



Dinner tonight will be enjoyed at a local restaurant.

Included Activities

Mekong Delta boat trip & tuk tuk

Accommodation

Chau Khuong Hotel – Deluxe or similar

Day 3 / Saturday, 17th October 2026

Ho Chi Minh City

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

Start your day early and head to Long Xuyen market on the mainland, near the O Moi ferry station. From there, embark on a boat trip to explore the Long Xuyen floating market—one of the most vibrant and authentic markets in the Mekong Delta. It's a photographer's dream, with a maze of boats brimming with fresh fruits, vegetables, and plants. As you float through the market, observe the daily routines of locals making a living on the water. You'll notice that many of the boats are run by women, managing their small businesses with skill and resilience. Along the way, you might spot fishermen, floating homes, families commuting by boat to school or market, and ferries crossing the river.

Arrive at Ong Ho islet, where you'll hop on a bicycle to visit Ong Ho Temple, dedicated to Guan Yu, a revered Chinese general known for loyalty and righteousness. Continue cycling through the islet to immerse yourself in the local lifestyle and enjoy a delicious home-cooked lunch.

After lunch, return to the mainland and make your way back to Ho Chi Minh City, with the rest of the day free to relax or explore at your leisure.

Included Activities

Mekong Delta – Long Xuyen floating market

Accommodation

Silverland May Hotel – Khaya or similar



Day 4 / Sunday, 18th October

2026 Hoi An

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

This morning, take a walking tour to get a feel for the city's fascinating blend of old and new, East and West. Enjoy a short city tour by visiting one of Vietnam's most pulsing markets, Tan Dinh. Then, stop past the General Post Office, where you can take a guided walk around. You'll notice a strong French influence here, which means excellent coffee and baguettes! Continue to visit the War Remnants Museum to learn about the city's sobering past before heading to the airport to take a domestic flight to Danang (1.5 hours)

Once arrival, head to Hoi An (30 mins) to check in the hotel with the rest of your day is at your leisure.

Included Activities

Ho Chi Minh City – Tan Dinh market

Ho Chi Minh City – General Post Office

Ho Chi Minh City – War Remnants Museum

Accommodation

Legacy Hoi An Resort -Superior Garden View or similar



Day 5 / Monday, 19th October

2026 Hoi An

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

Today, you'll really get to know Hoi An, with a day filled with authentic experiences. First up, your leader will take you on an orientation walk around the Ancient Town. Then, you'll discover Reaching Out Tea House, a non-government organisation that supports the local deaf and mute community by providing employment and vocational training. The peace and quiet of this café stands in stark contrast to the bustling streets outside. While here, you'll sip delicious teas in total silence – a tranquil experience you won't soon forget.

Try Cao Lau (a local noodle dish) with your group this lunch. In the late afternoon, you'll get ready for a cooking class with a local chef. You'll be escorted to a local market to shop for fresh ingredients and then taken through a culinary journey with hands-on demonstrations. Your local chef will even share the stories behind the yin and yang elements, unveiling the secret of home-cooked Vietnamese meals. Feast on your delicious creations, dishes that highlight the cooking of the Pho Hoi people.

Included Activities

Hoi An - Old Town walking tour

Hoi An - Tea Tasting in Silence

Hoi An - Market tour and garden visit

Hoi An - Cooking class with local chef



Day 6 / Tuesday, 20th October 2026

Hoi An

Meals Included: Breakfast

You're free today. You can consider booking our optional tours or just free to discover the town at your leisure.

Optional Activities



Garden to Table with a local chef - from \$50pp

Late this afternoon, you're in for a culinary treat. Head to Tra Que where you will tour a local chef's garden, selecting fresh herbs and vegetables that will form part of your exclusive group dinner. Relax in the peaceful surroundings while your private chef prepares a delicious spread that celebrates his garden's seasonal best.

Hoi An Walking Street food - from \$50pp

Enjoy a walking street food tour with our local guide around the town. Our Hoi An food tour starts around sunset and will walk you through local cafes, food stalls, markets, and restaurants, giving you a filling food adventure for the memory books.

Hoi An Boat, Bike & BBQ Dinner - from \$75pp

In the afternoon, head out on a boat and bike tour. This cycle & cruise combo deal is undoubtedly one of the coolest ways to tour Hoi An. Start with a casual cycle through emerald, green rice paddies and villages, then board a boat for a sunset view. Afterwards, enjoy a warm welcome meal at a local family's home.

Accommodation

Legacy Hoi An Resort -Superior Garden View or similar

Day 7 / Wednesday, 21st October

2026 Hue

Meals Included: Breakfast

Say goodbye to Hoi An this morning and head to Hue through coastal rice paddies and the mountainous Hai Van Pass. Check in the hotel and then, you'll go to a local coffee house where three generations of Hue locals are living together. Admire the traditional house and gardens before meeting your host, Mr Khoa. Learn about his passion for coffee with a demonstration of how to make Hue's traditional salt coffee, from the bean roasting process to the secret ingredients. Maybe even have a go at making it yourself! Continue to visit the Imperial Citadel - the home of Vietnam's last royal dynasty, the Nguyen Dynasty (1802 - 1945) and Forbidden Purple City. The evening is free for your own food adventure. Perhaps ask your leader for the best place to try imperial street specialties like banh hue (rice flour cakes stuffed with shrimp, pork and spices).

Included Activities

Hue - Salt coffee

Hue - Imperial City entrance and guided visit

Accommodation

Eldora Hue - Deluxe city view or similar

Day 8 / Thursday, 22nd October

2026 Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast & Lunch

With a caffeinated pep in your step, embark on a tour of the city's imperial monuments. Stop past Thien Mu Pagoda, an active Buddhist monastery since 1601, where you'll see a car that belonged to one of the selfimmolating monks of the 1963 protests. After some time exploring, it's time to eat! You'll enjoy a plant based Buddhist meal specially prepared for you by a chef who is the descendant of the royal family, in the garden of their beautiful family home. After a delightful meal, you'll finish your day of sightseeing with a visit to the royal tomb of Emperor Tu Duc. Then, head to Phu Bai airport for a short domestic flight to Hanoi – the capital of Vietnam in the early evening.

Included Activities

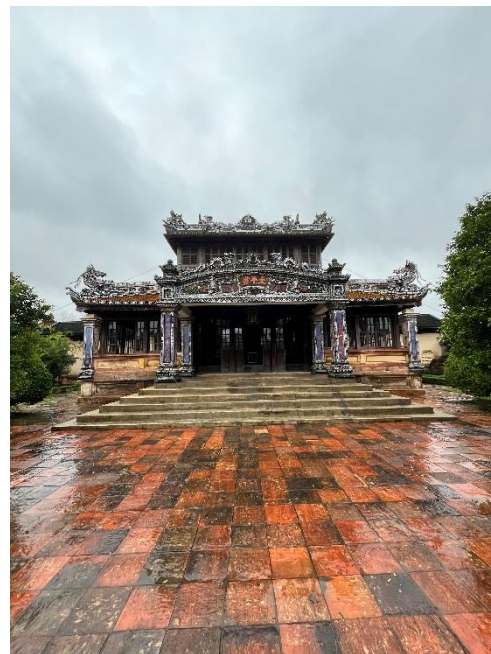
Hue Highlights & back streets by motorbike Hue

- Royal tomb of Emperor Tu Duc

Hue - Thien Mu Pagoda

Accommodation

GM Premium – Junior Deluxe or similar



Day 9 / Friday, 23rd October

2026 Halong Bay

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

This morning travel to the spectacular UNESCO World Heritage site of Ha Long Bay. This is one of Vietnam's most beautiful places – a bay of emerald waters dotted with sandstone islands and caves

After arriving at Ha Long, board your cruise where you'll have the chance to admire the spectacular scenery of Ha Long Bay with fascinating natural formations while having lunch. You also can join the cooking class aboard to learn how to make Spring Roll - a Vietnamese traditional dish.

This evening you can enjoy some night activities such as squid fishing, drinking, listening to music or just simply enjoying the night sky of Ha Long Bay.

Included Activities

Halong Bay overnight cruise & activities.



Accommodation

Rosy cruise – Junior Balcony Suite or similar

Special Information:

You are recommended to bring an overnight bag to keep your necessary luggage. We are afraid that there is not enough space to store all the luggage of every passenger on board. Moreover, after an overnight stay on board, you will turn back to the same hotel in Hanoi, so your remaining luggage will be sure to be kept safely. It's joint-in cruise for 2D1N package.

Day 10 / Saturday, 24th October

2026

Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

In the morning, enjoy your light breakfast and relax for a while before exploring a nearby cave. After that, go back to the cruise and enjoy the beautiful scenery until check-out time. Then transfer back to Hanoi to check in the hotel. This afternoon, your expert local guide will give you an insight into the intricacies and traditions of Vietnamese food culture including details on ingredients and historical backgrounds of popular northern dishes. You will eat as you



go and immerse yourself into the atmospheric heart of the Old Quarter, you will wander past street stalls and quiet residential lanes where you can observe local life that has changed little since Hanoi was founded over 1000 years ago.

Included Activities

Halong Bay cruise activities

Hanoi – Walking Street food tour

Accommodation

GM Premium – Junior Deluxe or similar

Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

Day 11/ Sunday, 25th October, 2026

Hanoi

Meals Included: Breakfast & Dinner

This morning visit the Temple of Literature - famous for being the first university of Vietnam. You will recognize that this is a popular place for Vietnamese students to take commemorative photographs when graduating. Then, enjoy a unique water-puppet performance hosted by a local family, who are experts in this art form.

The afternoon will be free to spend at leisure, picking up any last minute souvenirs before enjoying a final farewell dinner with your group this evening.

Accommodation

GM Premium – Junior Deluxe or similar

Day 12 / Monday, 26th October 2026

Depart

Meals Included: Breakfast

With no activities planned for today, your adventure comes to an end after breakfast. You will be transferred to the airport for your flight home.

Airport Transfer

Included on an individual basis



Important Information

- Please provide your full name exactly as per passport at the time of booking (including any middle names listed on your passport) for train and flight tickets. Ticketing fees may apply for amendments to details within 90 days of departure, and in some cases, you will be required to cover the cost of issuing a new ticket.
- This trip includes domestic flights as indicated on the trip map. The luggage allowance is 20kg for checking in luggage and 7kg for carrying on.

How to Book

If you are happy with the quotation and itinerary, please let your agent know. Please advise **Helloworld Travel Ponsonby** the names as per passport and your date of birth so that they may send you an invoice. The next step is to pay a per person deposit. This allows us to go off and confirm the arrangements. We can only hold arrangements for a group once we have received deposit. Please note that it can take approximately 1 week to confirm all services.

We would love you to travel with us so let your agent know if there is anything we need to change about this quote or if you have any questions. We will do our best to help!

Special Conditions

Final Balance

- Final balance payment is required 75 days prior to travel.

Cancellation by the traveller

- Cancellation prior to 75 days prior to departure will incur a loss of 25% deposit
- Cancellation between 75 – 60 days prior to departure will incur a loss of 75% deposit
- Cancellation for 60 days or inside prior to travel will incur 100% cancellation fees
- No shows will be treated as a cancellation and will incur 100% cancellation fees.

Cancellation by Helloworld Travel Ponsonby

A minimum of 10 passengers is required to operate the Food Discover Tour. If this minimum is not met 90 days before departure, we will make every effort to accommodate you on a similar tour, subject to mutual agreement. If no suitable alternative is available, your deposit will be fully refunded.

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