

VIBRANT VIETNAM !

10 DAYS

May 18 – 27, 2010

With thoughts of conflict banished to history, Vietnam is nothing less than mesmerizing. And peaceful, as you'll discover in its countless serene temples and during our exclusive Hermes overnight stay on a traditional junk amidst an archipelago of limestone towers. We'll travel the length of this coastal gem, from Hanoi to Hue, Hoi An to Saigon – on a journey punctuated by gracious people in colorful markets and grand palaces and tombs emerging from an emerald-green landscape. Join Hermes, and discover the rich past and promising future of an ever-evolving country.

Highlights:

- **Hanoi**, including Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, One Pillar Pagoda, Temple of Literature, Museum of Ethnology, Hoan Kiem Lake and Ngoc Son Temple
- **Rickshaw ride** through Hanoi's Old Quarter
- Water Puppet show
- Full day and overnight aboard a traditional Vietnamese *junk* on Ha Long Bay, with opportunities for active exploration
- **Hue**, including Thien Mu Pagoda, Imperial Citadel, and the tombs of emperors Minh Mang, Tu Duc and Khai Dinh
- **Hoi An**, including Japanese Bridge, Phuc Kien Pagoda, Phung Hung Old Merchant House, and the Quang Dong Assembly Hall
- **Saigon**, including History Museum, Reunification Palace, War Crimes Museum, Notre Dame Cathedral, French-Colonial post office, and Chinatown
- Accommodations for 8 nights in 5-star hotels and 1 night onboard a traditional Vietnamese *junk* on Ha Long Bay
- Services of a Hermes Tours escort
- Services of an expert, local guide in all cities
- **\$100 per person savings if you reserve 5 months before departure!**

Itinerary:

Day 1: May 18, 2010 / Arrive Hanoi

Hanoi celebrates its 1,000th birthday in 2010! We arrive here today and transfer to our hotel.

Hanoi Sofitel Metropole Opera

Day 2: May 19, 2010 / Hanoi City Tour

An entire millennium of history is ours to explore. After breakfast, we visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum where the revered leader lies in rest. Continue to the One Pillar Pagoda, Temple of Literature, and Museum of Ethnology. After lunch, stroll the shores of the serene Hoan Kiem Lake and Ngoc Son Temple. Then enjoy a one-hour rickshaw tour among the Old Quarter's antique and clothing shops.

We close our day with a mesmerizing, traditional Water Puppet show. Tonight toast your upcoming discoveries at our Hermes Tours welcome dinner.

Hanoi Sofitel Metropole Opera – B, D

Day 3: May 20, 2010 / Ha Long Bay by Traditional Junk/ Fishing Village

This morning we set sail on a traditional Vietnamese *junk* among Ha Long Bay's countless limestone islands that have captured travelers' imaginations for centuries. After lunch onboard, you might don your swimsuit to bathe in crystalline waters. Or ply the waters in a kayak, explore an island by foot, or simply relax and soak up the sun. Later, we're welcomed into a Cua Van fishing village to learn about local life here. After a savory dinner onboard, join an elective sea kayak tour to explore the bay by moonlight.

Jasmine Junk Premium cabin – B, L, D

Day 4: May 21, 2010 / Grotto Tour/ Return to Hanoi

Greet the sun with an on-deck Tai Chi class. Then we visit a nearby grotto carved into one of the monolithic islands. This afternoon we return to Hanoi and have free time to explore some of its 600 temples and pagodas.

Hanoi Sofitel Metropole Opera – B

Day 5: May 22, 2010 / Flight to Hue, Perfume River Boat Ride

After breakfast, we fly to Hue, on the banks of the Huong River. After lunch, we embark a small boat and follow the gentle Perfume River to the seven-story riverside Thien Mu Pagoda, the largest in the city and Hue's official symbol. Later, we drive to the mausoleum of Emperor Minh Mang, one of the country's most scholarly leaders. En route, we visit a local merchant, who shows us how conical hats and incense sticks are made. Our evening is free to explore Hue.

Hotel La Residence – B

Day 6: May 23, 2010 / Hue City Tour / Hoi An

After breakfast, we marvel at Hue's massive Imperial Citadel, which once housed a vast Forbidden City of emperors and concubines. We continue to the tombs of Emperors Tu Duc and Khai Dinh. Then, we transfer to Hoi An over the scenic Hai Van Pass ("Pass of the Ocean Clouds"). After our arrival, we have the rest of the day at leisure.

Hotel Victoria – B

Day 7: May 24, 2010 / Hoi An Tour

After breakfast, we enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An, a powerful port in the spice trade centuries ago. This former backwater village boasts an incredibly preserved ancient town. We'll browse some of its treasures and also see the Japanese Bridge, Phuc Kien Pagoda, Phung Hung Old Merchant House and the Quang Dong Assembly Hall. The rest of your day is free. Tailors in Hoi An will custom-make suits for you at a fraction of the price back home.

Hotel Victoria – B

Day 8: May 25, 2010 / Flight to Saigon / City Tour

We fly to Saigon after breakfast, and bustling French-Colonial city today known as Ho Chi Minh City. Our day here will be peppered with new images and perspectives about "The American War," as the Vietnamese know it. We visit the History Museum, Reunification Palace, and the War Crimes Museum. We'll also marvel at two of the city's architectural gems, Notre Dame Cathedral and the lovely French colonial post office.

Hotel Sofitel Plaza – B

Day 9: May 26, 2010 / Explore Saigon

After breakfast we continue to explore Saigon with visits to Cho Lon, Vietnam's largest Chinatown, a thriving district of colorful pagodas and markets. This afternoon, relax, shop or explore on your own.

Hotel Sofitel Plaza – B, D

Day 10: May 27, 2010 / Return Home

This morning is the end of our tour. You are free to make your return flight for any time today.

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What's Included:

Accommodation as listed, meals as listed, transfers to/from airport, domestic flights as listed, local tips to drivers/local guides, entrance fees to sights on itinerary, services of a Hermes Tours escort throughout the trip.

Not Included: International airfare to/from Vietnam, visa expenses, personal expenses, cancellation insurance, tips to your Hermes Tours escort.

Costs: \$2695 per person based on double occupancy.

Single Supplement: \$1100 per person

Early booking discount of \$100

Deposit due at time of registration: \$500

Final payment due 80 days prior to departure

Please note that Hermes Tours has changed its payment policy for 2010 tours. Final payment may be made via credit card without surcharge. You will be asked to sign a credit card authorization form. For your convenience you may also set up a payment plan.