



HARVARD

Alumni Association

JOURNEY THROUGH VIETNAM

JANUARY 1-16, 2018

Journey through Vietnam, a land of natural beauty, abiding tradition, and profoundly hospitable people. Begin in Hanoi, with its French accents and colonial architecture. Visit Da Nang and walk through a local village nestled among rice paddies. In Hoi An, an ancient market city now filled with canals and waterways, witness the contributions of international traders in this architecturally diverse and colorful village. Conclude in Saigon with highlights including Reunification Palace, the former wartime headquarters, and the History Museum. In this country of breathtaking landscapes and complicated history, rewards abound for the thoughtful traveler.

GROUP SIZE: 12 to 24 guests

PRICING (Per person, double occupancy):

- \$5,097 - Air inclusive from Los Angeles or San Francisco (\$4,795 air & land inclusive plus \$302 airline taxes and fees)
- \$5,497 - Air inclusive from Boston (\$5,195 air & land inclusive plus \$302 airline taxes and fees)
- \$4,095 - Land only
- \$1,595 - Single supplement

STUDY LEADER: Michael B. McElroy was appointed as the Abbott Lawrence Rotch Professor of Atmospheric Sciences at Harvard University in 1970. At Harvard, he served as director of the Center for Earth and Planetary Physics (1975-1978), as founding chair of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences (1986-2000), as chair of the University-wide Committee on the Environment (1991-2001), as first director of the Center for the Environment (2001-2004), and more recently as the Gilbert Butler Professor of Environmental Studies in 1997.

He is the author of more than 250 technical papers and several books covering topics ranging from studies of planetary atmospheres, to stratospheric ozone, to the chemistry of the troposphere, to changes in biogeochemical cycles and factors underlying both natural and human-induced changes in global climate. A recently completed book addresses the challenge posed by our need to switch to a low carbon energy future in order to meet the challenge of global climate change.

SCHEDULE BY DAY

B=Breakfast, L=Lunch, D=Dinner

MONDAY, JANUARY 1

DEPART U.S. FOR HANOI, VIETNAM

TUESDAY, JANUARY 2

ARRIVE HANOI

Late this evening arrive in the Vietnamese capital and transfer to your hotel.

Overnight: *InterContinental Hanoi (D)*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3

HANOI

Set off on a morning walking tour of Ba Dinh Square, a popular complex of cultural and historic sites. This was the place where, on September 2, 1945, Communist Party leader Ho Chi Minh read the Declaration of Independence, officially establishing the nation of Vietnam. Today, his memory is honored by the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum. Continue to the bright-mustard French colonial Presidential Palace and the 1,000-year-old One Pillar Pagoda.

Following lunch on your own, embark on an orientation tour. Pass Hoan Kiem Lake in the heart of the city and visit the marvelous Temple of Literature, which later became Vietnam's first university and today remains an active place of worship. Next, tour Hoa Lo Prison, also known as "Hanoi Hilton." Throughout the Vietnam War, and for many years thereafter, the North Vietnamese Army controlled the prison and held American soldiers captive here.

Later, walk the narrow streets of the Ancient Quarter (more commonly called the "36 Streets District"), where goods of all types are bought and sold. This is also one of the city's most popular gastronomic areas, with dozens of excellent restaurants. This evening enjoy a welcome dinner together at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *InterContinental Hanoi Westlake (B, D)*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 4

HANOI / HA LONG BAY

During a full-day excursion, explore Ha Long Bay ("Bay of the Descending Dragon"), Vietnam's legendary and beautiful waterway. A UNESCO World Heritage site, Ha Long Bay was the home of ancient cultures dating back 25,000 years. Take a boat ride on the placid waters and a lunch of local seafood specialties. Please note the weather in this region can be cooler and quite foggy, but it adds to the mystique of Ha Long Bay. Return to the hotel in Hanoi early this evening; dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *InterContinental Hanoi Westlake (B, L)*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 5

HANOI/DA NANG

Fly to Vietnam's fifth largest city, Da Nang, situated at the mouth of the Han River. Da Nang is the commercial and educational hub of central Vietnam and the third biggest economic center after Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. After arriving afternoon at your beachfront hotel, the remainder of the evening is at leisure. Dinner tonight is at the hotel.

Overnight: *Hyatt Regency Danang (B, D)*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 6

DA NANG/HOI AN

Travel to the nearby town of Hoi An, an ancient market city which had the largest harbor in Southeast Asia during the 1st century CE. Now riddled with canals and waterways, Hoi An was originally the commercial capital of the Cham people before seeing a succession of Dutch, Chinese, Portuguese, and Japanese traders all contribute to the building of an architecturally diverse and colorful village (which is now a UNESCO World Heritage site). These days the streets belong to pedestrians and bicyclists, as no cars are allowed in the old town – making it perfect for exploring on foot. Take a walking tour past the tile-roofed houses lining narrow streets, the Japanese covered bridge,

and the Chinese communal house. The rest of the day is at leisure to either remain in Hoi An and explore on your own (the town boasts numerous art galleries, shops, and tailors), or to return to the resort for a relaxing afternoon. Dinner is on your own tonight.

Overnight: *Hyatt Regency Danang (B)*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 7 DA NANG

This morning visit a neighboring village nestled amidst seemingly endless rice paddies. Here, gain a special insight into the everyday life of a local farming community: water buffaloes plow the fields, villagers ride to market with produce piled high on their bicycles, and owning a television set connotes a certain level of prosperity. Depending on the season, you may see the villagers engaged in threshing and harvesting. Next, enjoy a cooking lesson and lunch in Hoi An. The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure, and dinner tonight is on your own in Da Nang, home to many wonderful restaurants.

Overnight: *Hyatt Regency Danang (B, L)*

MONDAY, JANUARY 8 DA NANG/HUE

Tour the acclaimed Museum of Cham Sculpture, home to the world's largest collection of Cham sculptures and artifacts, all of which date from the 5th to 15th centuries. The Cham people are a small ethnic group influenced by many forces ranging from Chinese to Indian to Arabian. Built in 1915, the museum is constructed, like the art inside, in Cham style, with simple lines, smooth corners, and windows open to the sea air.

Depart for the ancient imperial capital of Hue, whose temples and attractions evoke its past grandeur as home to emperors and mandarins. Hue was the capital of Vietnam during the reign of the feudal Nguyen lords,

from 1802 until 1945, and it remained on the world stage due to its location near the border between North and South Vietnam. The city suffered considerable damage throughout the Vietnam War. In contrast to many cities in Europe whose historical ruins were rebuilt after conflicts, Hue's fascinating architecture was left as rubble for many years.

This afternoon, take a ride in a traditional cyclo, a three-wheeled bicycle in which passengers sit across a bench in front and the driver pilots from behind. From this unique vantage point, tour the Imperial Citadel, which houses the Forbidden Purple City, where only the emperor, his family, and his servants were allowed entrance. A vast complex of palaces, residences, temples, courtyards, and gates, the Imperial Citadel was built in 1804 to resemble the Forbidden City of Beijing. Today it is protected as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Conclude the day with a visit to the Dong Ba central market where locals buy their produce, fish, meat, and sundry items such as Vietnam's ubiquitous conical hats, ironware, jewelry, and tea.

Tonight, enjoy a special Hue dinner outdoors (weather permitting), accompanied by a performance of traditional music.

Overnight: *Hotel Saigon Morin (B, D)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 9 HUE

This morning cruise along Hue's Perfume River by sampan, a traditional, flat-bottomed boat used by coastal fishermen. Arrive at peaceful Thien Mu Pagoda, a Buddhist monastery that ranks among the city's oldest and most important monuments. After admiring this symbol of Hue, visit the palatial Tomb of Minh Mang (c. 1840), with its pavilions, reception hall, summer house, lakes, gardens, and courtyards modeled after the Ming Tombs of China. This complex contains an elaborate series of gates, pavilions, staircases, and bridges, all leading to the emperor's tomb.

After lunch at a local restaurant, visit two other tombs: Tu Duc, sitting in a narrow valley in a pine forest and considered one of the

most beautiful works of royal architecture from the Nguyen dynasty; and Khai Dinh, an elaborate architectural mélange of European and Asian, ancient and modern styles. Dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Hotel Saigon Morin (B, L)*

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10 HUE/MEKONG DELTA/CAN THO

This morning fly to Saigon. Upon arrival, drive south to the Mekong River town of Cai Be and then to the busy river port of Can Tho, the provincial capital where the various waterways that comprise the Mekong Delta converge. Arrive late afternoon with time to relax and enjoy the hotel's amenities before dinner here tonight.

Overnight: *Victoria Can Tho Resort (B, D)*

THURSDAY, JANUARY 11 CAN THO/MEKONG DELTA

Take an excursion by boat to the bustling floating vegetable market at Cai Rang, one of many such markets on the Mekong's lower reaches. The Mekong River is surpassed only by the Amazon in terms of aquatic biodiversity. Millions of people live within the mighty river's drainage basin, which counts as one of the country's two "rice bowls," as well as a major producer of vegetables and tropical fruit. It is along the river that locals conduct the business of everyday life, and you'll see farmers lined up selling their goods from bamboo poles suspended over their boats as a form of advertising.

After this scenic outing, have lunch at a local restaurant then return to the hotel late afternoon. The remainder of the day is at leisure, and dinner tonight is on your own.

Overnight: *Victoria Can Tho Resort (B, L)*

FRIDAY, JANUARY 12 MEKONG DELTA/SAIGON

Drive to the upper reaches of the storied Mekong this morning. Here, board motorized sampans for an up-close look at river life as you explore the maze of tributaries and inlets that lead to tiny settlements and villages populated by fishermen and farmers. Reminiscent of the canals and creeks of the American bayou, these channels wind through the overgrown landscape and provide transport, trade, and connection to the outside world for these settlements. Stop for lunch at a local restaurant, then continue to Saigon (the name Ho Chi Minh City is used interchangeably). Reach the hotel late this afternoon; dinner tonight is on your own in this vibrant city.

Overnight: *Sofitel Saigon Plaza (B, L)*

SATURDAY, JANUARY 13 SAIGON

Once the proud capital of South Vietnam, Saigon was renamed in 1976 by the war's Communist victors as Ho Chi Minh City and virtually closed to the outside world. Since the institution of economic and political reforms in the mid-1980s and the reentry of a peaceful and united Vietnam into the community of nations several years ago, however, Saigon has once again reclaimed its more cosmopolitan outlook – and its former name. Get a taste of Saigon on this morning's tour, which includes such highlights as the former Presidential Palace (now called Reunification Palace), the former wartime headquarters, and the History Museum, housing a fine collection of art and artifacts of Vietnam's indigenous peoples.

Next, attend a traditional water puppet performance. Continue on to see the stunning Central Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral. Lunch today is on your own; this afternoon is free for independent exploration. Dine together tonight at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *Sofitel Saigon Plaza (B, D)*

SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

SAIGON/CU CHI TUNNELS

Start the morning with a visit to a place of infamy: the Cu Chi Tunnels. Built over a period of 25 years beginning in the 1940s to sabotage the French occupiers, the tunnels are marvels of engineering, stretching from Saigon to the Cambodian border. Parts of the tunnels descend several stories deep and include living areas, storage facilities, weapons factories, field hospitals, and kitchens. Those who choose to will have a chance to descend into one of the tunnels, while those choosing to remain outside will have ample opportunities to tour the excavations above.

Return to the hotel in time for lunch on your own then the remainder of the day is free to explore as you wish. Saigon boasts virtually hundreds of pagodas and places of worship worthy of your time, including the Giac Lam Pagoda, the city's oldest; and the Jade Emperor Pagoda, considered the most colorful temple in Saigon. Other options include a stroll along the city streets, where you'll see thousands of bicycles and small motorbikes; a shopping excursion for fine silks and locally made crafts; or a visit to one of the city's colorful markets.

Tonight gather for a farewell dinner.

Overnight: *Sofitel Saigon Plaza (B, D)*

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

SAIGON/DEPART FOR U.S.

Today is at leisure; you may wish to relax at the hotel or to further explore Saigon on your own. Options include the Saigon Zoo and Botanical Gardens, home to many rare orchids, ornamental plants, and more than 100 species of mammals, reptiles, and birds; the Saigon Opera House, a beautiful French Colonial theater; and the Bitexco Financial Tower Skydeck, offering panoramic views of the city below. Lunch and dinner are on your own today. Late this evening, depart for the airport and your overnight flight to the United States. Please note: due to earlier flight times, the day at leisure in Saigon is not available to

guests on the Cambodia: Angkor Wat extension. *(B)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

RETURN TO U.S.

Arrive in the United States and connect with your domestic flights home.

Optional Extension:

CAMBODIA: ANGKOR WAT

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

SAIGON/SIEM REAP, CAMBODIA

Fly to Siem Reap, Cambodia. Take time to relax before lunch on your own. Your first excursion takes you to the South Gate of Angkor Thom, the last capital of the Khmers whose once mighty Khmer empire dominated much of Southeast Asia for more than 600 years. Sites here include the Terrace of the Elephants, eight feet high and nearly 1,000 feet in length; Terrace of the Leper King, with its emblematic statue of a king whose likeness remains a source of speculation; and the stunning Bayon Temple, an imposing stone edifice of 54 towers each carved with four serene faces and decorated with bas reliefs detailing events of the reign of King Jayavarman VII (1181–1202).

After our first taste of the Khmers' abundant cultural treasures, gather for dinner together at a local restaurant.

Overnight: *Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort (B, D)*

TUESDAY, JANUARY 16

ANGKOR WAT

Begin the day with a visit to the Angkor Wat complex of temples, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the three great Buddhist sites of the Eastern world. For many years, Angkor Wat was rumored to be a lost

city, hidden from the world until its discovery by French explorer Henri Moughot in the mid-19th century. In fact, however, it was very much a living city until 1431, when the Thais forced the Khmer court to move southeast. Today the site contains magnificent temples and statuary from the Angkorian Empire. Enter Angkor Wat Temple, the world's largest religious building, to witness the intricate detail of the bas reliefs and artwork depicting mythological battles and scenes of everyday life.

Next, visit the temple of Preah Khan, a complex of halls and pavilions, causeways and moats, and sculpted garudas and serpents built by King Jayavarman VII. After returning to the hotel for lunch on your own, this afternoon see the 12th-century temple of Ta Prohm, a mystical, decaying Buddhist shrine dedicated to the encroaching jungle. Built in memory of King Jayavarman VII's mother, the ruins here have not been touched – they are exactly as they were when first discovered, with massive tree roots virtually strangling parts of the stone façades. Return to the hotel and enjoy dinner together, followed by a cultural dance show.

Overnight: *Sofitel Angkor Phokeethra Golf and Spa Resort*
(B, D)

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 17

SIEM REAP/DEPART FOR U.S.

Begin with a visit to tiny Banteay Srei, a temple built for the Hindu god Shiva in the 10th century with exceptional carvings in its red sandstone walls. Banteay Srei's artistry on a miniature scale has earned it the nickname "the jewel of Khmer art." Continue on to Banteay Samre, an elaborate 12th-century temple dedicated to the Hindu god Vishnu. Banteay Samre is one of Angkor's most complete complexes thanks to restoration efforts using original materials. This afternoon, return to the hotel for lunch on your own and an afternoon at leisure. For those who wish, this afternoon you can visit Les Artisans d'Angkor, a development project where young adults learn traditional crafts such as stone and wood carving and lacquer

application. Late this evening, transfer to the airport for your flight to the United States. (B)

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

ARRIVE U.S.

Arrive in the United States and connect with your flights home.