

## Insiders Asia

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# Best Cities in Southeast Asia – 13 Days

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*Hanoi, Ha Long, Bat Trang, Danang, Hoi An, Saigon, Cantho, Siemreap, Bangkok*

**DAY 1: US - HANOI.** Depart for Hanoi.

**DAY 2: ARRIVAL - HANOI.**

Arrive in **Hanoi**, the capital of **Vietnam**, a beautiful city of lakes, public parks and temples. Meet your tour director and transfer to the hotel. You will have time to unpack and relax before kicking off your exciting tour of Hanoi. This afternoon, visit **Hoan Kiem Lake** and **Ngoc Son Temple** on a guided tour. Enjoy a one-hour cyclo tour sightseeing the famous “36 streets” of the **Old Quarter**, a collection of ancient, narrow marketplaces selling everything from silk to cosmetics. Tonight, your tour director hosts a welcome dinner at the historic **Indochine** Restaurant where you can join other participants for a special **Welcome Dinner** featuring exquisite Vietnamese cuisine. *Hanoi Elegance Hotel (D)*

**DAY 3: HANOI - GUIDED TOUR.**

With its French colonial architecture, narrow tree-lined streets, green parks, and tranquil lakes, Hanoi has been described as the most European-like city in Vietnam. Look for this layering of European and Asian styles on your guided tour of the city today. Visit the **One Pillar Pagoda** and **Quan Thanh Temple**. Then enter the **Temple of Literature**, perhaps Hanoi’s most historic site. The 11th-century temple was built in dedication of Confucius to honor achievements in literature, and one of the oldest universities in the world was established here in 1070. After lunch break, enjoy a guided visit to the **Vietnam Museum of Ethnology** which houses a display dedicated to Vietnam’s 54 ethnic minority peoples. *Hanoi Elegance Hotel (B/D)*

#### DAY 4: HANOI - HALONG.

This morning, drive east to **Ha Long**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Arrive in Ha Long and embark on a **private boat** for a 4-hour cruise. Ha Long Bay comprises over 3,000 small jagged limestone islands (called "karsts") that rise out of the **Gulf of Tonkin**. These dramatic rock formations are the backdrop of your boat cruise that comes complete with a fresh seafood lunch. Stop to visit some beautiful caves filled with spectacular stalactite formations. *Novotel Hotel (B/L/D)*

#### DAY 5: HALONG - BAT TRANG – HANOI - DANANG - HOI AN

After breakfast, depart for Hanoi by car. Enjoy the scenic view of the rural landscape of northern Vietnam on your way to visit the famous pottery village of **Bat Trang**. Since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, this town has been making fine, handcrafted earthenware from family-run shops. Keep your eyes open for the traditional, bright cobalt-blue ceramics for which the village is known. Upon arrival in Hanoi, proceed to the airport for a short flight to **Da Nang**. Transfer to Hoi An, a lovely ancient port town. *Life Resort (B/L)*

#### DAY 6: HOI AN - GUIDED TOUR.

Set out to explore this charming medieval city on foot. . Hoi An, a charming medieval city and once was a busy port which attracted Dutch, Portuguese, and Japanese trading vessels in centuries past. Learn the rich history of this unique town on a guided stroll where you'll see elegant pagodas, colonnaded French buildings and the **Japanese Bridge** that curves around the **Phu Bon River** and **Phuc Kien Pagoda**. Enjoy lunch at **Brother's Café** with the tranquil river and lush tropical garden for your view. Free leisure time.

*Life Resort (B/L)*

#### DAY 7: HOI AN - SAIGON - CANTHO.

Transfer to the airport for a flight to Saigon. Arrive in Saigon and drive directly to the **Mekong Delta** region. Upon arrival in **Cai Be**, set off by motorboat to visit the floating market and watch locals trading fruits and other commodities onboard their vessels. Keep cruising to **Vinh Long** through a series of small canals to experience the charms of the Upper Mekong Delta. Then wander into some small villages to visit fruit orchards and talk with villagers. Visit a small family business to see how coconut candy and crispy rice popcorn are made. Enjoy a lunch of fresh river food served in the lush garden accompanied

by traditional southern Vietnamese folk music. Take a delightful walk through the artfully cultivated bonsai garden. Your home tonight is *Victoria Cantho Hotel* (B/L/D)

#### DAY 8: MEKONG DELTA - SAIGON.

Today's sightseeing tour takes you to the heart of the Mekong Delta. Highlight of your morning tour will be a visit to the famous **floating Cai Rang market**. Here, each boat usually sells one particular item, (for example, pumpkins or pineapples) and in order for you to know where to shop, sellers hang that item like a shop sign from the highest part of the boat. Then board a sampan, a flat bottom wooden boat that will take you across the complex maze of the Mekong. A horse-drawn carriage will take you to your waiting coach on the other side of the island. Enjoy lunch at a beautiful Mekong Delta garden en route to Saigon. Arrive in Saigon late afternoon and transfer to your hotel.

*Liberty Central Hotel* (B/L/D)

#### DAY 9: SAIGON – SIEMREAP (CAMBODIA).

After a good night's rest and breakfast at the hotel, begin your sightseeing tour of frenetic **Saigon** and its landmarks. Some of the highlights are the **Independence Palace**, **Ben Thanh Market** and the **Central Post Office** (designed by **Gustave Eiffel** in 1920). After lunch break, transfer to the airport for a short flight to **Siemreap, Cambodia**. Arrive in Siemreap and transfer to your hotel for check in. Unpack, relax and be ready for an evening of entertainment. Tonight, enjoy a special dinner with **Apsara Dance Show at Angkor Village Theater**. *Borei Spa & Resort* (B/D)

#### DAY 10: SIEMREAP - ANGKOR.

As the Coliseum is to Italy and the pyramids are to Egypt, so are the temples of **Angkor to Cambodia**. Spend the day exploring these massive stone temples dating back to the 9<sup>th</sup> through 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, and learn about this ancient civilization, which, at its height, was home to more than one million people. Discover the famous **South Gate of Angkor Thom**, **Bayon**, **Baphuon**, **Phimeanakas**, **Elephant Terrace** and the **Terrace of the Leper King**. After lunch at a local restaurant, continue to explore Angkor Wat until sunset. If you choose, enjoy an optional ride on a tethered balloon for a photogenic bird's-eye view of the Angkor complex. Tonight, visit Angkor night market for souvenir shopping.

*Borei Spa & Resort* (B/L)

**DAY 11: SIEMREAP - BANGKOK.**

Contemplate the mysteries surrounding **Angkor Wat** on a morning visit to **Banteay Srei** and **Banteay Samre** temples. After lunch at the hotel, complete your visit to **Ta Phrom**, **Neak Pean** and **Preah Khan** temples. Transfer to Siemreap airport for departure flight to **Bangkok, Thailand**. Arrive in Bangkok and transfer your hotel. Free leisure time. *Swissôtel Nai Lert Park (B/L)*

**DAY 12: BANGKOK - GUIDED TOUR.**

Wake up in what people call "the land of many smiles." This morning is free to explore the city on your own. You might want to visit many shops around your centrally located hotel or sample world-renowned Thai cuisine in a local restaurant. Your half-day guided tour begins this afternoon as a local guide will show you **Bangkok** and its most interesting **Buddhist** temples. You'll conclude your amazing **Southeast Asian** adventure tonight with a **farewell dinner** on **Shangri-La Horizon Cruise**. Enjoy dinner while slowly drifting along the riverside of the **Menam Chao Phya**. *Swissôtel Nai Lert Park (B/D)*

**DAY 13: BANGKOK - DEPARTURE.**

Breakfast at the hotel. Free leisure time until transfer to Suvarnabhumi International Airport for your outbound flight. Bon voyage!

***Tour is personally directed by Insider's Asia director.***

