



Cruise through Halong Bay in Vietnam

Ophthalmology and Eye Care in Vietnam

17 February – 28 February 2019

With extension to Angkor Wat, Cambodia
17 February – 2 March 2019

*“The organisation was excellent throughout.
The visits were well planned and interesting.”*

Carolyn Parker, Optometry and Eye Care in Vietnam, 2016



Jon Baines
tours



Hoi An from the river

Ophthalmology and eye care in Vietnam are still developing at a national level. There are significant disparities between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural areas. A range of professional visits and meetings with ophthalmologists will provide excellent insight into ophthalmology and eye care in Vietnam. The professional programme is balanced by a wide range of cultural visits with ample opportunity to experience the beauty, culture and history of Vietnam and enjoy its fabulous cuisine.

The tour begins in Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, which celebrated its 1000th birthday in 2010. Arrive in Hanoi and check into the La Siesta Hotel before a walking tour through the vibrant old quarter in the afternoon. Cars are banned from the old quarter at the weekend making it ideal for walking and rickshaw tours. Walk through Hanoi's '36 Streets' where each street is named after the produce that was sold there – hence you may find yourself leaving Silver Street to enter Lacquer Street via Bamboo and Silk Streets – and visit the traditional medicine shops. Take a rickshaw ride around peaceful Hoan Kiem Lake and enjoy a welcome dinner that evening.

Embark on a sightseeing tour the next morning starting with the One Pillar Pagoda as well as the

Temple of Literature, the site of Vietnam's old university. Have lunch at KOTO, an Australian-Vietnamese based charity, and learn about their inspiring initiatives with street children. Spend the afternoon at leisure or further explore Hanoi. In the afternoon meet with former military doctors who were on the front line during the Vietnam-American conflict and take part in a discussion. These meetings have been highly commended on previous tours, providing real insight into the past. Dinner that night is at the acclaimed Green Tangerine, a blend between French haute cuisine and Vietnamese culinary art.

The following morning visit the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology, the



Opera House, Hanoi



Green Tangerine restaurant, Hanoi (top);
The Victory Star junk in Halong Bay (above)

largest eye hospital in Vietnam. Meet with local ophthalmologists, take part in a tour of the hospital and learn about the background to ophthalmology in Hanoi. Partners will take part in a walking tour exploring the culinary culture of Hanoi.

Rise early the next day to set off for Halong Bay, where thousands of towering, steep-sided islands rise from the emerald waters as junk boats cruise languidly among them. Board your own private junk, the lovely Victory Star in time for lunch. Spend the afternoon cruising with time to stop and explore caves, beaches and coves. Spend the night in a cabin on the junk.

Take coffee on deck next morning before disembarking at the port. Visit a water puppet theatre show in Doa Thuc village and then fly to Hue and the elegant Saigon Morin Hotel.

The following morning visit the Hue School for the Blind, which provides vocational training to

students, and see their low vision unit. Continue to visit the vast Hue Citadel, which was home to the nation's last royal family. The vast citadel defended the Imperial City itself, its huge outer walls still bearing the scars of battle dating from the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam-American conflict. Meet with a former Vietnamese army officer and hear his story. Take a relaxing boat trip along the Perfume River and visit the elegant Thien Mu Pagoda.

Board the train for one of the great railway journeys of the world. Travel along the South China Sea, snaking from cliff to jungle-covered cliff past beaches and islands and through the lush green mountains via the Hai Van Pass to Danang. In Vietnamese the pass is known as Đèo Hải Vân, meaning 'Ocean Cloud Pass'.

Arrive in charming Hoi An and check into the luxurious Almanity Resort. Hoi An was once a thriving port popular with European, Chinese and Japanese merchants - a cultural mix still in evidence today. Hoi An is an excellent place to have one of the local tailors run up a bespoke outfit, shop in the silk market or simply relax and soak up the atmosphere.

On a walking tour of its old quarter see ancestral homes, merchants' houses and Chinese Assembly Halls, herbalists and acupuncturists interspersed with boutiques and cafes. Dinner that evening is at Tam Tam, a former merchant's house in old Hoi An.



Hue Citadel



Following breakfast visit the Cao Thang Eye Hospital. The modern hospital examines 70,000 patients and performs more than 5,000 procedures per year. Spend the afternoon at leisure with options to visit the interesting FITO Museum of Traditional Vietnamese Medicine or the poignant War Museum. The farewell dinner that evening will be at the elegant Indochine restaurant.

Transfer to the airport next day to board your return flight, or alternatively join the extension to Angkor Wat in Cambodia (see overleaf).

Take a boat across Thu Bon River and visit the village of Kim Bong, as well as visiting some of the surrounding villages and countryside. The area is littered with ancestral tombs, family temples and herb farms. Visit a family-run vegetable and herb farm and sample some of their fresh homegrown ingredients for lunch, followed by a relaxing foot massage.

The following day visit the The Danang Eye Hospital, the main eye care institution in central Vietnam, responsible for providing eye care and preventing disease. Hear about their work in training community health staff to identify, treat and prevent eye disease. The rest of the day is at leisure with options to take a cookery class, explore the old town, visit a tailor to run up a bespoke outfit, browse the local markets or relax around the pool.

From the relative quiet of Hoi An continue south to the hurly burly of Ho Chi Minh City, or Saigon as it is still often referred to by its inhabitants. That afternoon visit the French era Notre Dame Cathedral and the palatial Central Post Office. Continue to tour the former Presidential Palace, a combination of luxurious reception rooms and reinforced bunkers. Dinner will be at the wonderful Ngon restaurant.

Next morning there is an option to take an early morning walk around Ho Chi Minh City.



Take the train along Ocean Pass (top); The Japanese Bridge, Hoi An; Central Post Office, Saigon (above)

Itinerary 17 – 28 February 2019

B = Breakfast **L** = Lunch **D** = Dinner

3 nights Hanoi – 1 night Halong Bay – 2 nights Hue – 3 nights Hoi An – 2 nights HCMC

17 Feb (Sun) Hanoi **D**
Am Arrive and transfer to the La Siesta Hotel
Pm Walking tour of Hanoi's '36 Streets' including medicine, silver and bamboo streets. Cyclo tour around Hoan Kiem Lake past the Hanoi Opera House and the French District
Eve Welcome dinner

18 Feb (Mon) Hanoi **B D**
Am Visit the Temple of Literature and the One Pillar Pagoda
Pm Meet with former military veteran doctors
Eve Dinner at Green Tangerine

19 Feb (Tue) Hanoi **B D**
Am Visit the Vietnam National Institute of Ophthalmology. Talk: *'An Update on Modern Cataract Surgery'* Christopher Liu. **Partner Programme:** culinary walking tour
Pm At leisure
Eve Dinner at Wild Rice

20 Feb (Wed) Hanoi / Halong Bay **B L D**
Am Early departure for Halong Bay. Arrive and board the Victory Star junk
Pm Cruise through Halong Bay and overnight on the junk

21 Feb (Thur) Halong Bay / Hue **B D**
Am Morning coffee onboard the junk and return to port. Visit a water puppet theatre at Dao Thuc village
Pm Fly to Hue and transfer to the Saigon Morin Hotel

22 Feb (Fri) Hue **B D**
Am Visit the Hue School for the Blind low vision unit. Guided tour of Hue Citadel and meet with a former military veteran
Pm Take a boat cruise along the Perfume River to the Pagoda
Eve Dinner at Y Thao

23 Feb (Sat) Hue / Hoi An **B D**
Am Train to Danang and transfer to Hoi An and the La Siesta Hotel
Pm Walking tour of the old town
Eve Dinner at Tam Tam

24 Feb (Sun) Hoi An **B L**
Am Take boat across Thu Bon River and visit Kim Bong village, artisans' villages and surrounding countryside
Pm Lunch at a local herb and vegetable farm followed by a foot massage. At leisure or optional Vietnamese cookery class

25 Feb (Mon) Hoi An **B D**
Am Visit Danang Eye Hospital. Talk: *'Overcoming Corneal Blindness'* CL. Partners at leisure
Pm At leisure
Eve Dinner at Secret Garden

26 Feb (Tue) Hoi An / Ho Chi Minh City **B D**
Am Fly to HCMC and transfer to the Liberty Central Hotel
Pm Visit Notre Dame Cathedral, the Central Post Office and Reunification Palace

27 Feb (Wed) Ho Chi Minh City **B D**
Am Optional early morning walk. Visit the Cao Thang Eye Hospital
Pm At leisure. Option to visit the war museum or FITO Medical History Museum
Eve Farewell dinner at Indochine

28 Feb (Thur) Ho Chi Minh City **B**
Am Transfer to the airport

"The food was excellent everywhere and on all the visits we were welcomed as friends"

Daisy Surmont, Medicine in Vietnam and Cambodia with the RSM, 2017



The elegant Saigon Morin Hotel, Hue



The temples of Angkor Wat

Extension to Angkor Wat Cambodia

28 February – 2 March 2019

Cambodia is a nation with a proud ancestry in the form of the Khmer Empire, which at its zenith covered much of modern South East Asia, leaving as its legacy the magnificent structures at Angkor. At its peak Angkor is thought to have contained upwards of a million people, making it the largest city in the world at that time.

Fly to Siem Reap and transfer to the Lotus Blanc hotel. The following morning depart early to visit the Bayon and the romantic ruins of Ta Prohm, still intertwined with enormous tree roots hundreds of years old. Return to the hotel for breakfast and then visit Angkor Wat, which represents one of humankind's most astonishing architectural achievements. The afternoon is at leisure to explore the market, the old French Quarter or relax around the pool. Dinner that evening is at Vrioth to enjoy delicious Cambodian food, still less known to Westerners than that of its Thai or Vietnamese neighbours. Transfer to the airport the following day or spend more time in Cambodia.

28 Feb (Thur) Ho Chi Minh City / Siem Reap

B D

Am Fly to Siem Reap and transfer to the Lotus Blanc Hotel

Pm At leisure

Eve Dinner at the Foreign Correspondents Club

1 Mar (Fri) Am

Siem Reap

B D

Early start to visit the Bayon and Ta Prohm for sunrise. Return to the hotel for breakfast before visiting the Angkor Wat complex

Pm
Eve

At leisure
Dinner at Vrioth

2 Mar (Sat)

Siem Reap

B

Am
Pm

At leisure
Depart to airport for onward flight



Ta Prohm, Cambodia (top); Lotus Blanc Hotel (above)

Tour Leader

Professor Christopher Liu OBE

Christopher Liu is a Consultant Ophthalmic Surgeon and Honorary Clinical Professor based in Brighton. Born in Hong Kong, Christopher came to England aged 15 to study before entering medical school in London. He is widely travelled and enjoys introducing western delegates to exotic cultures. He has led the Royal College of Ophthalmologists Study Tours to China in 2004 and 2014, Egypt 2006, Syria in 2007, Cuba in 2012 and Japan in 2017. Christopher has been president of the Medical Contact Lens and Ocular Surface Association, British Society for Refractive Surgery and the Southern Ophthalmological Society. He has also been Honorary Secretary of the United Kingdom and Ireland Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeon, and is Council Member and Trustee of the Royal College of Ophthalmologists. Christopher Liu was appointed OBE by the Queen in her 2018 New Year's honours list.

Guide

The national guide will be Lam, who has worked with us on our health care tours for many years. Highly organised, knowledgeable and personable, Lam has been extremely popular with previous groups.

“Lam was absolutely superb. His knowledge of English was first class, but also he was exceptionally well informed on Vietnamese history and on architecture that we visited”

Catherine Alison, Medicine in Vietnam and Cambodia with the Royal Society of Medicine, March 2017

CPD / CME

It is possible to gain CPD/CME points on this tour through the professional visits and talks. If you wish to apply please contact us.

The cost of the tour is US \$3,321 per person (excluding international flights and transfers)

The cost includes:

- The services of an experienced tour leader (Professor Christopher Liu)
- 10 nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities in medium grade and first-class hotels

The single room supplement is US \$738

- Overnight in first-class junk with private facilities
- Breakfast and lunch or dinner daily (all meals on 20 February)
- All admission fees
- Services of an English speaking national guide
- All transport services and taxes in Vietnam
- Internal flights and taxes
- All tips

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned and drinks with meals
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Travel insurance
- Visa

The cost of the extension is US \$638 per person and includes:

- Two nights' accommodation in twin-bedded rooms with private facilities at the Lotus Blanc Hotel

The single room supplement is US \$99

- Two breakfasts and two dinners
- All admission fees and water and tips during sightseeing
- Services of an English speaking national guide
- All transport services in Cambodia
- One way flight from Ho Chi Minh City to Siem Reap

The cost excludes:

- Meals not mentioned and drinks with meals
- All optional excursions, tours and visits
- Visa (payable on arrival)

NB: All itineraries in Vietnam and Cambodia are subject to change according to local conditions. Places on this tour are strictly limited.

Please contact us if you would like us to organise your flights or for advice on flights.

About Us

To travel with us is to dig below the surface, revealing the deeper destination. Of course, you will visit the great historical sites; marvel at the wonders of architecture and engineering; be moved by the riches of culture and art; and experience the most spectacular landscapes in the world. What we also do is make sure that you see the country as it is today, giving you privileged access that independent travel and other tour companies rarely get close to. We give you a variety of experiences, from the sublime to the humble, in the company of intelligent, curious, like-minded people. And while we can be worthy, we also make sure that you have a lot of fun.



St Joseph's Cathedral, Hanoi (top); Harvest time; The flower market in Hoi An; Cycling back from market (above)

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