



## VIETNAM

A gastronomic discovery with Gail Monaghan: 16<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> April 2012

Following a thread of graceful chaos, we travel from the bustling South to the more tranquil and conservative North. Together we observe Vietnam past and present through both cultural and culinary lenses. From slurping the simplest bowl of delicately flavoured Pho at a discrete hole in the wall in Hanoi, to preparing and enjoying the most elaborate Imperial dishes of Hue, we will give you a refreshing understanding of how the Vietnamese celebrate life through their cuisine and traditions.

Begin your journey in bustling Ho Chi Minh City (more commonly known as Saigon). Here, warmer temperatures and an Asian sense of community mean much of life happens outdoors, so we'll dig in to discover Saigon's street cuisine. We will sample some of the city's specialities, many of which are best savoured perched on an improbably small plastic chair on a busy street corner. Try crisp rice-wrapped cha gio, sweet che and the original Vietnamese French fusion of banh mi, before rejoining a shoal of motorcycles and bikes heading home.

Next, we will discover some of the region's produce at a local market before our first hands-on cooking class in the beautiful residence of a former American Ambassador. Later, wander through timeless alleys to ancient pagodas or explore a more recent, yet equally fascinating history at the War Remnants Museum, the Reunification Palace, and the classic, French-colonial General Post Office.

Then we fly north to Danang and the charming UNESCO World Heritage Site of Hoi An, seemingly a million miles and three centuries from Saigon. Along the way we'll stop off at the Buddhist, and formerly Viet Cong, sanctuary of Marble Mountain and the Cham-pa Sculpture Museum, which houses the finest collection of Cham sculpture in the world. Here we are offered an insight into the Hindu influence on Cham culture that dominated the south of Vietnam in the middle ages.



We rise early the next day, enjoying the sunrise and some Tai Chi at our magnificent beach front residence. Then we learn how to source the freshest fish at the wholesale market before breakfast and a fish-focused cooking class. Rest assured that we'll reserve time for you to wander around the back streets of Hoi An to admire the ancient Japanese, Chinese and Vietnamese influenced merchants houses. Visit the 400-year-old Japanese Covered Bridge and the outstanding wood carvings of the Assembly Hall of the Chaozhou Chinese Congregation. Beyond all this, Hoi An is also a Mecca for tailoring. Spend the afternoon with one of the masters and together whip up a catwalk-inspired creation.

An epic drive over the Hai Van Pass, one of Southeast Asia's most iconic road journeys takes us to Hue. Here we will focus our attention on the former Imperial capital's unique Imperial dining traditions, rituals, delicacies and elaborate presentation; a fine balance of elegance and simplicity almost forgotten until the last decade. We will be guided by the experienced hands of a local chef whose family have guarded Hue's culinary traditions for centuries; his grandfather was even a chef at the Royal Court.

Tranquilly cruising along the enigmatically named Perfume River, we will stop to explore the Imperial City, the Nguyen emperor's temples, tombs, palaces and pagodas, including Thien Mu Pagoda, the cradle of Buddhism in Vietnam.

In Hanoi, the wide, tree-lined boulevards and French colonial architecture are reminiscent of Paris and are the perfect setting for urban walking and exploration. Discover Hanoi's old quarter taking in some of the key sites including; Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum, the Presidential Palace, the One Pillar Pagoda and the Hanoi Hilton Prison.

We then broaden your gastronomic experiences in several different directions. We will introduce you to Mr Dzung, one of the founding members of Hanoi Chef Association. Exploring the Thanh Cong market together, Mr Dzung will give you an informal introduction to North Vietnamese cuisine and an explanation of what makes it distinct, before retreating to his cosy private home for another hands-on lesson.

The final culinary chapter is philanthropic in nature: Hanoi has a growing number of charitable vocational training schools specially set up to teach street kids the culinary arts. Each has a slightly different focus and philosophy and we will visit the one that most closely matches our group's interests.



On our last day we draw on everything we have learnt while exploring the “French connection” in Vietnamese cuisine. Chef Didier Corlou, the grand master of Franco-Vietnamese fusion, will share his passion and some of his favourite recipes with you. You will surely agree that his creativity is infectious and his understanding of the Vietnamese culture truly captivating. In the evening we delight in the diverse dishes we have prepared, before heading out to enjoy the capital’s nightlife.

*Price based on a minimum group size of 8 people travelling together. A 9-day all inclusive and fully guided journey through Vietnam staying in the most luxurious properties, travelling by domestic scheduled economy flights and private vehicle, including activities and meals, costs \$9,250 USD per person, excluding international flights. The price is based on double occupancy and a single supplement will apply.*

## Your Hotels

Park Hyatt, Saigon:  
saigon.park.hyatt.com

The Nam Hai, Hoi An:  
thenamhai.com

Pilgrimage Village, Hue:  
pilgrimagevillage.com

Sofitel Metropole, Hanoi:  
sofitel.com/gb/hotel-1555-sofitel-legend-metropole-hanoi

*If you are interested in joining Gail Monaghan and Brown + Hudson on this exquisite journey, please contact us on +44 203 358 0110 or email us at enquiries@brownandhudson.com. We will then send you further information and a trip booking form.*