



NORTH - CENTRAL - SOUTH VIỆT NAM ITINERARY

November 1 - 16

Booking Inquiries: <https://culinaryescapades.openkitchenevents.com/#booking> or call 202-285-9840

Northern Việt Nam - The Cradle of Vietnamese Civilization.



Day 1: November 1, Arrival Day – Welcome to Hà Nội!

- Arrival to Nội Bài International Airport (HAN) and transfer to hotel by private car. That evening, we'll kick off the Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade with an Orientation Meeting where you'll be greeted by Chef Hue-Chan Karels, Open Kitchen Team, and In-Country Team Lead. You'll also meet and get to know the other guests.
- A Welcome Dinner will follow at one of Chef Hue-Chan's favorite restaurants in Hà Nội with a special curated menu, featuring the flavors and exotic specialties of northern Vietnamese cuisine and taste some authentic and award-winning handcrafted rice spirits.



Accommodations in Hà Nội:

The Apricot Hotel is Hà Nội's small luxury hotel located in the historic district on Hang Trong Street, with sweeping view of the legendary Hoan Kiem Lake.



Day 2: November 2 - Hà Nội

- **Market Tour, Cooking Class, and Lunch** - After breakfast at the hotel, we will begin our first full day in Hà Nội with a delightful local chef who will guide us on a tour of a vibrant market to purchase seasonally fresh ingredients for our hands-on cooking class of traditional Hanoian Cuisine. In this cooking class, you'll learn the fundamentals of food preparation, ingredients, and style of Northern Vietnamese dishes and experience Vietnamese history and culture through these dishes. We will cook and feast on a multi-course lunch.
- **Hà Nội by Night Culinary Adventure** - Pre-sunset, we will begin our culinary tour of Hà Nội's famous Old Quarter. Our first stop will be at one of the highest rooftop sky bars for cocktails and some breathtaking views of Hà Nội at sunset. For dinner, we'll graze on some specialty street foods. After dinner, we'll venture to a slick bar to experience the iconic Phở as a cocktail! We'll taste the spices and flavors that make up the best part of Phở in a flaming cocktail then stop for a flight of craft beer at one of the best craft beer taprooms in Hà Nội.



Day 3: November 3 - Travel from Hà Nội to Mai Châu

- **A Scenic Journey and Lunch of Local Mai Châu Cuisine** - After breakfast, we will check out of our Hà Nội hotel and travel to Mai Châu by private transportation. You'll enjoy the scenic drive through small farming towns and over epic mountain passes. We'll arrive in Mai Châu and have lunch at a local restaurant.
- **Vibrant Culture Immersion and Adventure in Mai Châu** - We'll explore Mai Châu's ethnic villages and countryside by bicycle with a local guide. We'll ride through rice paddies and farms, as well as to local craft shops for you can shop for handcrafts and meet artisans spinning traditional textiles. We'll return to our hotel for sunset cocktails followed by a relaxing dinner of local dishes.



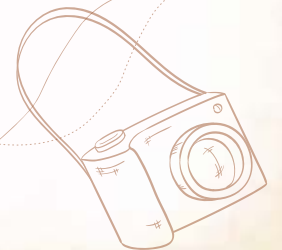
Accommodations in Mai Châu:

Mai Châu Mountain View Resort is at the heart of Bản Lác or Lác Village, located in a beautiful and peaceful location amid mountains and stunning views.



Day 4: November 4 - Mai Châu Local Market Tour, Cooking Class, and Lunch

- Mai Châu's cuisine is very different from what you have experienced in Hà Nội. We've designed a special cooking class this morning with a tour of the local market as a wonderful way for you to learn more about Mai Châu's diverse ethnic cultures through its cuisine.
- After the cooking class and lunch, we will travel back to Hà Nội. You'll enjoy a free evening in Hà Nội to tour the city or simply rest in the hotel. We will provide sightseeing and dining recommendations.





Day 5: November 5 - Hà Nội

- **Hà Nội Coffee Tasting and Making Class** - After breakfast at the hotel, we will be treated to a fun Coffee Tasting and Making Class at a local coffee shop. Did you know that Việt-Nam is the 5th largest exporter of Coffee in the world? You will learn how to make 2 amazing coffee drinks while munching on some delicious Vietnamese doughnuts (Bánh Rán)!
- **Hà Nội Famous Market and Free Time** - After our Vietnamese coffee experience, we will take a walk to Đồng Xuân Market that was originally built by the French in 1889 and now the largest covered market in Hà Nội. Then, you'll enjoy some free time to explore Hà Nội on your own, shop for souvenirs, or simply rest at the hotel. We will provide sightseeing recommendations.
- **Hà Nội Farewell Dinner** - You will experience one of the most iconic Hanoian specialty dish "Chả Cá Thăng Long" - comprised of turmeric-marinated fish fillets served in a sizzling skillet table-side along with heaps of dill and scallions, rice vermicelli, roasted peanuts, rice crackers, and dipping sauces!



Day 6: November 6 – Travel from Hà Nội to Hạ Long Bay

- **Hạ Long Bay Adventure Day 1** – After breakfast at the hotel, we'll check out of our hotel in Hà Nội and begin our 2.5-hour journey to Hạ Long Bay on private transportation. We will arrive at Tuần Châu Marina and transfer to our privately chartered Orchid Cruise by speedboat.
- We will have some wonderful welcome drinks then gather for lunch while we cruise and do some sight-seeing around the magnificent Hạ Long Bay.
- After lunch, we'll visit a beautiful water cave named "Dark & Bright" by bamboo boat. (The Dark & Light Cave is a system made up of two separate caves. The "Dark" Cave is 100 meters long with very little natural light. The "Light" Cave, on the other hand, is considerably shorter and has lots of natural light beaming through gaps and holes in the rock making it feel like a church.) Going through the Dark & Bright cave, we will come to a lagoon, surrounded by magnificent mountains.
- We'll return to our private Orchid Cruise for some swimming and breathtaking sunset before sailing to our sleeping area for anchoring. There will be a cooking demonstration by our chef prior to dinner. Following dinner, you can enjoy time on your own at the Orchid Cruise panoramic bar, partaking of squid fishing, or private massage that can be arranged in your cabin.



Accommodations in Hạ Long Bay: Orchid Cruise



Central Việt Nam - The Geographic Heart of Vietnam



Day 7: November 7 – Travel from Hạ Long Bay to Huế

- **Hạ Long Bay Adventure Day 2** - For those early risers, there will be Tai Chi at sunrise on the sundeck. We'll have a light breakfast then off for some kayaking to explore Ao Ếch (Frog Lake) and the hidden charm of Hạ Long Bay.
- We'll row back to the Orchid Cruise to pack up our luggage and check out, followed by brunch as we cruise back to Tuần Châu Pier for our next adventure.
- **Traveling to Huế from Hạ Long Bay** - A Royal Welcome Dinner– We will travel to Nội Bài International Airport by private transportation for our 1 hour-15 minute flight from Hà Nội to Huế and will be transferred to our hotel for an Imperial Feast featuring royal cuisine.



Accommodations in Huế:

Azerai La Residence is a lovely property close to the world heritage city of Huế and the ancient citadel.



Day 8: November 8 - Huế

- **Exploring Huế's Imperial City and Food Scenes on Scooter, Cooking Demonstration of Huế's Royal Foods** – After breakfast at the hotel, we will meet our local guide and venture on scooters to explore Huế's Imperial City, visiting Tu Hieu pagoda- where Master Thich Nhat Hanh live and rest on his last days of life, and discover and taste amazing authentic Huế dishes in the most hidden places in this beautiful city.
- A highlight of this exploration is a visit to a family who has been making traditional Huế steamed dumplings for the imperial royal court for 3 generations! You'll have the chance to learn how to make these delicious dumplings, taste these freshly steamed, and learn about Huế's cultural heritage, traditions, and local life.
- We will conclude this tour with some delicious Huế beer and local snacks before heading back to the hotel in the late afternoon. You'll enjoy your last evening in Huế on your own to shop for souvenirs, tour the city or simply rest in the hotel. We will provide sightseeing and dining recommendations.



Day 9: November 9 - Travel from Huế to Hội An

- **A Scenic Journey to Hội An with a visit to Children of Việt-Nam in Đà Nẵng, a Home Cooked Lunch**
- After breakfast at the hotel, we will travel from Huế to Hội An by private bus. Enroute we will make a stop in Đà Nẵng, Chef Hue-Chan's birthplace, to visit a charity that is near and dear to her heart – Children of Việt-Nam (COV) in Đà Nẵng, whose mission is to "... lift children out of poverty by eliminating barriers to fulfilling their potential through wraparound services that focus on one child, one family, one community at a time." COV serves Đà Nẵng City and the surrounding areas and focus on children with disabilities, ethnic minority and rural children living in poverty, children living in poverty at risk for dropping out of school, children living in single-mother households. Open Kitchen has arranged for a home cooked lunch by local families supported by COV programs with Đà Nẵng specialty dishes. Open Kitchen will donate a portion of our proceeds from our Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade to further COV's mission.
- **Welcome to Hội An!** - We will arrive late afternoon to Hội An. Following hotel check-in, we will take a brief tour of this charming ancient town, including scouting out some amazing shopping venues, then we will have a Welcome Dinner at the famous Cargo Club restaurant by the acclaimed chef, restaurateur and author Trinh Diem Vy, that showcase Vietnam's and Hội An's cuisine.



Accommodations in Hội An:

Anantara Hoi An Resort is set on the Thu Bồn River and less than a mile from Hội An's historic area. The resort's 94 rooms are all set in traditionally styled, two- or three-story townhouses reflecting Hoi An's history of trade with Holland, Japan, China and France.

Day 10: November 10 - Hội An



- **Bicycle or Motorbike Ride to Hội An Local Market and through Rice Paddies and Organic Garden, Cooking Class, and Lunch** - After breakfast at the hotel, we will meet our local chef instructor to go to a colorful local market to purchase fresh ingredients for our hands-on cooking class and lunch that day. Our chef has designed a cooking menu featuring Hội An's distinctive regional cuisine. We will be cooking at his family's lively restaurant in An Bàng Beach, a charming beach town about 2 miles outside Hội An.
- For our cooking class, our chef will discuss local spices and their uses and benefits, while working with you to prepare three delicious dishes. We will enjoy our lunch and take in the vibe of the local village.
- **Free time in Hội An** - After our wonderful day at An Bàng Beach, we'll head back to our hotel for some free time to explore Hội An, rest, and have dinner on our own. We will provide sightseeing and dining recommendations.



Day 11: November 11 - Hội An

- **A Visit to Hội An Fish Market and Countryside Bike Tour** - For early risers, we have arranged for a wonderful excursion to a fish market by boat where you'll experience a true local way of life, from fishmongers selling fish and customers bargaining on prices.
- We will return to the hotel for breakfast then meet our local guide for a Hội An Countryside Bike Tour for an idyllic ride through rice fields and rural countryside. You'll ride through beautiful emerald villages with water buffalos on farmlands and meet local artisans who will be happy to share their crafts with you, from making straw mats to milling rice into flour. There will be endless photo opportunities as we will take the most scenic country paths.

We will stop at a small village for lunch and a cold drink and enjoy the local life and weather permitting, we will take a boat ride to discover the Thu Bồn River and its waterway.

- **Free Afternoon, Sunset Seafood BBQ Beach Dinner on An Bàng Beach** - We will return to our hotel for a little rest before heading off by private bus to a wonderful Sunset Seafood BBQ beach dinner in An Bàng Beach prepared by our local chef!





Southern Việt Nam - Vibrant Urban Energy & Mellow Countryside



Day 12: November 12 - Travel from Hội An to Sài Gòn

- **Uber-Urban Cultural and Culinary Immersion, and a Welcome Lunch** – After breakfast at the hotel, we'll depart for Đà Nẵng International Airport by private transportation for our 1.5-hour flight to Sài Gòn.
- We'll kick off our uber-urban Sài Gòn culinary adventures with a special and delicious lunch with celebrity Chef Nikki Tran, a Vietnamese-American (or "Fish Sauce American"), at her Kàu Ba restaurant in Saigon. Chef Nikki has appeared on Phil Rosenthal's "Somebody Feed Phil" and David Chang's "Ugly Delicious," both Netflix shows, and NBC's Travel Voyager and featured in numerous publications.
- After hotel check-in, you have the option of a tour of the Reunification Palace and War Remnants Museum by our Tour Leader OR free time.
- **Sài Gòn by Night - Cocktails & Nibbles Adventure** - Pre-sunset, we'll meet for Cocktails & Nibbles Hopping around Sài Gòn to experience the amazing sights, sounds, and flavors of this vibrant city! We've selected some of the best cocktail bars with breathtaking views of Sài Gòn with hip vibes and cool crafted cocktails and mocktails for our outing!



Accommodations in Sài Gòn:

Hôtel des Arts Saigon, located in the heart of Hồ Chí Minh City, is an exquisite 5-star boutique hotel features décor that fuses the classical charm of French Indochina with period artwork and beautiful furnishings custom designed by Vietnamese artisans. It has a gorgeous rooftop infinity pool and restaurants with amazing city views.





Day 13: November 13 - Sài Gòn

- **Discovering the History of and Lunch.** After breakfast at the hotel, we meet our local guide and travel 1.5 hours to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels. We will step back in time to learn how this vast underground network was used in the Vietnam war. We'll have lunch following the tour then back to our hotel to rest up for the evening exciting adventure!
- **Sài Gòn Scooter Foodie Tour** - Pre-sunset, we'll embark on an exciting scooter foodie tour of Saigon to experience and taste some of the best and hidden places only accessible by way of scooter.



Day 14: November 14 - Travel from Sài Gòn to the Mê Kông Delta

- After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel in Sài Gòn and begin our amazing adventure in the Mê Kông Delta. We will travel to Bến Tre, a green island between the four corners of the Mê Kông River with many canals, coconut groves, and fruit orchards (about 2 hours).
- **Experience an Exclusive Private Culinary Adventure at a Charming, Authentic Homestay** - We will experience life on the Mê Kông River on board a traditional wooden boat with a chef demonstration and lunch of dishes reflecting Mê Kông Delta cuisine and local ingredients. We will return to our homestay to relax and explore the Bến Tre island, known as the coconut kingdom in Vietnam and one of the major agricultural producers in the Mê Kông Delta. For dinner, we will feast on a traditional Mê Kông Delta meal followed by a wonderful tea service to the sound of folk music indigenous to this region.



Accommodation in the Mê Kông Delta:

Our home for an oversight stay is the very charming Út Trinh Bến Tre Homestay where the wonderful owner will be our curator for a memorial culinary experience.



Day 15: November 15 – Travel from the Mê Kông Delta to Sài Gòn - Last Day of Open Kitchen's Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade!

- After breakfast at the serene Út Trinh Bến Tre Homestay, we will journey back to Sài Gòn. We will have an incredible lunch at the LUNCH LADY, one of Anthony Bourdain's favorite food vendor! For dessert, we'll have a chocolate tasting at Marou.
- You will have a Free Afternoon to enjoy your last day in Saigon and Việt-Nam. Now is a good time to do some shopping for gifts and souvenirs!
- **Experience Vietnamese "Cuisine Mới" or "New Cuisine" with Chef Peter Cuong Franklin**
- We will meet up for our Departure Dinner to say goodbye to our friends for one last awesome meal in Việt-Nam at Anan, an elevated "Cuisine Mới," or "New Cuisine" restaurant by Chef Peter Cuong Franklin's Anan Saigon that's voted top 50 restaurants in Asia. We have arranged a "Meet & Greet" with Chef Peter, followed by a fabulous dinner.



Day 16: November 16 - Departure

- **Breakfast and Departure** - After breakfast, you'll check out and make your journey back home with such amazing memories of your time on Open Kitchen's Culinary Escapade to Việt-Nam!
- The closest airport is Tân Sơn Nhất International Airport (SGN).
- Transfers by private car to the airport. Bon Voyage! Travel Safe!



