

CRUISING THE RED RIVER IN NORTHERN VIETNAM

Monday 18 March - Saturday 6 April 2019

18 nights

TOUR OVERVIEW

This tour begins with an opportunity to relax and immerse yourself in the local life and flavours of Hanoi; visiting homes and markets and observing the locals going about their daily routines. Then an overnight train journey takes you from Hanoi into the highlands to stay at Sapa. Here you will visit colourful markets and villages and following small trails, meet farmers and members of different hilltribe groups. This area is known for its spectacular views of rice terraces, towering mountains and meandering rivers. Transferring to Viet Tri, you embark on your Pandaw rivership and set sail downstream for ten nights. The Pandaw is the first tourist craft to explore the Red River delta and its main tributaries and connect downtown Hanoi with the wonders of Halong Bay. There will be another chance to visit Hanoi to see some of the most well-known sites. On the Red River, there are plenty of opportunities to get off the ship and visit the local artisans and craftspeople. Halong Bay, is a spectacular labyrinth of dramatic, densely forested karst hills and extraordinary rock formations. These gigantic rocks are one of Asia's most photogenic natural wonders. There is some concern that this scenic wonderland is deteriorating with many tourists visiting each day. However, being on board the RV Angkor Pandaw gives the chance to travel further afield into remoter parts of the bay. Single travellers can enjoy a cabin on their own for no extra cost on this cruise.

RIVERSHIP - RV Angkor Pandaw

Built in 2012 in Saigon; 42.25 m in length with 90 cm draft. This ship has berths for 32 people.

Accommodation and facilities:

- 10 main deck and 6 upper deck staterooms
- Air-conditioned panorama dining room
- Spacious, open-air lounge
- Observation deck
- Lounge bar
- Library with contemporary and classic literature
- Hair dryers in all cabins

Wining and dining:

- Local master chef heading an experienced international culinary team
- Semi-buffet breakfast and lunch, and seated theme dinners
- Daily lean and light menu options
- Complimentary coffee, water, tea, soft drinks, local beer, local spirits, juices
- Series of cultural performances, educational talks, cooking classes, and ship tour
- Welcome cocktails and farewell reception
- 24hours hospitality bar





TOUR MANAGER

Jenny Magee is your Tour Manager. Passionate about Southeast Asia, she most recently spent seven months, solo travelling there. Her favourite kind of travel is slow and deep, with plenty of time for interesting conversations and learning about people and places. Jenny is deeply interested in language and culture, having worked for almost 30 years, helping new migrants settle into New Zealand life.

Now self-employed as a coach and writer, Jenny works with women who want to make the most of the second half of life. This often involves getting out of their comfort zone and doing what they've always wanted to do. With her combined passions for travel and culture, connection and adventure, Jenny is looking forward to ensuring you have a memorable tour in her favourite part of the world.

TOUR PRICE *Ex Auckland, Share twin per person*

Main Deck Cabin	NZD\$10,350
Upper Deck Cabin	NZD\$11,350

Single supplement (limited availability, land portion) NZD\$760

Please contact Calder & Lawson Tours if you are interested in a single occupancy place.

GROUP SIZE Minimum 10, maximum 14

VARIATIONS IN TRAVEL We can make arrangements for any travel you would like to do before or after this tour, or book business class seats for the flights. Please contact us.

TOUR INCLUSIONS

- The services of an experienced New Zealand based Calder & Lawson tour manager
- Economy class airfares
- 7 nights hotel accommodation
- 1 night on overnight train
- 10 nights on board RV Angkor Pandaw
- Meals as specified in the itinerary
- Local guides
- All group transfers
- Admissions as detailed in the itinerary
- All tips for local guides and drivers

TOUR EXCLUSIONS

- Airline taxes
- Personal expenses
- Travel insurance
- Beverages during included meals, unless specified
- Hotel portorage

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

- A slower paced tour with opportunities to meet and interact with local people and see more than the main tourist sites.
- Several days exploring the dramatic landscapes of the Sapa region.
- 10 nights on a luxurious Pandaw rivership with all meals and activities included.
- The unusual limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations in Halong Bay.
- Visits to markets, lunch with a local family in Hanoi and the distinctive flavours of delicious Vietnamese food.
- A great tour for single travellers with no single supplement charged for the sole use of a cabin on the rivership.

IS THIS TOUR FOR ME?

This Journeys tour showcases northern Vietnam in some depth. It is not very physically demanding with 10 days spent living in luxury on board the Pandaw rivership. Excursions from the ship are optional but will require some walking and on some days embarking and disembarking from the ship onto other smaller craft. In Hanoi, there will be city walks and in the Sapa area walks on village paths in the mountains. It is important to note that this is a new river expedition and itineraries and schedules are subject to change due to uncertain local conditions.

DAILY ITINERARY

Monday 18 March 2019
Auckland or Christchurch – Singapore

Meals: In flight

Board a mid afternoon flight from Auckland or Christchurch to Singapore, arriving in the evening and staying overnight.

Tuesday 19 March
Singapore - Hanoi

Meals: In flight/D
Overnight: Hanoi

A morning flight from Singapore arrives in Hanoi in the late morning where we will be met and taken to our hotel. In the late afternoon, a cyclo tour through the maze of narrow streets in the Old Quarter will introduce us to this special part of the city. A Welcome Dinner will be served in the evening.

Wednesday 20 March
Hanoi

Meals: IB/L
Overnight: Hanoi

Begin this morning's tour with a visit to the local market. Here, we will see fascinating goods as well as fresh fruit, vegetables and many other local products. Continue through charming alleys and discover little-seen Hanoi. Enjoy a coffee break next to a scenic lake and pass a pagoda, where monks are sunk in prayer. Walk to a typical Hanoian home for lunch prepared by a welcoming local family and learn about their daily routines. After lunch, visit Hanoi's quirkiest local market. Rarely visited, and a little hard to find, this market is guaranteed to amaze.

Thursday 21 March
Hanoi

Meals: B
Overnight: Hanoi

Take a look behind the scenes of one of Vietnam's most beloved art forms: water puppetry, a traditional art form dating back to the 11th century. Meet a puppet maker in his workshop, paint a personalized puppet, learn the secrets of the performers, and gain insights into local craft and rural traditions.

Friday 22 March
Hanoi – Lao Cai

Meals: B
Train: 7 hours 50 minutes
Overnight: On board the train in a two-person shared cabin

We will begin early this morning to witness Hanoi waking up and head to Long Bien Market, the biggest fruit and vegetable wholesale market in northern Vietnam. No other place in Hanoi exemplifies Vietnamese life better than this market. We will see buyers haggling for goods, money counters, motorbikes weaving through crowded aisles and other dizzying scenes of daily life. Continue to downtown Hanoi for a hot bowl of pho, a typical Vietnamese breakfast and a stroll around Hoan Kiem Lake to see the heart of Hanoi. Pass by groups of people doing their daily Tai Chi, gymnastics or martial arts and join a 45-minute Tai Chi class. Practise the slow movements of this popular martial art under the guidance of a local teacher. After the Tai Chi class, enjoy some Vietnamese coffee at a local coffee shop. Spend the rest of the day exploring Hanoi at leisure with a late check out from the hotel at 6pm. We will then be transferred to the railway station for an overnight train to Lao Cai, the gateway to Sapa. The train departs Hanoi at 9.40pm and arrives at Lao Cai at 5.30 am.

Saturday 23 March
Lao Cai - Sapa

Meals: B/L
Overnight: Sapa

On arrival in the border town of Lao Cai, we will have breakfast before driving to a local market - Can Cau where hill tribe groups gather. The market offers a variety of local products, which cannot be found in other areas such as an interesting animal market where pot-bellied pigs, cows and buffalos can be seen. Continue with a short walk to a hill-tribe village. Here we will visit some local homes to understand more about the culture and traditions of these tribes. Afterwards transfer by road up through the mountains to the former hill station town of Sapa established by the French in 1922. In the terraced hills and mountains of this area, the expansive green landscape is enlivened by the colours of its hill tribe population. It is here we will find hands stained with colour from fabric dyes and shades of blue, red and green intricately embroidered and stitched into jackets, waistcoats, pants, skirts, caps, purses and leggings.

Sunday 24 March
Sapa

Meals: B/L
Overnight: Sapa

This morning after breakfast, we leave Sapa for a 30-minute winding road transfer to Ban Khoang Valley. Enjoy the breathtaking view of Hoag Lien Mountain Range along the way, also known as the Tonkin Alps. Our first stop is at Lu Khau Village in Ban Khoang Valley. The Lu Khau Village is home to Blue Hmong and Red Zao minorities. Explore the village on foot, meet the friendly local people and learn about their colorful culture and lifestyle. Depart from Ban Khoang Valley for an 8 kilometer road transfer to Ta Giang

Phinh Valley and enjoy a local lunch there. This afternoon, take a leisurely walk through the charming Ta Giang Phinh Valley. Walk on the village path which winds down the impressive valley, home to Blue Hmong ethnic minority people. Visit some local houses to see handicraft workshops and observe villagers working in the fields tending their crops. There will be a mid-afternoon transfer back to our hotel in Sapa for overnight.

Monday 25 March

Spa - Viet Tri

Meals: B/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

We check out of our hotel in the early morning, meet our local tour guide and take a private transfer by coach from Sapa to Viet Tri to board our Pandaw rivership. Once on board we set sail downstream for sunset and a night on the Red River.

Tuesday 26 March

The Lo River

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

In the morning we transfer to Gia Thanh village and visit the conical hat making village. Then continue by bus to visit Hung Lo Temple where we will enjoy a "Hat Xoan" performance, a genre of Vietnamese folk music. In the afternoon we will moor in Minh Chau to visit a carpenter's village and smith's village in Vinh Phuc province.

Wednesday 27 March

Upper Red River

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

Today we visit the ancient village of Duong Lam, with mossy houses dating back over 400 years; the village exemplifies the features of a traditional agricultural lifestyle. Sail on downstream on the Red River to a timeless arcadian Vietnam with emerald green rice paddies punctuated by limestone rock formations. Of interest are the Thay and Tay Phuong Pagodas, hardly known, yet with exquisite temples dating from the 8th and 11th century and home to some fine Buddhist statuary carved from jackfruit trees.

Thursday 28 March

Hanoi

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

Today we drop anchor in the bustling city of Hanoi, and visit some of the highlights of this interesting city which we did not visit earlier in the tour: the final resting place of the revolutionary leader, Ho Chi Minh; and the notorious prison cynically named the Hanoi Hilton by the American POWs who were held there. The Temple of Literature is often cited as one of Hanoi's most picturesque attractions. Originally built as a university in 1070 dedicated to Confucius and scholars, the buildings and gardens are extremely beautiful. We will be welcomed back to the ship by Lion Dances.

Friday 29 March

The Lower Red River

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

In the morning there is a visit to Bat Trang ceramics village, a 14th century porcelain and pottery village near Hanoi. Here local artisans combine both traditional and modern techniques to create beautiful porcelain artworks. Later in the day we continue sailing down the lower Red River to Dien Xa Bonsai village.

Saturday 30 March

Day River

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

After breakfast there will be time to explore the Dien Xa Bonsai village. Most families in the village grow bonsais. The occupation has existed for more than 700 years and the village once provided flowers and bonsais for the kings and mandarins of the Tran Dynasty. There is a temple in the village that worships the ancestor of the craft village. In the afternoon, a visit takes us to the famous Phat Diem stone cathedral. The cathedral's wooden interior boasts a vaulted ceiling supported by massive columns. Above the granite altar, Vietnamese looking cherubs swarm, while clouds drift across the blue ceiling. Opposite the cathedral's main doors is the free-standing bell tower and stone slab where mandarins used to observe the Catholic Mass. Later a trip to a local house where they make rice wine before we board the ship and sail up the Day River to Ninh Binh where we will be surrounded by quintessentially Vietnamese limestone scenery.

Sunday 31 March

Ninh Binh

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

In the morning, a visit by rowing boat to the pristine and untouched area of Thung Nang, often called 'Halong on land'. Later in the day, we will stop at a bamboo and rattan village where they make products for both the domestic and overseas market.

Monday 1 April

Luoc - Thai Binh - Kinh Thay Rivers

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

This morning relax and observe the lively and interesting life on the river before we reach our next destination in the afternoon. Here there will be an excursion to Thanh Ha Commune with a village walk and a private water puppet show set under shade by a beautiful pond of lotus and lilies. We drop anchor near Hai Phong Port, the gateway to Halong Bay.

Tuesday 2 April**Halong Bay**

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

Casting off along the river we enter Halong Bay's amazing island scenery with its 2,000 dramatic limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations dating back 20 million years. Exploring Halong Bay, we stop at the 'Dark and Bright Cave' famous for its stunning limestone structures and rich natural habitat. Take a kayak or a local basket boat rowed by fishermen and enter this remarkable cave into an enclosed area like a crater. Bats can be heard in the cave and there are massive stalactites hanging from the ceiling. We continue our cruise around Halong Bay until we drop anchor in Rang Dua.

Wednesday 3 April**Halong Bay**

Meals: B/L/D

Overnight: RV Angkor Pandaw

This morning we stop at Viet Hai Village and continue our journey by mountain bike or electric buggy to visit the village's vegetable farm and typical houses. It is a breath-taking trip along a small road winding its way through the limestone rocks. In the afternoon we will continue cruising towards Lan Ha Bay for a visit to a floating fishing house. Residents of the Gulf of Tonkin mostly live on boats and floating rafts. The provincial government is planning to resettle these floating villages on shore to protect the landscape of this heritage area. If the weather is kind, we will end the day with cocktails at a beautiful beach in Halong Bay.

Wednesday 4 April**Halong Bay - Hanoi**

Meals: B/L

Overnight: Hanoi

This morning our cruise ends at Tuan Chau jetty where we disembark for our transfer to Hanoi. On route we will stop for lunch at a local restaurant. Our last night will be in Hanoi, a city we have got to know and there will be time for last minute shopping and exploration.

Thursday 5 April**Hanoi - Singapore - Auckland or Christchurch**

Meals: B/ in flight

Today we will fly back to New Zealand via Singapore where we will connect with a Singapore Airlines flight back to Auckland or Christchurch arriving mid morning on the 6 April.

TOUR EXTENSION

For first time travellers to Vietnam, there is an opportunity to take an extension to Ho Chi Minh City, visiting Hue, Hoi An and the Mekong Delta.

HOW TO SECURE YOUR PLACE ON THIS TOUR

A deposit of \$1,000 is required to secure your place on the tour. When minimum numbers are reached, the tour will become a 'confirmed departure'. At that point we will advise when the full tour payment will be due.

- [Click here](#) to complete the online registration form, pay the \$1,000 deposit and your spot in this tour is secured.
- Or you can complete a paper registration form. You can download one from the website www.calderandlawsonontours.co.nz, or give us a call and we will email or post one to you.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

Can be found on the website www.calderandlawsonontours.co.nz, on the back of the paper registration form or on the summary page when you complete an online registration.

VARIATIONS

This itinerary is Version 2 dated 20/08/2018 and is subject to change. Exchange rate fluctuations may result in a change to the tour price.

