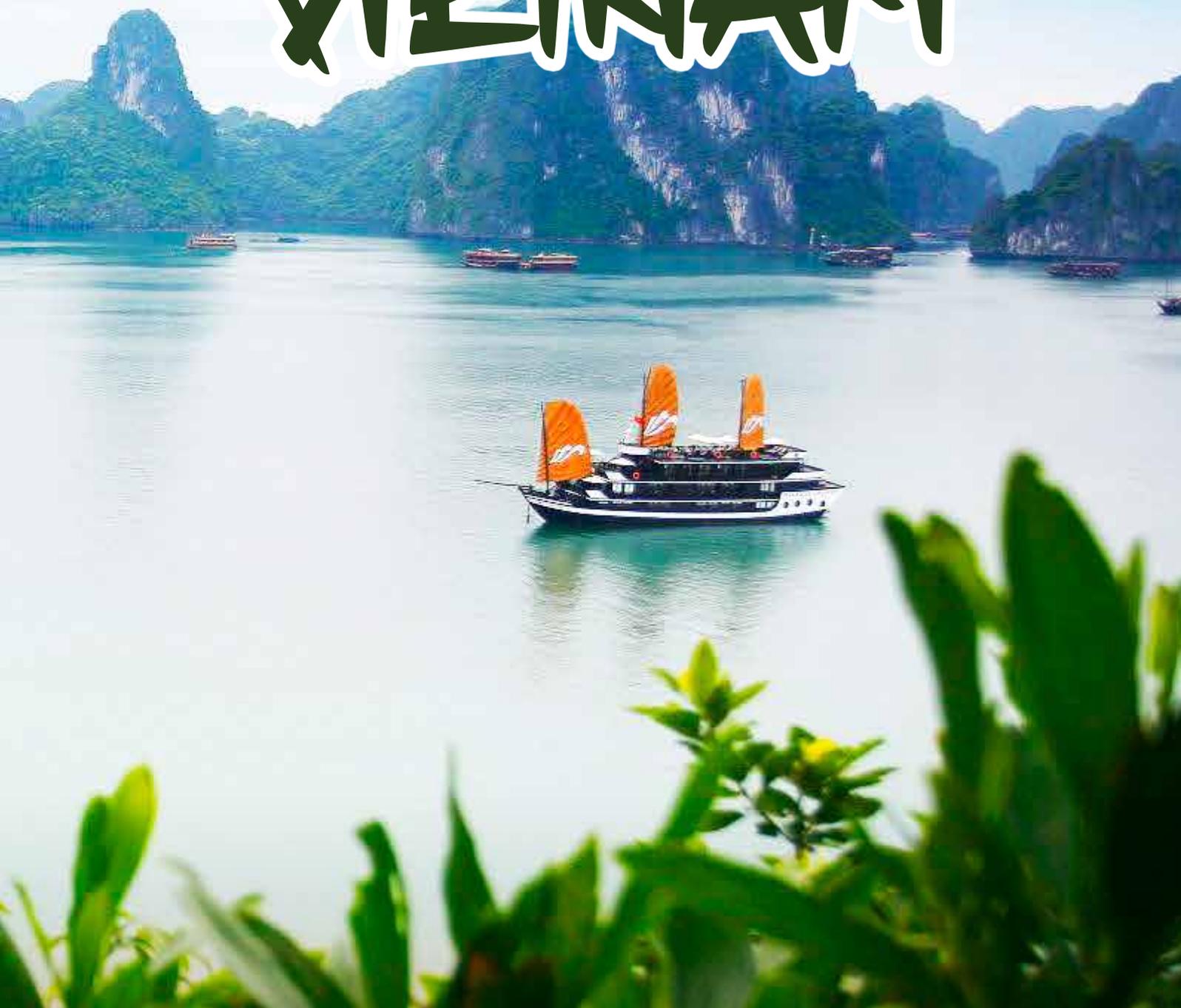


VIETNAM



With Hayley Anderson · 5th – 20th September 2018
Extension to Sapa: 20th – 23rd September 2018

· HO CHI MINH CITY · DALAT · HOI AN · HUE · DONG HOI · HANOI · HA LONG BAY · SAPA ·



Scott McGregor's

RAILWAY ADVENTURES

OVERVIEW

Embrace this rare opportunity to explore Vietnam by private train on the legendary Reunification Express—one of the world's greatest rail journeys. Welcomed onto your private rail carriages in Ho Chi Minh City, you will travel in stages, enjoying Vietnam's most iconic destinations on a 2,500-kilometre odyssey north to Hanoi and on to Sapa (optional extra).

The adventure includes side journeys to the colourful colonial hill station city of Dalat, the ancient trading port of Hoi An, and a special optional tour on the normally inaccessible last steam railway in Indochina. An overnight cruise around the islands of the stunning World Heritage listed Ha Long Bay is the icing on the cake and highlights more fascinating aspects of this diverse country.

Enjoy luxury hotels, most meals and expert guides all through the tour. Along the way, discover the rich culture of Vietnam, its ancient kingdoms and colourful colonial past, fascinating ethnic diversity and triumphant post-war reconstruction.

Legendary food, friendly people and excellent shopping complete the experiences of this wonderful and unique railway adventure.

Guard at the Citadel in Hue



WHY TRAVEL WITH US

The joy of travelling is no longer confined to the destination—the mode of travel is a large part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a truly unique perspective on some of the world's most spectacular holiday destinations, with the assurance that the journey is just as magical and unforgettable as what is discovered at the end of the line.

With us, you can confidently expect:

- **Small group sizes** — a maximum of 20 passengers per trip guarantees an intimate experience with less time spent queuing, more time with your guide, and better access to sightseeing destinations.
- **Unique itineraries** — each itinerary has been meticulously developed by a team with great cultural awareness and many years' knowledge of each destination. You are guaranteed to experience the best that each destination has to offer.
- **Authentic local experiences** — whether it's a little-known yet impressive steam railway, a small boutique hotel or an authentic restaurant, know that you will experience something special on our tours.
- **Expert local guides and local operators** — we employ local guides to share their passion and knowledge of the places they call home, while our partners on the ground offer us support and backup all the way.
- **Customer satisfaction** — our testimonials speak for themselves. Thousands have travelled with us over the years and many come back year after year, often bringing friends along! On our customer satisfaction ratings, over 97% would recommend us to others and/or travel with us again.
- **Fully escorted** — our team of tour leaders is experienced and capable, entertaining and considerate, and together with our local guides, has your needs well covered. They will help with everything along the way, giving you the peace of mind to soak up your surroundings. And you'll find them jolly good company to boot!

Hoi An Ancient Town



Hayley Anderson

MEET YOUR TOUR LEADER

Hayley Anderson has had a lot of experience in the travel industry, living and working in Australia, New Zealand, Europe, Asia and Africa, and Canada. She has worked for Scenic Tours as a tour director, for nine years taking passengers all around Australia, extensively touring NZ and taking tours to Africa, Indochina and Canada. She is currently working with Bill Peach Journeys (BPJ) as a casual journey director, looking after high-end tours around Australia, New Zealand and overseas.

When she is not on tour with BPJ, Hayley works casually for several companies, taking passengers from visiting cruise ships around Sydney and beyond. Hayley is also growing her on-line presence in the field of photojournalism with the development of her digital photography site, www.hayleyanderson.com

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exclusive travel aboard Railway Adventures' private train attached to the Reunification Express
- Six separate train trips, including the Reunification Express and the Dalat Mountain Railway
- Fully escorted by an expert Australian leader and local guide throughout
- 15 nights in quality 4- or 5-star hotels and resorts with most meals included
- Optional extension to Sapa and return in a special Haratours sleeper carriage
- Two night cruise aboard a luxury junk on Ha Long Bay
- Comprehensive sightseeing including six World Heritage sites

TOUR MAP



HOW YOU WILL TRAVEL

We offer the best train trips possible, a private luxury coach for off-train travel and many other appealing ways to explore. Here's a selection:



Private Carriages attached to the Express



The Reunification Express



View of Hai Van Pass from the dining car of our private train

Day 1: Wednesday 5 September – ARRIVE IN HO CHI MINH CITY

Transfer to your hotel on arrival. Later this evening, enjoy a welcome dinner with your tour leader, team of local guides and your fellow travellers.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City. Meals included: Dinner (D)

Day 2: Thursday 6 September – HO CHI MINH CITY

Begin your exploration of Ho Chi Minh City with a city tour stopping at the bustling Ben Thanh Market, the historic City Post Office and Notre Dame Cathedral. After lunch at a local restaurant, explore the War Remnants Museum and the old Presidential Palace, now known as the Reunification Palace, including a seldom visited secret VC hiding place that stored weapons for an attack on the Independence Palace in 1968. Later on, return to your hotel and enjoy dinner at a nearby favourite.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City, (B, L, D)

Day 3: Friday 7 September – HO CHI MINH CITY – MY THO – MEKONG RIVER

After breakfast, you will follow the path of Vietnam's very first railway line (opened in 1885, abandoned in 1958) to My Tho, 70 kilometres southwest of Ho Chi Minh City in the Mekong Delta. On the way, you will be introduced to the railway history of southern Vietnam and will see some of the surviving vestiges of the abandoned line. From the site of the former railway station on the My Tho quayside, take a cruise on the Mekong River to a nearby island where you can walk through rice fields and orchards, sample local fruit and rice wine and listen to a musical performance.

Afterwards, row along the island waterways and canals in a sampan to another island where you will have lunch, sampling the delicious local specialty – 'elephant ear fish'. Then, it's back to Ho Chi Minh City and an afternoon and evening of leisure in and around your centrally located hotel.

Overnight: Grand Hotel, Ho Chi Minh City, (B, L)

Day 4: Saturday 8 September – HO CHI MINH CITY – THAP CHAM – DALAT

After breakfast, you will head to Saigon Railway Station where your private railway carriage is coupled onto Train SE6, departing at 9.00 am. The first of your scenic train journeys takes you along the southernmost section of the former Transindochinois railway, built between 1904 and 1913. It meanders across the rice paddies and busy towns of the fertile south while morning tea and, later, lunch is served in your private buffet car.

Reaching Thap Cham (Cham Tower) Station at 3 pm, you are conveyed by luxury coach up the mountains to the old French hill station of Dalat, stopping for sightseeing along the way. Situated in the cool climate of the Central Highlands, this was once a favourite retreat of the French colonialists. Our accommodation tonight is in the old-world grandeur of the Sofitel Dalat Palace Hotel and dinner will be served in the opulent dining hall at the hotel.

Overnight: Sofitel Dalat Palace Hotel, Dalat, (B, L, D)

Day 5: Sunday 9 September – DALAT

This morning, you will take a tour of Dalat in the coach, visiting the summer residence of the last emperor, Bao Dai, who was forced to abdicate in 1945. After this, explore the quirky architecture of the Crazy House Art Gallery and visit the Truc Lam Temple on scenic Tuyen Lam Lake. On the way we'll stop at the Prenn Waterfall. After lunch head to the old Dalat Railway Station, an Art Deco masterpiece completed in 1938 and the terminus of the former Langbian Cog Railway (operating between 1932 and 1969, now earmarked for reconstruction). Here, take a short diesel-hauled train trip along a reopened seven-kilometre adhesion rail stretch of the old line and learn about the line's fascinating history. Take time to see the tall Linh Phuoc Pagoda before the return journey to Dalat hauled behind the vintage Russian diesel railcar.

Overnight: Sofitel Dalat Palace Hotel, Dalat, (B, L)

Day 6: Monday 10 September – DALAT – NHA TRANG – DANANG – HOI AN

After a leisurely breakfast we'll head back down the mountain to resume our train journey from Nha Trang, stopping to view some surviving vestiges of the old Langbian Cog Railway and the extraordinary views stretching out over the coastal plain on the way. After lunch at the wonderful beachside Sailing Club restaurant, visit the Po Klong Garai Temple built by the Cham in the early 14th century. Here, you will discover more about this ancient people who left their architectural mark on the entire south-central coastal region of Vietnam.

At the station, board your private coach coupled onto Train SE8 and travel along the final section of the Transindochinois railway, built by the French colonial government between 1935 and 1936. This is a stunning section of coastline-hugging railway, with mountains and lakes a part of the ever-changing scenery. Dinner will be served in your private buffet car as the countryside rolls by in the deep glow of evening. As you travel, enjoy a talk on the history of the line you are riding and enjoy the on-board music and movie system. The train pulls into Danang station at 11 pm and the coach will then transfer you to your luxurious resort hotel in the heart of old Hoi An.

Overnight: Anantara Hoi An Resort, Hoi An, (B, L, D)

Day 7: Tuesday 11 September – HOI AN

Enjoy a free morning to take your time over breakfast, relax in the hotel and explore the district. Your guided walking tour of the town begins just before lunch, exploring the Thien Hau Temple, the Japanese Covered Bridge and several ancient houses. Hoi An is also renowned for its skilled tailors who can create any type of garment within 24 hours, so today will also provide an opportunity for a fitting session.

A leisurely lunch is unfurled at the Cargo Club in the heart of the old town and afterwards you are free to stroll around the ancient town and return to the hotel in your own.

Overnight: Anantara Resort, Hoi An, (B, L, D)

Day 8: Wednesday 12 September – HOI AN

This is a free day for you to enjoy and explore the wonders of Hoi An at your leisure. Highly recommended is a traditional Vietnamese cooking class. You will be in the company of an experienced chef who will guide you through the procurement of ingredients at the local village market and then provide in-depth, hands-on cooking instructions followed by lunch.

Alternatively, you can enjoy an early morning trip to the UNESCO World Heritage Listed My Son temple complex, a cluster of stone towers and sanctuaries built by the Cham people from the 7th to the 14th centuries, which is often compared to South East Asia's other major temple complexes such as Angkor Wat, Borobudur, Bagan and Ayutthaya.

Overnight: Anantara Resort, Hoi An, (B)

Day 9: Thursday 13 September – HOI AN – DANANG – HUE

Today, find yourself back on the rails. Departing Hoi An after breakfast, you will visit the busy Danang Railway Workshops and meet the manager who is passionate about the work they do and the future of the national railway system. You will also visit the world-renowned Cham Sculpture Museum, established in 1915/1916 by academics of the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, which contains the world's largest and most valuable collection of Cham sculptures from various temple sites, dating from the 4th to the 15th centuries. Following this, enjoy lunch at a famous local restaurant.

Later in the afternoon, re-board your private carriages at Danang Station coupled onto Train SE4. Snacks will be served in the buffet car as the train rolls over the stunningly beautiful Hai Van Pass. Stone-lined tunnels and viaducts are a feature of this dramatically engineered line completed by the French in 1906. Perched on a cliff and hugging the coastline, the railway has wide views across the sea and beyond to your next destination, the old imperial capital of Hue. The train will pull into the grand colonial station at 3.00 pm, where you will be transferred to the luxury Imperial Hotel. The evening is yours to enjoy the multitude of dining options in the busy district around the hotel.

Overnight: Imperial Hotel, Hue, (B, L)

Day 10: Friday 14 September – HUE

Hue acted as Vietnam’s political and royal capital during the 19th century and remains one of the country’s most important cultural and religious centres. Your full-day tour begins with a visit to the vast Hue Citadel, followed by visits to the Tu Duc and Khai Dinh Mausolea, and the Royal Arena where tigers and elephants once fought for the king’s amusement. Visit a ‘garden house’ – a unique architectural feature of Nguyen-dynasty Hue surrounded by flower gardens and orchards.

After a picnic lunch, explore the tranquil Thien Mu Pagoda before taking a boat trip back to your hotel along the Perfume River. In the evening, enjoy a royal banquet featuring dishes once only served in the Forbidden City.

Overnight: Imperial Hotel, Hue, (B, L, D)

Day 11: Saturday 15 September – HUE – HANOI

Midmorning sees you boarding a flight for the short trip to Vietnam’s historic and dynamic capital, Hanoi. Enjoy lunch at an atmospheric local favourite eatery on the way into town, before checking into your centrally-located hotel for the next few nights.

Boarding a coach, you will receive a short orientation of the city’s nightlife en route to the evening’s restaurant for a dinner featuring the special cuisine of the North. Later, return to the hotel through the bustling Old Quarter by traditional rickshaw.

Overnight: Hilton Hanoi Opera Hotel, Hanoi, (B, L, D)

Day 12: Sunday 16 September – HANOI

Enjoy a full-day tour of Hanoi, with the morning spent exploring some of the capital city’s more famous sights including the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Presidential Palace Vestiges Area, the One-Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature. Lunch will be hosted at a local restaurant and then the tour of this fascinating ancient city continues in the afternoon.

An optional visit to the famous Water Puppet Theatre is highly recommended and is easily arranged. Attending an early session leaves you free to join the group at the Gourmet Corner Restaurant situated on the top floor of the Elegance Diamond Hotel for dinner. This option offers an ideal setting for dinner as you can enjoy the views across the lake to the city while dining on a wide variety of Western and Vietnamese dishes.

Overnight: Hilton Hanoi Opera Hotel, Hanoi, (B, L)

Day 13: Monday 17 September – HANOI

Today, you have the option to take it easy or experience any number of optional activities. Your guides and host will help with plans and suggestions.

Overnight: Hilton Hanoi Opera Hotel, Hanoi, (B)

Day 14: Tuesday 18 September – HANOI – HA LONG BAY

The morning’s coach trip will bring you to the coastal port of Ha Long City where you will board a special overnight luxury junk for a cruise of Ha Long Bay. After checking in, enjoy a welcome drink and soak up the atmosphere of the spacious newly built traditional teak cruising junk. It sets sail through the mysterious bay while you are served an exquisite lunch, the vessel floating amongst the natural rock formations and picturesque beauty of this UNESCO World Heritage listed seascape.

Visit the Ba Hang floating village and drop anchor in the calm water surrounded by beautiful islets where you can swim, kayak and experience an optional visit to Luon Cave.

Enjoy the sunset party on the sundeck with local wine and fresh fruits and, as the sun sets over the islands, you will hear more from the guide about the customs and lifestyles of the locals. You can also join a cooking demonstration, learning about the craft of fruit and vegetable carving. After dinner, try squid fishing with the crew, watch a movie, have a drink at the bar or just relax in your cabin listening to the gentle sound of the water lapping the sides of the ship as it anchors in a protected bay for the night.

Overnight: onboard Royal Cruises private junk on Ha Long Bay, (B, L, D)

Day 15: Wednesday 19 September – HA LONG BAY

Join your fellow travellers for a light breakfast while sailing to Sung Sot Cave, where you can explore one of the largest and most beautiful caves in Ha Long Bay. This cave is regarded as an opera theatre, with three main chambers covering an area over 10,000 square metres. Once back at the boat enjoy a buffet lunch served on board whilst the junk moves through the bay.

The afternoon is yours to relax or enjoy one of the many activities on offer such as a kayak tour, swimming or hiking on one of the islands. In the evening, enjoy drinks on the deck and a sumptuous farewell banquet with Scott and your fellow travellers.

Overnight: Royal Cruises private junk on Ha Long bay, (B, L, D)

Day 16: Thursday 20 September

HA LONG BAY – NOI BAI AIRPORT – DEPART, (B, L)

Enjoy a lazy morning as the junk slowly makes its way back to port. Before disembarking, enjoy an early lunch on board and bid farewell to the crew. Your coach will take you back to Hanoi and directly to the airport in time for the afternoon flight home or beyond.

OR if you are joining the optional extension to Sapa, you will have a lovely dinner in downtown Hanoi followed by transfer to Hanoi Railway Station for the beginning of your next adventure in your special Hara Tours sleeping carriage on the night train to the Chinese border town of Lao Cai.



PRICE

Per person twin share..... **\$7,985**
Single supplement..... **\$1,395**

Deposit (per person) **\$1000** at time of booking
Final payment due by **7th July 2018**

INCLUSIONS

- 15 nights accommodation in comfortable, centrally located 4-5 star hotels
- Many meals as specified in the program
- Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
- Luxury chartered coach, with luggage transport throughout the tour
- Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
- All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

EXCLUSIONS

- International flights
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals and services not mentioned in itinerary
- All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
- Excursions listed as optional and extra in the brochure

EXTENSION TO SAPA

Day 1: Thursday 20 September – HANOI – SAPA

Your transfer to Hanoi's main railway station will see you settled into your special and well-appointed railway carriage for the overnight trip to Lao Cai on the Chinese border.

Overnight: on special Hara Tours train, (B)

Day 2: Friday 21 September – LAO CAI – SAPA – DRAGON JAW MOUNTAIN

Welcomed by your local guide at Lao Cai Railway Station, have breakfast and then be transferred by coach to Sapa, high in the Hoang Lien Range of mountains. After checking into your hotel, you will visit Sapa town, Sapa Post Office, Sapa Hospital and be taken to the best walking tracks for a view of the valley. Lunch will be enjoyed at the hotel before you trek up to Ham Rong Mountain to view an amazing panorama of Sapa town. Following this, visit the Orchid Garden and a traditional ethnic village before making your way back to the hotel for dinner.

Overnight: Bamboo Hotel, Sapa, (B, L, D)

Day 3: Saturday 22 September – SAPA – CAT CAT – SILVER WATERFALL – LAO CAI

After breakfast, you will undertake a morning excursion by road and foot to Cat Cat Village (Black H'mong ethnic minority). Lunch will be at the hotel followed by checkout and a transfer to Silver Waterfall. You will then continue to Lao Cai City and visit Upper Temple and the Lao Cai international border. Dinner is at a local restaurant before boarding the night train back to Hanoi.

Overnight: on train, (B, L, D)

Day 4: Sunday 23 September – HANOI – DEPARTURES, (B)

Arriving early into Hanoi the next morning, transfer to the hotel for breakfast and have the use of a room until approximately 2.00 pm when transfers will occur to Noi Bai Airport for the afternoon flights home or onwards.

PRICE

Per person twin share..... \$1,685
Single supplement..... \$125

Deposit (per person) \$1000 at time of booking
Final payment due by 7th July 2018

INCLUSIONS

- 3 nights accommodation in comfortable, centrally located hotels
- Many meals as specified in the program
- Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
- Luxury chartered coach, with luggage transport throughout the tour
- Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
- All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary

EXCLUSIONS

- International flights
- Airport transfers on arrival and departure
- Meals and services not mentioned in itinerary
- All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
- Excursions listed as optional and extra in the brochure



Sapa

SUGGESTED FLIGHTS

We have suggested flights for this itinerary depending on your departure point from Australia, any preferred stopovers en-route and/or your planned pre- and post-tour activities. We can also investigate your preferred airline and offer you a solution based on connection times and prices. Contact 1300 733 323 to discuss your options.

HOW TO BOOK

Download a booking form from our website and follow the easy steps to getting on board. Alternatively, contact Platinum Travel & Tours on 1300 733 323 or enquiries@platinumtravel.com if you'd prefer a form be sent to you.

Complete the form and submit it, along with your \$1000 pp deposit to secure your place on the tour.

DETAILS SUBJECT TO CHANGE

We endeavour to have all the details of our tours correct at the time of printing. However, sometimes factors beyond our control may affect the final inclusions and prices. These factors may include, but not be limited to; significant fluctuations in currency exchange rates, individual hotel/restaurant decisions that may affect bookings; weather events forcing a change of itinerary; unexpected trackwork on rail lines, unexpected closure of site attractions and so forth. Therefore, items mentioned in the brochure such as quoted prices, hotels and inclusions are subject to change. If a change is imposed on us, we will endeavour to ensure the substitute is of the same quality that you've paid for.

TOUR PACE / LEVEL OF FITNESS:

Our itineraries are designed to make the most of each destination, so a reasonable amount of activity is built into most days, which is why we call them adventures. Our philosophy is to offer you the best experience possible, while leaving you, our guest, the flexibility to pace yourself and choose how much or how little you want to do. Each Railway Adventures tour incorporates periods of free time for your own exploration and relaxation. While you don't need to be a 'gym junky', a reasonable level of fitness is required for most of our tours.

The ability to manage your own luggage, get on and off all manner of trains and coaches, walk for extended periods, stand comfortably, and climb steps and stairs will ensure you get the maximum enjoyment from your adventure.

ADDITIONAL TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

In addition to assisting with flight suggestions and bookings, we can also give you some ideas of what you could do before and after your Railway Adventure. We can also organise your all-important Travel Insurance for you. Call our office on 1300 733 323 if you would like to discuss options.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

For more information on factors such as travel insurance requirements, fitness levels, fees and charges, tour cancellations, payment schedules and so on, please refer to our Terms and Conditions, which accompany the booking form. They can also be found on our website.

WHERE YOU WILL STAY

Hand-picked hotels and resorts based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere. Here's a selection;



Anantara Resort - Hoi An



Grand Hotel - Ho Chi Minh City



Imperial Hotel - Hue



The Hilton, Hanoi



Halong Bay

THE RAILWAY ADVENTURES STORY

A passion for train travel can manifest itself in many ways. Founder and director of Railway Adventures, Scott McGregor, has made much of his obsession over the years. "Travelling to boarding school on the Mudgee Mail gave me a sense of how an active social life and long-distance trains can be a good combination."

Building a rural retreat out of a collection of vintage railway carriages in the early 1980s gave Scott a new perspective on rail heritage. During this time, he also operated his first tour – The Antipodean Renaissance Express – an experience he has never forgotten. Trading in vintage memorabilia and furniture sourced largely from the railways was also a source of great inspiration. Scott travelled far and wide trading and collecting for his Sydney shop, Off The Rails.

Hosting a couple of TV documentary series about great train journeys paved the way for leading his own train journeys. Once just an enjoyable part-time hobby, "getting paid to do what I love" has, naturally enough, led to a more substantial commitment and ultimately the launch of Scott's own dedicated train travel and touring company.

"Thoroughly rewarding trip. Well constructed itinerary including both railway interest and a diverse variety of heritage sites...a most enjoyable journey."



Scott McGregor's

**RAILWAY
ADVENTURES**

1300 733 323
railwayadventures.com

*This tour is operated by
Platinum Travel Corp in
association with Scott
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Adventures. ATAS
Accreditation
No: A10597*

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LEISURE TRAVEL & TOURS

- Murray, AUCKLAND, NZ