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WanderTours
P.O. Box 16102
Seattle WA 98116

Vietnam (and Cambodia) Women-only Tour
Dates: March 13 – 24, 2025 (Vietnam)
Dates: March 24 – 27, 2025 (Cambodia optional add-on)
Trip Leader: Beth Whitman

HIGHLIGHTS:

- An emphasis on **women-owned businesses and female artisans** throughout the tour
- A **cooking class** in Hoi An, including a **tour of the local market**
- Day tours of and visits to important sites in **Hanoi, Hoi An and Ho Chi Minh City**
- **Overnighting on a houseboat in Ha Long Bay**
- Taking a day trip to the **Mekong Delta**
- Optional add-on to Siem Reap, Cambodia to visit **Angkor Wat**

Our adventure starts in Hanoi on March 13, 2025. If you'd like to arrive early, we can arrange additional hotel nights prior to the tour.

The tour ends in Ho Chi Minh City (unless you are joining us for the Cambodia add-on, in which case the tour ends in Siem Reap).

ITINERARY

Day 1
Thursday, March 13, 2025 – Hanoi
Meals: Dinner

Upon landing at Noi Bai International Airport, you'll be met by a driver and taken to our hotel in **Hanoi** (about 35 minutes away) for the start of our adventure!

Depending on your arrival time, you may have a chance to relax before we convene for a **welcome dinner** at the hotel's wonderful restaurant. You may then want to enjoy a **cocktail at the hotel bar**, which has one of the best **rooftop views** in the city.

Overnight at [Pan Pacific Hotel](#) or similar in Hanoi.

Day 2
Friday, March 14, 2025 – Hanoi
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today after breakfast, we'll begin a **full day of sightseeing** in the country's capital. We'll start with a visit to **Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum**, where the former leader lies in state. We'll also tour the **modest home** where he lived as well as the **Ho Chi Minh Museum**.



From there, we'll visit the **One Pillar Pagoda**, a Buddhist temple that's considered the **most unique pagoda in Asia**. Then we'll tour the **Imperial Citadel of Thang Long**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site dating back to the 11th century.

We'll have lunch at a local restaurant before visiting the exquisite **Hanoi Opera House**, built by the French in the early 1900s, and then walk the grounds of the **Temple of Literature**.

After visiting these popular sites, we'll stop by **Craft Link**. This **fair trade organization** supports artisans (many of them women) by selling and promoting their handicrafts so they can better **support themselves and their families**.

We'll finish today's sightseeing with a **walking tour of Hanoi's Old Quarter**. Due to the narrow alleys and this being a densely populated area, we may break up into two groups. Known as "36 streets," this is an important center for commerce with **each street focused on a particular specialty**. For example: Hang Thung is the street of buckets; Hang Bac is the street of silver; and Hang Duong is the street of sweets.

We'll take a break in the late afternoon and relax a bit at our hotel before having dinner at a local restaurant.

Overnight at [Pan Pacific Hotel](#) or similar in Hanoi.

Day 3

Saturday, March 15, 2025 – Hanoi – Mai Chau / Avana Retreat

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After breakfast at our hotel, we'll start the four-hour journey to **Mai Chau**. This mountainous region is inhabited by **ethnic minority people** who settled here from Thailand many years ago. It includes the **Muong**, the **White Thai** and the **Hmong**.



We'll arrive in time for lunch at the home of a **White Thai family** where we'll learn about their culture and see how they live.

Afterwards, we'll take a **short walk** through beautifully **terraced rice paddies** and **small villages**.

We'll then meet up with our bus and drive to our accommodations, a five-star resort located deep in a **tropical forest**. Here, we'll not only connect with nature but we'll also get to learn more about the **tribes** who reside nearby.

Dinner will be on your own tonight at the resort so as to provide you with some flexibility. The **restaurant here is fantastic**, but you might also want to enjoy some down time at the **pool with a cocktail** or **schedule a spa treatment** for yourself!

Overnight at [Avana Retreat](#) or similar near Mai Chau.

Day 4

Sunday, March 16, 2025 – Mai Chau / Avana Retreat

Meals: Breakfast

After coming all this way to such a wonderful resort, we didn't want to rush off, so we'll spend the full the day here. While it's a **free day**, there are **many workshops and programs to attend at the resort**. These vary, but they include yoga, meditation, batik painting, rattan weaving and more. We might do these as a group or, if there's something special you'd like to try on your own, there's time to do so today. You might even decide to **loungue by the pool** or schedule a **spa treatment**.

Lunch and dinner are not included so as to provide you with the **maximum amount of flexibility**.

Overnight at [Avana Retreat](#) or similar near Mai Chau.

Day 5

Monday, March 17, 2025 – Avana Retreat – Hanoi

Meals: Breakfast

Following breakfast, we'll have some time in the morning to enjoy the resort before we check out and make our **way back to Hanoi** (about four hours). You might choose to sleep in a bit and have a late breakfast before our departure as lunch is not included today.

We'll arrive back at our hotel in **Hanoi** in the late afternoon. Tonight, dinner is on your own so you can **enjoy a meal** at the hotel or try one of the fantastic restaurants in the city.

Overnight at [Pan Pacific Hotel](#) or similar in Hanoi.



Day 6

Tuesday, March 18, 2025 – Hanoi – Ha Long Bay

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

After an early breakfast, we'll make our way toward **Ha Long Bay**, about two and half hours away.



Upon arrival, we'll transfer to a **beautifully outfitted boat** for a **cruise through the waterways**. We'll sail through **emerald green waters** and around the limestone karsts that make this area so famous.

After a wonderful lunch served on the boat, we'll have a chance to **explore on foot** and (possibly) by bamboo row boat. We may **visit nearby caves** and **sandy beaches** and take in the glorious views from our sundeck. All of this is at the captain's discretion and depends on the weather.

We'll drop anchor in the late afternoon and have a **refreshing drink** while enjoying the **sunset** and a leisurely dinner on board the boat.

Note: Our itinerary in Ha Long Bay will be subject to the specific boat we're on as well as the weather conditions. Expect to be flexible on this part of the journey!

Overnight on board a boat in Ha Long Bay.

Day 7

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 – Ha Long Bay – Hanoi – Da Nang – Hoi An

Meals: Breakfast, Brunch

If you're up for it, we'll start out **early in the morning for the sunrise** and a light breakfast on board the boat. We'll then disembark for a bit more exploring in the area. We'll rely on our captain to determine what and where we'll go this morning. You're welcome to hang back on the boat if you prefer to relax.

Once back on the boat, we'll make our way to port while **enjoying brunch** along the way.

We'll then make the drive back to Hanoi and go directly to the airport for our flight to **Da Nang**. From here, we'll drive to our hotel in **Hoi An** (about an hour away from the airport).

Our accommodations are located on the beach! Dinner is on your own so you can enjoy a leisurely meal at one of the resort's restaurants.

Overnight at [Boutique Hoi An Resort](#) or similar in Hoi An.

Day 8
Thursday, March 20, 2025 – Hoi An
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

After breakfast, we'll start our morning tour, which includes the local market as well as a **cooking class**.

We'll start with a tour of **Hoi An's vibrant central market**, where we'll learn all about the fresh ingredients used to prepare Vietnamese food. We'll then take a **private cooking class with Ms. Vy!** Well known to many, Ms. Vy is an authority on **Vietnamese cuisine and culture** and is also quite the entrepreneur.

During our class, we'll get to put some of our own skills to work and then enjoy the meal we've prepared. Of course, we'll also receive a **copy of the recipes** we've prepared!

After lunch, we'll embark on an **afternoon tour of the charming town of Hoi An**. We'll meander through the back streets of the town and explore the **merchant homes, temples and markets**. We'll also walk along the busy **waterfront**, where fishing boats are moored.

We'll finish our walking tour at a **tea house that supports disadvantaged youth**.

Dinner will be on your own again as you may be full from lunch and treats from the market!

Overnight at [Boutique Hoi An Resort](#) or similar in Hoi An.



Day 9
Friday, March 21, 2025 – Hoi An
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today will be another wonderful day in Hoi An.

We'll start the day with a **scooter ride in the countryside**. You can either be a passenger sitting behind a local driver or you can **take control of the scooter** yourself!

We'll get outside of the busy central area of Hoi An and **visit villages** where we can **meet locals** who have small businesses making rice crackers and traditional lanterns and more.

We'll pass by many **rice paddies** on our way to a village that specializes in the **growing of herbs and spices** used in Vietnamese cooking.

Upon wrapping up our scooter tour, we'll have lunch at a local restaurant and then have the **afternoon free to explore Hoi An** on our own (or you can return to our beautiful beachside resort).

Dinner is on your own this evening to give you the chance to relax at the resort or return to town (about 3 miles away) for a meal at a local restaurant.

Overnight at [Boutique Hoi An Resort](#) or similar in Hoi An.

Day 10
Saturday, March 22, 2025 – Hoi An – Ho Chi Minh City
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Today after breakfast, we'll make our way to the airport for our **flight to Ho Chi Minh City** (which many know as Saigon).

Our flight arrives around noon, so we'll stop at a restaurant in the city for lunch before taking in some of the **city's sights**.

We'll begin our afternoon tour with some sightseeing that may include the **Presidential Palace** and **Notre Dame Cathedral**. These sites will give us a chance to learn about the south's history, including when **Saigon fell** to the North Vietnamese on April 30, 1975, as well as why there is such a strong French influence in the country.



Depending on our time, we might visit a **museum** before finishing our afternoon tour with a stop at the **Mekong Quilt Shop**. This non-profit store provides jobs to more than **100 under-privileged women in Vietnam and Cambodia**. These women work from home, making **handicrafts** such as beautiful **quilts, clothes, jewelry** and other products.

We'll then check in to our hotel and have a little time to relax before enjoying a wonderful dinner at **KOTO**. This very special restaurant teaches **hospitality skills to disadvantaged** (and very sweet) youth in Vietnam.

Overnight at the [Sofitel Saigon Plaza](#) or similar in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 11
Sunday, March 23, 2025 – Ho Chi Minh City
Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Today will be a long but very rewarding day as we head out to the **Mekong Delta**. This is a **rich, fertile region** that includes countless **waterways** that crisscross the landscape.

We'll start by driving about two hours to the port of **Ben Tre**, one of the country's most southern provinces. Once here, we'll board our boat and explore the area via water.



We'll start with a visit to a **coconut processing plant** before traveling onward to a **brick-making shop**.

From here, we'll take a **spin on a bicycle** to the village of Phong Nam, where a factory for **coconut spirits** (yes, alcohol!) is located. We'll peddle around the village and gardens and be able to visit the **home of a local family** who rely on fishing, shrimp and farming.

From here, we'll embark on a **sampan** (flat-bottomed wooden boat) and we'll be rowed through small canals to get back to our boat, where we'll have lunch.

We'll continue touring by taking **village roads** via bike or foot (your choice) and meet some other locals. Finally, we'll make our way back to our boat and on to the port at Ben Tre, where our bus will be waiting for our return to Ho Chi Minh City.

Dinner will be on your own so that you can choose to relax after a long day or, if you like, explore the hotel's restaurant or one of the many eateries nearby.

Overnight at the [Sofitel Saigon Plaza](#) or similar in Ho Chi Minh City.

Day 12

Monday, March 24, 2025 – Ho Chi Minh City – Home OR onward to Siem Reap, Cambodia

Meals: Breakfast

This is our final morning together for the Vietnam portion of the tour. You may take a flight home today, continue your travels onward or, if you like, join us for the **Siem Reap, Cambodia add-on** where we'll visit Angkor Wat!

If you're flying home or onward today, your transfer to the airport is included.

If you're continuing on to Cambodia with us, the following is our itinerary.

Check out is at noon and our flight is scheduled for late afternoon. You may leave your bags at the hotel and then explore on your own until our departure for the airport in the early afternoon (exact time to be determined). Lunch is on your own so you can grab a bite to eat at the hotel or while you are out and about.

Upon arrival at **Siem Reap Airport**, we'll be met by our guide and taken to our hotel.

Because we'll be arriving so late in the afternoon/early evening, dinner is not included. You can relax at the hotel or go into the **bustling downtown area of Siem Reap** to choose one of the many restaurants to have dinner on your own.

Overnight at [Treeline Urban Resort](#) or similar in Siem Reap.

Day 13

Tuesday, March 25, 2025 – Siem Reap

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

This morning, we will depart very early (before 5:00 AM) in order to **catch the sunrise at Angkor Wat**. This will be a spectacular way to experience this ancient **Buddhist complex that was built in the 12th century**. At the time, it served as the capital of the Khmer Empire.

While here, we'll tour **Angkor Wat**, which covers 81 hectares. We won't walk the whole complex, but our guide will make sure we **see the highlights**.

We'll then head back to the hotel for breakfast and to freshen up a bit.

By late morning, we'll make our way back to the complex of temples that make up this **UNESCO World Heritage Site**. We'll start by visiting **Angkor Thom** and **Ta Prohm** (the jungle temple).



We'll stop for lunch before then going to Banteay Srei, which means citadel of the women. Though relatively small, it's considered to have some of the **finest stone carvings** on the planet and they feature women!

Dinner is on your own tonight so that you can relax at the hotel or go back into town to explore the local restaurants.

Overnight at [Treeline Urban Resort](#) or similar in Siem Reap.

Day 14

Wednesday, March 26, 2025 – Siem Reap

Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

Today after breakfast, we'll visit a couple of **fascinating locations** that will help us understand Cambodia's recent history as well as a number of **artisan workshops**, specifically ones that support women and young people.

We'll start by visiting the **Wat Thmey Pagoda**, informally known as the killing fields of Siem Reap. While there are no "fields" here, like in Phnom Penh, there are exhibits and photographs here that will give us the opportunity to learn more about the Khmer Rouge and the **genocide that took place in the late 1970s**.

From here, we'll visit the **Apopo Center**, where people, rats and dogs are trained in demining the countryside. (Cambodia is one of the most mine-affected countries in the world.) This will help add some context to Cambodia's history.



We'll leave the past behind and then visit a couple of places that are helping people secure a better future.

One such place is **Artisans Angkor**. Created to help young rural people find work near their home villages, it does so by providing them with professional skills where they might otherwise only have limited educational opportunities.

We'll also visit **Satcha**, the country's first handicraft center. Here, they teach artisans to utilize their traditional knowledge while incorporating it into

contemporary design. The resulting products appeal to international visitors and also help preserve the local culture and traditions.

We'll return to the hotel for lunch (on your own) and you'll have some free time in the afternoon to relax or do some last minute shopping in town.

We'll reconvene this evening for a final dinner together and to attend a performance called **Phare Circus**. Using theater, music and dance, the performers tell the story of Cambodian culture through a variety of art forms. The school here was started by **young refugees** who wanted a way to overcome the trauma they endured when living for years under the Khmer Rouge regime. It now helps about **1,200 students every day** to hone their skills so that one day they can earn a livable wage.

Overnight at [Treeline Urban Resort](#) or similar in Siem Reap.

Day 15

Thursday, March 27, 2025 – Siem Reap – Home

Meals: Breakfast

Today, we'll return to the airport for our flights home or onward for more travels.

Checkout is at noon, but you may be able to leave your bags at the hotel should your flight be late in the day and you want to do some wandering before heading to the airport.

**** Itinerary subject to change without notice.**