

Pandaw Red RiverCruise – 11 days

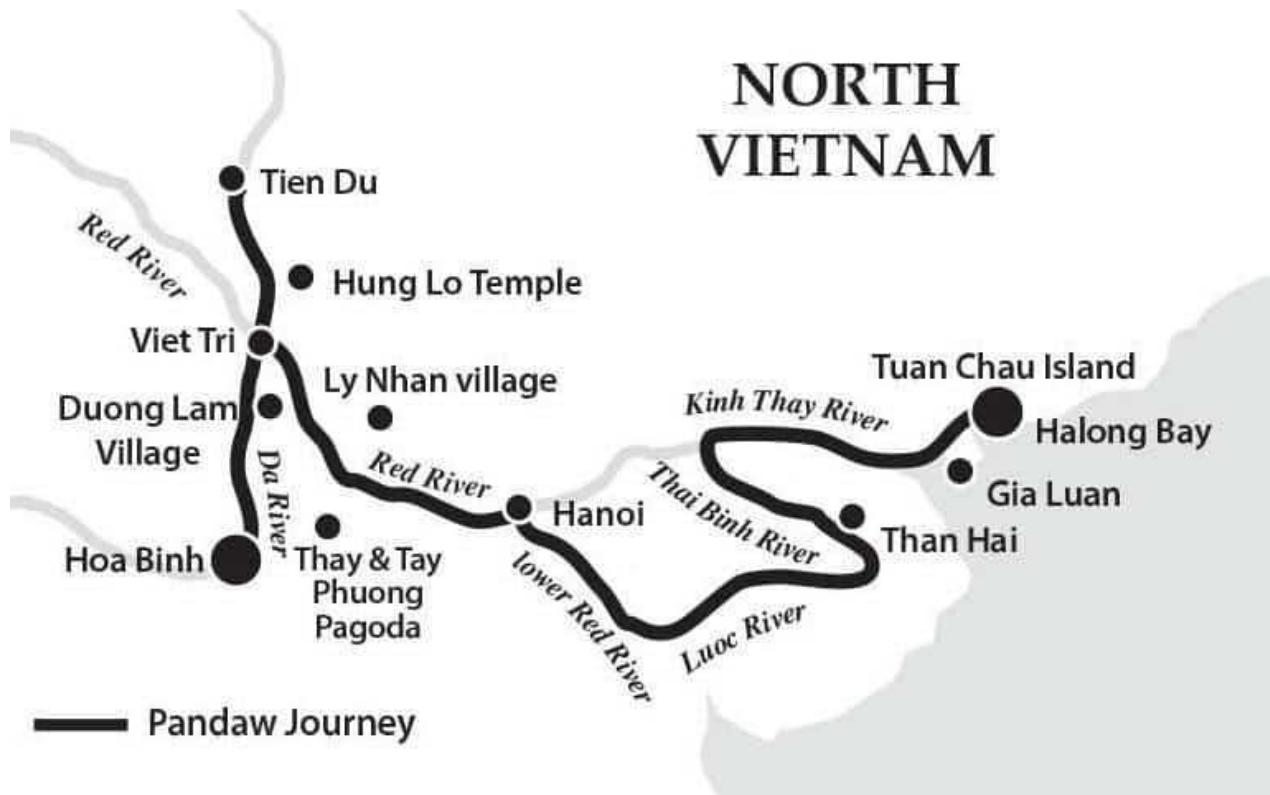
(Upstream: Halong – Hoa Binh)

Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	HALONG BAY	L/D
Day 2	HALONG BAY	B/L/D
Day 3	HALONG BAY	B/L/D
Day 4	THE KING THAY RIVER	B/L/D
Day 5	BAT TRANG VILLAGE	B/L/D
Day 6	HANOI	B/L/D
Day 7	THE LOWER RED RIVER	B/L/D
Day 8	LO RIVER	B/L/D
Day 9	THE DA RIVER	B/L/D
Day 10	HOA BINH	B/L/D
Day 11	HOA BINH	B

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Travel Map



Detailed Itinerary

Day 1

HALONG BAY

Transfer from Hanoi International Airport or meeting point to Halong Bay to embark your Pandaw ship followed by lunch on board. Cast off in the afternoon with a welcome cocktail for an evening sail, dropping anchor in a sheltered bay amidst the beautiful island scenery.

Meals: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 2

HALONG BAY

Morning sail around Halong Bay and beyond with its 1,500 dramatic limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations, dating back 20 million years.

Stop at Viet Hai Village and explore on mountain bike or electric buggy, visiting the village's vegetable farm and typical village houses. It is a breath-taking trip along a small road winding its way through the limestone rocks.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 3

HALONG BAY

Exploration of Halong Bay continues with a visit to the so called "Dark and Bright Cave". Take a kayak or a local basket boat rowed by fishermen and enter this remarkable cave into an enclosed area similar to a crater. Bats can be heard in the cave and massive stalagmites hang from the ceiling.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 4

THE KING THAY RIVER

Observe the lively and interesting life of the KinhThay river, a key commercial waterway. Meet your guide in the dining room for a lecture on Vietnam, its history, geography and the boat people.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 5

BAT TRANG VILLAGE

The day is spent cruising towards Hanoi. Enroute, stop at Bat Trang in the afternoon, a ceramic village. On the way back to the ship watch a traditional unicorn and lion dance at the jetty. This dance originated in China and spread over Southeast Asia.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 6

HANOI

Drop anchor in the capital and bustling city of Hanoi to visit some highlights of this Asian metropolis. Must-sees include the notorious Vietnam War prison known as the Hanoi Hilton, temple of literature

where Confucius did his thinking, and the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 7

THE LOWER RED RIVER

Morning sail through the day from Hanoi up the Red River to Viet Tri – not the most picturesque of towns, but an excellent base for going deeper into Highland Vietnam.

Go ashore to visit a timeless Arcadian Vietnam with emerald green rice paddies punctuated by limestone rock formations. Of particular interest are the Thay and Tay Phuong Pagodas.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 8

LO RIVER

In the morning cruising to Tien Du ferry station to the village of Gia Thanh, makers of the conical hats (known as 'non la'). Take in the sights and sounds of the bustling river with all kinds of craft and activity.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 9

THE DA RIVER

Day sailing downstream while admiring the unspoilt beauty of the Da River. Pass through the Ba Vi National Park with its rich and diverse tropical and sub-tropical flora and fauna before arriving at Hoa Binh then visit the UNESCO-praised village of Duong Lam.

In the afternoon, take a tour of the ship including the galley, crew area and engine room.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 10

HOA BINH

Hoa Binh was the site of a major battle with the French in 1951 & 1952 and is home to the Muong ethnic group.

The Hoa Binh Dam at the Black River is the largest hydroelectric dam in Vietnam and Southeast Asia. Take a morning boat ride on the reservoir of Hoa Binh power station and visit a local village. A traditional performance by local hill tribe people is given in the evening.

Meals: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Pandaw RV Song Hong / Pandaw Red RiverCruise

Day 11

HOA BINH

Disembark after breakfast (08.30am) and visit a museum and local village where villagers still wear traditional dress.

Lunch will be served at a local restaurant, followed by a transfer to Hanoi airport or drop off point Pan Pacific Hotel Hanoi.

Meals: Breakfast

Accommodation: n/a

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Entrance fees
- Guide services (English language)
- Main meals, local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes
- Transfers between ports of embarkation and Hanoi International Airport at the start and end of the voyage

Exclusions:

- International flights
- Port dues (if levied)
- Laundry
- All visa costs
- Fuel surcharges (see terms and conditions)
- All beverages except local mineral water, jugged coffee, teas & tisanes
- Tips to tour guides, local guides, bus drivers, boat operators and cyclo drivers

Important note*:

- For overnight registration, we will need passport information (Full name, sex, Nationality, passport number, date of birth) of passengers at least four weeks prior to cruise date
- The tour price would vary depending on date of departure and group size. Please book the tour or contact us for a free updated quote

Important Information

River Conditions Warning

The rivers you will sail on are subject to seasonal rises and falls of water level, in some places as much as 30 metres. Water levels can change dramatically overnight and a sudden rise can impede our progress upstream considerably and even prevent us from passing under certain bridges. A sudden fall can result in our being unable to get into certain places or go as far upstream as we would hope. Groundings on sandbars are not infrequent and are part of the excitement of any expedition. Published itineraries are indicational only and subject to sudden change. In such events alternative itineraries will be provided and we do our best to ensure that if a stop is missed we make up for it with another stop.

Passengers are thus forewarned and expected to be flexible and patient. River cruising in Asia can be a dramatic and adventurous experience – not like cruising the controlled waterways of Europe or America. Note also that we operate in areas with little or no developed infrastructure and subject to the strictures of local officialdom. Be prepared for this and it is all more the fun!

For itineraries that include flights in the price of the ticket it should be noted that regional airlines can change departure times or cancel flights at very short notice. In such an event we endeavour to arrange alternative flights but note that this can result in delays often resulting in embarking or disembarking on a different day to that indicated in the itinerary. In such an event the company will cover the cost of hotel accommodation and main meals only, but will not be liable for any claims for compensation for missed days on board a ship, drinks or curtailment of the said itinerary.

Clothes

We recommend wearing loose and comfortable clothing made of cotton or modern material that can readily cool off sweat and body heat. The type of shoes will depend on the excursion types so best to have both light, open toed shoes as well as good walking/hiking shoes with you. A sun hat is always a good idea to bring along.

Southern Vietnam and Cambodia are warm all year-round, but our other cruise destinations can get chilly during the winter months (Laos, Myanmar or northern Vietnam). Therefore, it is always recommended to bring a pullover or a warm jacket with you during this period.

Many of our cruises include visits to local temples or pagodas. When visiting these holy sites, make sure to wear appropriate clothing which covers your shoulders and knees.

Sea sickness

Generally speaking, the rivers we are cruising on in Southeast Asia are very calm and there is hardly any motion on any of our ships. A bit of motion can occur during monsoon rains with stormy winds, but the amount of motion is much less than one would feel during bad weather on the open ocean.

Sea cruises as we offer in Halong Bay or Lan Ha Bay can sometimes encounter heavier waters and ship motion, although this happens very rarely and port authorities will most likely not allow sailing under any such circumstances anyway.

If you are new to cruising or prone to motion sickness, it does not hurt to bring along some motion sickness medication. Drinking a nice hot fresh ginger tea is a natural remedy and tasty alternative our staff is always happy to make for you.

Food and Beverage

All food and beverage on board is completely safe to eat and enjoy, including the ice cubes you enjoy in your chilled drinks. We do not recommend drinking water straight from the tap anywhere, including onboard. We provide you with complimentary clean drinking water throughout your cruise.

You may want to be bit careful with local dishes as they can be spicier than you are used to from home. Approach new dishes slowly and carefully. If you have a sensitive stomach, then you may like to double check with our chef or onboard managers about specific dishes or meals.

On excursions, it may be a good idea to avoid local foods and snacks unless offered by our tour guides. Besides the above, in general we recommend the following motto for your pre- and post-cruise travelling in the Southeast Asian tropics: boil it, peel it, cook it, wash it or forget it!

Health risks

The most effective protection from personal contamination is ensuring strict attention to personal hygiene and in particular, frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water and refraining from hand-to-mouth contact. Colds and other viruses can spread quickly in an enclosed area such as a ship. Continue to practice common-sense hygiene and respiratory courtesy. Wash your hands often and cover your coughs and sneeze. It is recommended that passengers carry anti-bacterial hand sanitizer, which does not require rinsing with water. Use sanitizer frequently and throughout the day, particularly after shore excursions and prior to meals. If you have any questions regarding your health or safety, please do not hesitate to ask your cruise director.

Motion sickness can be a problem for some people when cruising, flying or travelling on coaches and trains and it is a good idea to take precautionary measures. Over-the-counter drugs for treating motion sickness can be purchased at pharmacies in most countries, though a side effect can be drowsiness. Alternatives such as ginger tablets and acupressure wristbands are also available and work well for some people.

Visa requirements for Cambodia

Cambodia visas are easily obtained for most travelers on arrival. Note that passports must have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Cambodia.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Cambodia embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Visa requirements for Vietnam

With the exception of visa exemptions, all travelers must arrange their visa prior to arrival in Vietnam. Passports must also have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Vietnam.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Vietnam embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Visa requirements for Laos

Laos visas are easily obtained for most travelers. Note that passports must have a validity of at least 6 months after your last date of travel in Laos.

Because travel restrictions across Southeast Asia are constantly changing, we recommend checking with the Laos embassy/consulate in your home country for the latest information.

Insurance

We recommend at least purchasing travel health insurance which covers both in- & outpatient visits and medical repatriation. Buying additional trip cancellation and interruption coverage may also be beneficial in case you have to cancel your travel plans due to unforeseen circumstances.

Electrical adapters

We always recommend bringing a travel adapter as a standard item in your travel kit. You can borrow an adapter on board, but these may be limited.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.