



GLOBAL CYCLING
ADVENTURES

Cycling Vietnam's Central Coast

HUE TO NHA TRANG

OVERVIEW

Vietnam's Central Coast is a stunning fusion of elements where the Annamite Mountains meet the South China Sea. We'll cycle through lush rice fields, past crashing surf on pristine beaches, over challenging mountain passes, and to untouched seaside refuges. On our journey, we will explore layers of history from the Hindu Cham civilization down through the Nguyen dynasty and the war years as well as the prosperity and dynamism of the thriving new Vietnam. We'll rest at cozy hotels, and savour meals shoulder to shoulder with the locals.

Our journey begins in Hue, Vietnam's capital under the feudal Nguyen dynasty, where we'll find meticulously-crafted palaces, tombs and gardens. Riding south, we witness the awesome scale of Vietnamese fisheries and aquaculture amid a surreal background of jungle-covered mountains and saltwater lagoons. We'll cycle high above Da Nang on the iconic Hai Van Pass before enjoying an exhilarating descent into the exotic atmosphere of Hoi An with its legacy of the spice and silk trades that continue to shape its identity. We cycle to My Son, the capital of the ancient Hindu Cham civilization, then follow seaside roads into rustic villages along the coastline. A visit to the memorial site of the My Lai massacre will connect us to the war years and the ferocious conflicts that consumed this region. We'll relax at the end of the trip with a stay on Whale Island, where we can soak in the unmarred natural beauty and reflect on our journey through Central Vietnam.

We ride a total of 470 km over 8 days of cycling, with an average distance of 52 km and elevation gain of 397 m per day. In order to avoid traffic, most days will include some minor transfers between 15 and 60 minutes, with the exception being the 2.5-hour transfer on Day 6. Most of the cycling is in the mornings, leaving the afternoons for some more leisurely rides, sightseeing, a massage or relaxing by the beach or pool. For more details on the riding days, please see our tour grade information at the bottom of the page.

The trip is fully supported, and your guide's expert knowledge of the area and terrain means that you always know what is coming up in terms of distance and difficulty. This makes a tremendous difference, as does the constant supply of water and refreshments along the way.

- DURATION - 10 DAYS
- AVERAGE DISTANCE PER DAY - 52 KM
- ARRIVAL DESTINATION - HUE
- DEPARTURE DESTINATION - NHA TRANG

ITINERARY

DAY 1 MEET IN HUE

We start our tour with a morning pickup from your hotel in Hue. Please be ready to ride! You will meet your guide and be fitted to your bikes. Our first ride is through this atmospheric city and its surroundings, where we'll discover monuments of the last dynasty of Vietnam as we wind our way through tree-lined lanes and elevated roads in rice paddies. We visit the tomb of a famous emperor and cross the beautiful Perfume River by small ferry. We'll explore the 17th century Thien Mu Pagoda at its majestic vantage point over the river, before heading to the Forbidden City of the Nguyen dynasty - a moated palace that played a crucial role from the rise of the Nguyen dynasty, to the French colonial era, to the Tet offensive. After lunch, we'll check into our hotel. This afternoon, you will have free time to explore this riverfront city, with its many parks, gardens, and tombs of emperors. Please let us know if we can help with any pre-trip hotel bookings or airport transfers.

Cycling Distance: 26 km Meals: Lunch, Dinner

DAY 2 HUE TO LANG CO

This morning, we start with a 15-minute transfer to the outskirts of town. We'll hop on our bikes and ride along canals and rivers into the estuary of the Perfume River - a more isolated region of farming and fishing villages. We then arrive at the remarkable "Ghost City" made up of huge, ornate mausoleums to ancestors, many of which are funded with money sent home by Vietnamese expatriates living abroad. The artistry of the mausoleums makes a striking contrast with the rural landscape of rice fields, woods, and wetlands. The ride continues through this serene countryside and finishes by the shores of Vietnam's largest lagoon, where locals harvest oysters and fish. From here, we transfer the final 40 km to Lang Co Beach Resort for lunch. The rest of the day is yours to enjoy the resort, head to the spa, or relax at the beach.

Cycling Distance: 64 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 3 LANG CO TO HOI AN

Our ride begins straight out of the resort this morning, with a fun spin around another peaceful lagoon on our way to the day's challenge - the iconic Hai Van Pass. We will climb to 480 m above sea level over a distance of 10 km and be rewarded with superb views over Da Nang Bay before

enjoying the downhill ride to the city of Da Nang for lunch. In the afternoon, we wind down with a relaxing, scenic ride to Hoi An. On the way through Da Nang's neighborhoods we'll pass the Marble Mountains -strange limestone columns that seem artificially placed into the flat landscape. We follow the Thu Bon River into the town of Hoi An, an important port of call for Chinese, Japanese, and Portuguese traders during the 17th and 18th centuries. The architecture reflects its cosmopolitan past, with over 844 UNESCO-protected historic structures forming the core of the town. We will spend two nights here, giving us a chance to enjoy the sights and atmosphere of this energetic community.

Cycling Distance: 62 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 HOI AN TO MY SON TO HOI AN

This morning, we cycle directly from our hotel out of Hoi An on small village roads and then make our way up the Thu Bon River by roads and farm lanes. The ride is a fascinating immersion into the region's ecosystem and agricultural economy, inextricably tied to the natural cycles of the tides, seasonal rains, and jungle flora. Eventually, we arrive at My Son, ancient capital of the Cham civilization, a Hindu people who ruled this region until about 500 years ago. Although some of the temples were destroyed by American bombs, there are many remaining temples that convey the prosperity and artistry of the Champa kingdom. We will have lunch before visiting the site on foot. In the afternoon, we transfer by van for just over one hour back to Hoi An. Dinner is on your own tonight, so get adventurous and try the delicious Vietnamese food Hoi An's markets and riverside restaurants have to offer. Your guides will be happy to recommend some of their favourites.

Cycling Distance: 55km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

DAY 5 HOI AN TO QUANG NGAI

In the morning, we leave Hoi An and cross the Cua Dai Bridge, high above the Thu Bon River, with impressive views of the ocean and the Cham Islands in the distance. We have a pleasant ride on quiet rural riverside roads, with friendly local farmers, towards the village of Tam Thanh to enjoy the beach and a lunch of local seafood. We then transfer about 1h45m and spend the afternoon at My Lai. Here we climb on foot to an old temple to visit the memorial and museum - the site of one of the worst massacres of the American War. Our guides will share the perspectives of the Vietnamese who lived through that traumatic period and explain the continued fallout from the war to the present day. We then transfer about 30 minutes to our hotel where the Phuoc Giang River meets the sea near Quang Ngai. This is the perfect place to relax and reflect on the day's explorations.

Cycling Distance: 56 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 6 QUANG NGAI TO QUY NHON

This morning, we'll begin with a 2.5 hour transfer to ideal cycling roads further south. We will

hop on our bikes and begin a diverse ride through rolling coastline, rice paddy fields, salt flats, fishing villages, and a series of small passes that form natural gateways to isolated beach communities. Our destination is Quy Nhon, an American port and supply centre during the Vietnam War and refuge for thousands of Vietnamese fleeing the vicious bombing of the countryside. Quy Nhon is now a prosperous mid-size hub for the agriculture and fisheries of Binh Duong Province. We finish today's ride beside a large river estuary with a view to the Quy Nhon skyline and take a brief transfer to our hotel in the city center. This afternoon you will have time to explore the city's bustling side streets and waterfront promenade before a well-earned dinner at one of your guide's favourite restaurants.

Cycling Distance: 68 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 7 DIEU TRI TO TUY HOA

This morning we transfer 45 minutes out of the city of Quy Nhon to a panoramic inland road along the Ky Lo River valley. The terrain is green and gently rolling, with beautiful views of the highland foothills as we pass through a mix of tribal and Viet villages. Potbellied pigs, chickens, and barefoot children trot across your trail, and we pass over rushing streams where the locals cast their fishing lines. After about 50 km, we leave the valley and wind our way on quiet trails along a lagoon surrounded by farmland and market villages. We finish today's ride with an impressive section along the coast as we enter the coastal city of Tuy Hoa past a series of modern sculptures on its newly-beautified waterfront. Your hotel is within walking distance to the sea and the city centre, giving you a chance to explore another of Central Vietnam's lesser-known but rising cities.

Cycling Distance: 90 km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 8 TUY HOA TO WHALE ISLAND

Today is the last cycling day and perhaps the most memorable. We ride from our hotel, and after 20 km the scenery becomes very beautiful with looming mountains and a network of lush rice paddies across the valley. Prepare for a brutal hill today as we cycle to Vung Ro Bay and up the challenging Ca Pass. We are rewarded with jungle and bay views and stop for pictures at Vung Ro Bay before pushing through the last 3km to the top of Ca Pass (10% grade). On our last stretch of the bike tour we head to Dai Lanh Beach for refreshments and a swim before transferring to Dam Mon. We may have the option to bike to Dam Mon if the traffic and dust conditions allow. The scenery here is like a moonscape and unlike anything else we have seen on the tour. Here, we swap bikes for boats and head to Whale Island for some well-deserved R&R. The boat journey takes about 10 minutes and we'll stay at the secluded Whale Island resort for two nights.

Cycling Distance: 58km Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 9 WHALE ISLAND REST DAY

A close connection to nature is the central guiding principle of Whale Island, which takes its name from the tradition of whale worship of the indigenous people here. This 900-hectare island is pristine and uninhabited apart from the resort, making it a sanctuary for the many forms of life: colourful flowers, exotic birds, shimmering schools of fish, and of course whales and whale sharks if we are lucky! The day is yours to enjoy this paradise as you wish. Snorkel to explore its famed coral reefs, take a kayak or catamaran out into the bay, or venture out onto the island's trails on foot. Soak in the views from the bar and terrace or kick back on a deck chair with a good book. We will gather tonight for our final dinner of the trip, a feast of local specialties where we can celebrate and reflect on our amazing journey along Vietnam's Central Coast!

Cycling Distance: 0km Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 10 WHALE ISLAND TO NHA TRANG

It's time to say farewell to your guides and fellow travellers. This morning, we transfer back to the mainland. Our included transfer will take you to Nha Trang or down to Cam Ranh Airport for domestic or international connections. If you prefer to go to Tuy Hoa Airport or other destinations, we can assist with those arrangements at additional cost. We can also assist those looking to stay longer on Whale Island or around Nha Trang with hotel and travel arrangements.

Cycling Distance: 0km Meals: Breakfast

INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- Accommodation: 9 nights in mostly 3-4 star hotels (twin/double)
- Meals as listed
- Support vehicle
- Experienced English speaking guide(s)
- Bottled water while riding
- Snacks & drinks while riding

NOT INCLUDED IN THE TOUR

- International & domestic flights
- Airport pick up
- Airport drop off
- Single room surcharge
- Bike Hire
- Visa fees
- Drinks (except water while cycling)
- Tips for crew

TOUR GRADE 4: ACTIVE

This is an Active level trip that will provide some challenging climbing sections (up to 635 m per day) and significant distances (anywhere from 30 km to 90 km per day). The climbs are always interspersed with downhills and flat sections, and the toughest days are distributed throughout the trip, allowing for recovery in between. While less experienced cyclists are welcome to join the trip, it is best suited for cyclists with the stamina to cycle those distances and elevations on successive days. Central Vietnam can be quite hot and humid even in the morning hours, so it is helpful to acclimatize to these types of conditions before the trip, if possible. To fully enjoy the trip, riders should also have the confidence to navigate a bike through occasional crowded streets and rough sections of broken pavement. Of course, it is always an option to proceed through tricky sections on foot, or skip ahead, as a support vehicle is available at all times to provide refuge for weary riders.

This trip is mainly on good quality tarmac roads and some vehicle-width dirt roads. There are occasional bumpy sections, but nothing overly technical. While we have sought out bike-friendly routes, we will be regularly sharing the roads with other vehicles, including cars, motorbikes, and buses. We generally ride rain or shine, but based on the guide's discretion or your level of comfort, modifications to the planned route and schedule can be made. It's all part of the adventure!

The trip begins with a nice warm up day with a flat ride in Hue and the surrounding countryside. Day 2 features a succession of significant hills, each with up to 100 m of climbing. Day 3 includes a formidable 420 m climb up the Hai Van Pass. Days 4 and 5 are easier, with relatively flat riding from Hoi An to My Son and south of Hoi An. Days 6 to 8 present a wide variety of terrain, with some gentle climbs or rolling sections punctuated by several series of hills of 50 m to 150 m in height. There are some steep sections of grades between 5% and 10%, mostly in the latter half of each ride. Day 9 is an off-bike day at Whale Island where you can trade in your bikes for snorkels, kayaks or beach chairs!