



The Small Cruise
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COASTAL VIETNAM BY SEA: SINGAPORE TO HONG KONG – WITH SMITHSONIAN JOURNEYS

In alliance with Smithsonian Journeys. This cruise is part of a collection of PONANT voyages that are specially-tailored for English-speaking travelers who want to engage with the world. In addition to the usual elements of the PONANT experience, the listed price for these voyages includes transfers to and from the ship, talks and discussions aboard ship by world class experts, and a shore excursion or activity in each port of call that encourages guests to embrace the sights, sounds, tastes, and smells of the local environment and culture. For most of its existence, Vietnam has lived in the shadow of China or been subject to Western domination, first by the French and then by the Americans. But since the 1980s, it has emerged as a growing economy, striving to become one of the economic tigers of Southeast Asia. This 15-day voyage from Singapore to Hong Kong invites you to experience the many sides of Vietnam, from the ancient civilizations of Cham and Khmer, through Chinese influence and French colonialism, to the present day. Sailing from Singapore through the South China Sea, your first port of call after a day and a half at sea is in the Con Dao Islands, located about 60 miles off the southern coast of Vietnam. Once known primarily as home to the "Tiger Cells," one of the most brutal prisons in history, it is now visited for its picturesque fishing villages overlooking a sparkling sea. You may choose to focus on the island's history on a tour that includes a historical museum, the prison, and a visit to the local market, or you may explore the islands' natural beauty on a hike in the highlands. A morning of cruising brings you to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon), where your ship will dock for two nights, making it possible to experience a variety of aspects of this fascinating

city. Focus on the city's history, both ancient and modern, in visits to the History Museum, the War Museum, the Cu Chi Tunnels, and the Reunification Palace. Experience the city's cultural diversity in visits to temples, in a trip to Chinatown's open-air market, or in an evening performance of Vietnamese dance and song. Or enjoy sampling the regional cuisine -- on a cruise of the Mekong Delta followed by lunch in a colonial villa, or in a cooking class in the Ho Chi Minh Agricultural Villages. A day of cruising along the Saigon River and then along Vietnam's southern coast brings you to Nha Trang, one of the country's most popular resorts, with beautiful long beaches backed by palm trees and promenades. It is also a center of craftsmanship, where you can see rice paper being made and spend time in the Truong Son Handicraft village, where artisans demonstrate their skills in rattan weaving, calligraphy, sand painting, and more. Your next port of call, Da Nang, serves as an introduction to the ancient Cham civilization and to Hoi An, an old trading port that blends indigenous and foreign (primarily Chinese) influences. Visit the Cham Museum and the ruins of ancient Hindu temples at My Son; travel to the countryside and experience a day of tending garden, cooking lunch, and mask-making; or visit the UNESCO Heritage Site of Hoi An, perhaps enjoying a dinner ashore after sunset, when this fascinating town is lit almost entirely by lanterns. Chan May, the lovely bay just around the peninsula from Da Nang, is your gateway to the imperial capital of Hue, the seat of power of the Nguyen dynasty that ruled much of Vietnam from the early 19th century until World War II. Exploration of this UNESCO Heritage Site will tour the Royal Citadel, similar in plan to the Forbidden

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City in Beijing, and the magnificent tombs of the emperors on the outskirts of the city. You may also visit either the seven-tiered tower of the Heavenly Lady Pagoda overlooking the Perfume River or the garden house and temple built to honor Princess Ng c S n. After a day at sea, arrive in the World Heritage site of H Long Bay , a series of rocky pitons emerging from the sea, surrounded by mountains with mysterious caverns. From here, you may choose to travel to Vietnam's bustling capital of Hanoi , where a guided tour includes visits to the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum , the Hoa Lo Prison ("Hanoi Hilton"), the Ng c S n Pagoda , and the Old Quarter. You may choose a day of tranquility at Yen Tu Mountain , site of a Buddhist monastery where you can practice Tai Chi, enjoy a vegetarian lunch , and join a meditation class with a monk. Or, you may decide to explore Ha Long Bay itself on a cruise aboard a local boat. Your final port of call is the amazingly vibrant city of Hong Kong , where excursions introduce you to the food markets of the city or to places you can purchase birds' nests, ginseng, and other herbal medicines. Or you may opt for a panoramic coach tour that includes views over the city from



Victoria Peak.

ITINERARY

Day 1 - Singapore

Nicknamed the Garden City, Singapore stretches across Malaysia's southern-most region. Experience the vibrant hustle and bustle of this city-state for yourself at the Marina Bay. No too far away is the historic centre, offering up a unique smorgasbord of neoclassical buildings and contemporary towers. Decked out in topiary, the pavements of Orchard Road are also home to countless shopping centres. The colourful markets in Chinatown and Little India are the perfect opportunity to quell hunger pangs in a hawker centre, one of the city's traditional snack bars. Between the two districts, get a slice of history with a trip to the Raffles dock. It was here that Englishman Sir Raffles, the founder of the city, is said to have

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arrived one fateful day in January 1819.

Day 2 - At sea

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Day 3 - Côn Dao Islands

To the south of Vietnam, the archipelago of the Con Dao Islands, located in the South China Sea, is composed of sixteen rocks covered in lush vegetation. A regular stopover on the Maritime Silk Road connecting China to Europe between the 2nd and 13th centuries, the islands were mentioned by Marco Polo during his voyage from China to India in 1294. A former English and French trading post, the archipelago became a French colony in 1861 using the name Poulo Condor. A penitentiary centre was built there and used to imprison opponents of the colonial regime. During the Vietnam War, the Saigon regime and the United States locked up communist

enemies there until 1975. In its idyllic natural setting, Con Dao has become a memorial site and a symbol of the fight for independence.

Day 4 - Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon)

Located near the Mekong delta, Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city in Vietnam. It is both the historic heart and economic hub. Formerly Saigon, the city is an imposing avant-garde metropolis. You can admire its famous central post office and its emblematic Reunification Palace. From 95 years of French presence, the city has kept some remarkable monuments, like the Cathedrale Notre-Dame with its neo-Gothic façade built in 19th century red brick. You'll succumb to the magic of this hectic city, where everything is about contrast, like the very brightly-coloured district of Cholon, Saigon's "Chinatown".

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Day 6 - Sailing Saigon River

The Saigon River originates in Phum Daung in the south-east of Cambodia and runs through Saigon before flowing into the South China Sea further south, to the north-east of the Mekong Delta. Along its shores, you will see traditional stilt houses, dwellings from the colonial period, Buddhist temples, and daring skyscrapers. This architectural eclecticism will afford you a glimpse of new and ancient Vietnamese traditions. On this cruise, you will also be able to admire the lush, tropical natural environment along this mythical river that is more than 170 kilometres (105 miles) long.

Day 7 - Nha Trang

Nha Trang, the capital of the Khanh Hoa province in Vietnam, is a coastal city with 300,000 inhabitants. Famous for its long, 7-km white sand beach along which runs Tran Phu Street, the city's main thoroughfare, Nha Trang is a member of the Most Beautiful Bays in the World Club, an international association that includes 41 bays. The bay is the reason the city is sometimes called the "Riviera of the South China Sea". You will have the opportunity to discover the city during a rather original experience: a tour in a rickshaw.

Day 8 - At sea

During your journey at sea, make the most of the many services and activities on board. Treat yourself to a moment of relaxation in the spa or stay in shape in the fitness centre. Depending on the season, let yourself be tempted by the swimming pool or a spot of sunbathing. This journey without a port of call will also

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Day 9 - Da Nang

Mid-way between Ho Chi Minh City to the south and Hanoi to the north, Da Nang enjoys an ideal location in Vietnam. The old colonial town has skilfully navigated the transition to economic growth, becoming a wealthy tourist destination. With its five Marble Mountains, its 72-metre high Buddha and white sand beach, Da Nang will create some magical memories, made sublime by a secular culinary tradition that has nothing left to prove. It is also the gateway to the country's treasures, including the cities of Hoi-An and Hue, which are both UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Day 10 - Chan May

To the south-east of Thua Thuen-Hue province, Chan May harbour was developed around its industrial activity, but has since opened up to cruise tourism. This harbour enjoys an exceptional location on the Vietnamese coast, not far from Chan May, the doorway into the imperial city of Hue, the ancient capital of the country and listed by UNESCO as World Heritage site. Its royal citadel dating from the 19th century, inspired by

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the Forbidden city of Beijing, is a gem of architecture and history.

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Day 12 - Ha Long

Shielded by majestic karstic peaks, Halong reveals itself through a string of spectacular landscapes. Known the world over for its bay, listed with UNESCO, this city in northern Vietnam is lesser known for its heritage. That is a shame, as the authenticity and cultural richness of Halong is surprising. Boasting a unique mix of modern architecture and heritage from the dynasty of the Hung kings, the tourism capital of the Quang Ninh province promises unexpected moments in its bustling streets and breathtaking panoramas of one of the most beautiful bays in the world.

Day 13 - At sea

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Day 14 - Hong Kong

Hong Kong, known as the "Fragrant harbour", bordered by the South China Sea, is a heady place attracting tourists from the world over. This former British colony today combines ultramodern shopping malls and authentic markets like the Ladies Market or the night market on Temple Street. At first sight, you'll be overwhelmed by the city's architecture which, because of lack of ground space, reaches skywards, with its 1,250 skyscrapers and other towers. Believing is seeing, so if you go up to Victoria Peak, the highest point on the island, you'll see a dizzying and unforgettable view of the bay.

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Day 15 - Hong Kong

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Please note:

Itineraries are subject to change.

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YOUR SHIP: LE JACQUES CARTIER

YOUR SHIP: Le Jacques Cartier

VESSEL TYPE:

LENGTH:

PASSENGER CAPACITY:

BUILT/REFURBISHED:

Featuring innovative and environmentally-friendly equipment, elegantly designed staterooms, spacious suites with large windows, and lounge areas that open onto the outside, this new limited-capacity yacht boasting just 92 staterooms and suites will offer you a truly unique cruising experience. Le Jacques Cartier will embody refinement, intimacy and comfort. Aboard this ship that flies the French flag, you will experience the incomparable pleasure of an intimate cruise, with the possibility of exploring an ever-increasing range of destinations in an ethnic-chic ambiance with luxury service. Experience a luxurious setting where the accent is on authenticity and passion for travel. RESTAURANTS As it is an essential part of French culture, gastronomy will naturally have pride of place aboard this new ship. To the back of Deck 4, you will find a 260 m² panoramic restaurant which can accommodate all of our passengers in a single sitting. Designed differently to that on our other ships, this dining area, which opens onto the outside, will have a buffet of salads, desserts and cheeses at your disposal. Our discreet and attentive crew will provide table service for hot meals. In a relaxed atmosphere, an outdoor grill on Deck 3 will serve grilled meats with a variety of salads and desserts. PUBLIC AREAS Le

Jacques Cartier has many common areas that are designed and equipped to meet all of your needs while preserving the intimacy of each passenger. A 140 m² reception area includes: A reception/concierge desk, An excursions desk, The ship's administrative services, The sales office, manned by our Guest Relations Officer, Our 50 m² boutique which sells clothing, jewellery, beauty products, postcards and various accessories, Toilets accessible to passengers with reduced mobility. A new hydraulic platform with adjustable height provides: Easier boarding than on any other cruise ship, Easier Zodiac embarkation and disembarkation for expeditions, Easier access to the sea for swimming and practising various water sports such as kayaking or paddle-boarding. A pool deck offering: A pool with a panoramic view, equipped with a counter-current swimming system, A pleasant solarium, An outdoor bar and lounge with armchairs and sofas. A 200 m² main lounge which can accommodate all of our passengers to share convivial moments and to host activities organised during the day or evening. Lastly, a theatre that seats 188, equipped with: The latest sound and lighting technology, A LED wall as the stage backdrop, for the projection of high-resolution images and videos. Please click the following links to read more about Ponant and the other Ponant

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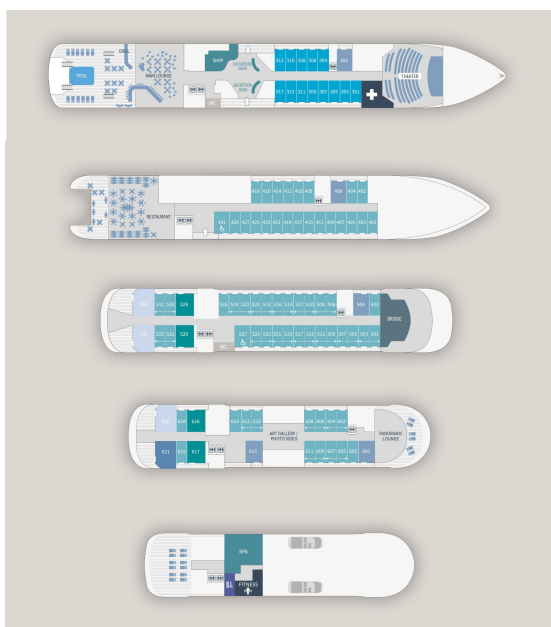
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