

**Center For Global Education**  
**Travel Seminar Program Planning Checklist**  
*Vietnam*

**CGE in Vietnam:**

CGE does not have staff or facilities in Vietnam. We partner with local organizations to provide programming. Our primary partner is the Vietnam-USA Society (VUS). VUS was founded in 1945 as the first bilateral friendship organization in Vietnam with the goal to promote mutual understanding, friendly relations, and mutually beneficial cooperation between the people of Vietnam and the United States.

**Programming in Vietnam:**

In light of our mission, all travel seminars include the following: country orientation, health and safety and cross-cultural adaptation; dialogue with leaders at the governmental and local level; analysis/ reflection sessions once every 2-3 days; and re-entry discussion before departure. Depending on the theme(s) of your seminar, additional programming will include specific visits, activities and speakers related to your interests and goals.

**Key themes/topics for Vietnam:**

- war, peace & reconciliation
- economics & globalization
- U.S. relations & politics
- human rights
- environment
- ethnic minority groups
- health, HIV/AIDS
- religion, religious freedom
- women/gender issues

**Vietnam Checklist:**

On the following pages are the checklists of possible activities, visits and travel in Vietnam to help us to plan your travel seminar and meet your goals. There are generally 2-3 visits per full program day. This is just a sample of the visits that can be arranged! Programming is focused on Hanoi, the economic hub of the country, and the home of the U.S. Embassy and many onn-governmental organizations and cultural institutions. A few suggested locations and visits outside of Hanoi:

**Halong Bay:** A UNESCO World Heritage site, about three hours by van from Hanoi. The bay contains thousands of small islands. Highlights are a boat ride through the bay and islands, a visit to a limestone cave, a chance to swim in the Gulf of Tonkin, and a hike in nearby Cat Ba National Park.

**Sapa:** In the far northwest of the country, close to the border with China. Sapa is a former French hill station, and is home to a mosaic of ethnic groups. It is 8 hours by train from Hanoi. Highlights are walks through the the minority villages, the market and scenery.

**Cuc Phuong National Park:** Vietnam's oldest national park, located about 3 hours southeast of Hanoi. It houses the Endangered Primate Rescue Center, Turtle Conservation Center, and botanical gardens. The Park offers homestays with Muong families that live within the park boundaries.



## **Vietnam Checklist:**

(Under development)

- Visit the headquarters of the Vietnam Women's Union and speak with an officer about women's issues.
- Meet Chuck Searcy, a Vietnam War veteran, and learn about the ongoing issue of land mines and other unexploded ordnance as well as local efforts at rehabilitation and reconciliation.
- Visit Friendship Village, a facility established by war veterans of five countries that provides rehabilitation and vocational training for veterans and children of Vietnam affected by Agent Orange.
- Visit and have lunch at Hoa Sua School. The school takes in street kids to teach them French cooking and baking, and skills for working in restaurants and hotels.
- See a traditional water puppet show.
- Tour the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Museum, One Pillar Pagoda and the Temple of Literature.
- Meet with officers about the U.S. Embassy to learn about US activities in Vietnam and the current relationship between the two countries.
- Spend a morning at the Ethnology Museum seeing the exhibits, and walking through the replicas of traditional Vietnamese houses.
- Attend a lecture on religious beliefs and practices in Vietnam, and the status of religious freedom.
- Meet with Buddhist students to learn about their work and life.
- Learn about Vietnamese history and culture from Huu Ngoc, a professor, cultural researcher and columnist for Vietnam News.
- Visit a silk village and meet with workers and a manager. Opportunity to purchase silk items.
- Attend a presentation on economics and globalization by Dr. Le Dang Doanh, senior economist with the United National Development Program and former president of the Central Institute for Economic Management.
- Visit Action Aid and meet with an officer to discuss their work on issues of poverty, anti-trafficking, HIV-AIDS and micro-credit.
- Visit with Lady Borton to hear stories about her experiences with the Vietnamese people during the war, including living at a refugee camp with thousands of boat people.
- Attend a presentation about traditional Vietnamese music by a musician Ba Pho, or presentations on traditional Vietnamese handicrafts or modern Vietnamese art by artists.
- Meet with doctors, nurses and administrators at the National Hospital of Traditional Medicine to learn about their research and therapies for cancer and Aids using traditional techniques including natural plants.
- Travel by van to Cuc Phuong National park (3 hours) and visit their Endangered Primate Rescue Center, Turtle Conservation Center and botanical gardens. Option to stay overnight in guesthouses, or do a homestay with families living within the park in traditional stilt longhouses.
- Travel by train to Sapa (8 hours overnight). Visit the botanical garden and market. Walk through Catcat Village (Hmong people) and Tavan Village (Giay and Dao people).
- Travel by van to Halong Bay (3 hours). Travel by boat through the bay to Cat Ba Island, visiting a cave and the option for a swim in the Gulf of Tonkin. Hike in Cat Ba National Park.