



WELCOME TO

YOUR JOURNEY

VinaPix

VINAPIX PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS

"Our sole mission is to get you to the best place, at the best time of the year, at the best time of the day, so that you can create the best photograph."

From the endless plains of the Mekong Delta to the remote and rugged peaks of the North-west Highlands, Vietnam is a vast and diverse place. From the ancient streets of the North where life continues much as it has for thousands of years to the bustling skyscrapers of the South where almost everything is new and changing, Vietnam is a place of startling contrasts, and from the well dressed and fashionable youngsters of the big cities to the colourful costumes and traditional lifestyles of over fifty ethnic minority groups Vietnam is one of the most culturally exciting places on the planet.

There is something for everyone here, and for the photographer every day is a parade of sights and opportunities that can be found nowhere else. VinaPix Photography Tours are run by photographers and only for pho-

tographers. Indeed, we have been photographing Vietnam for twenty years, and no one knows the country better than we do. Our tours are unique. We don't try to fit everything into one rushed trip. Rather we follow the seasons and only run tours when the weather is optimal for photography. We make sure you arrive at the best locations at the right time of day... and have enough time to create photographs you can be proud of.

For this reason we run only one tour to each of the four distinct regions in Vietnam each year. Each of these four tours has been crafted so that you will visit the iconic locations required for any respectable Vietnam portfolio. We also, however, take you further off the beaten track to places of beauty and interest that are less well known... adding an element of originality and uniqueness to your work. Every tour also includes

opportunities for photographers to explore their personal interests, be that street photography, food photography, portraiture and so on. Indeed, each tour can be customized to meet participant's desired photographic outcomes.

Our rates include all accommodation, transport, meals and sundry costs* starting from the day before the tour officially begins until we return you to the airport for your flight home. While you are here the only thing you need to focus on is taking great photographs. We have put a lot of work into making our tours the very best Vietnam photographic experience possible and we take great pride in what we offer, so please take a look through this brochure and if you would like any additional information, do not hesitate to contact us.

** See page 11 for details*

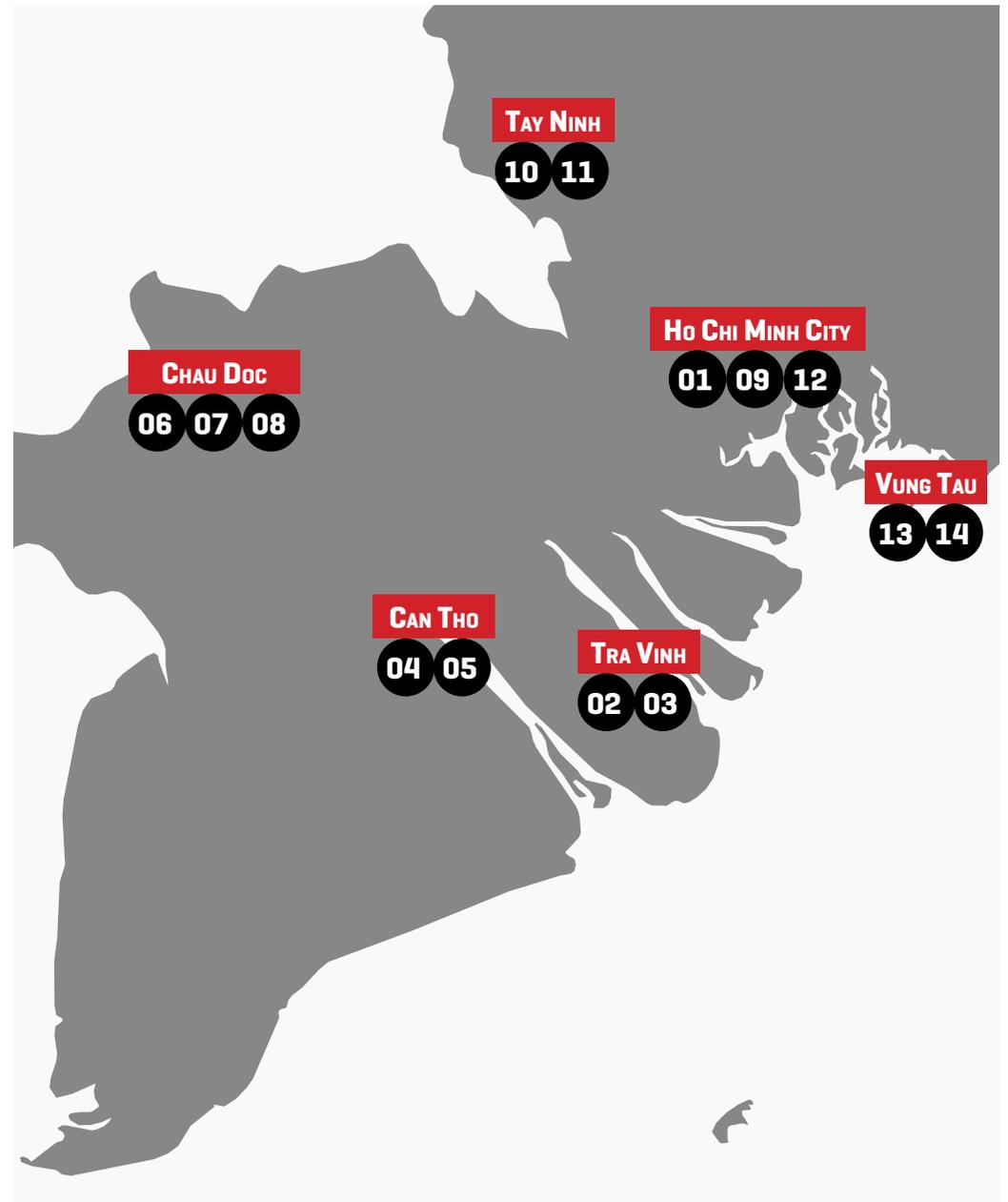
SAIGON AND THE MEKONG DELTA

Explore the vast delta of the mighty Mekong River. Sit back and be paddled through quiet backwater canals fringed with forests of green palm trees, stopping here and there to watch smiling children laugh and swim in the slow moving water. Wander around rustic rural villages and countryside homes and meet local farmers and fishermen. See the sun rise over a floating market where hundreds of boats of all shapes and sizes congregate to sell local and exotic produce. Pause

in silence and soak up the spirit of ancient and ornate Khmer pagodas or venture deep into cool mountain caves to admire statues of the Buddha hidden from wars long past. Climb Sam Mountain and gaze out over rice fields coloured a thousand shades of green stretching as far as the eye can see and mingle with women under conical hats as they bring in the harvest. All this and much, much more is what awaits you as you let us introduce you to this photographic paradise.

ARRIVE

We meet you at the airport and whisk you off to your hotel to relax and freshen up after your flight. Later we all get together to enjoy a good meal before an early night to help you get over any jet-lag.



01**HO CHI MINH CITY | SAIGON**

Today we begin by exploring a bustling street market where everything from live seafood, every kind of vegetable and even imported goods, are sold to the slow moving tide of local shoppers. A few hundred meters up the road we enter the ancient halls of a Chinese temple where beams of sunlight stream down through clouds of fragrant incense smoke. After lunch we explore the city and by sunset we find ourselves over the Saigon River to photograph the city skyline at sunset.

02**TRA VINH**

After an early breakfast we head deep into the heart of the vast delta of the mighty Mekong River. At My Tho we take to the water and are paddled along backwater canals where the daily life of the local fishermen and farmers surround us. After lunch we continue on to Tra Vinh. Later we visit an ancient Khmer style Buddhist pagoda and then make our way through the endless rice fields to another beautiful pagoda, before finding a suitable spot to set up our tripods and capturing a Mekong sunset.

03**TRA VINH**

Today we begin by visiting another stunning pagoda complex before visiting some local farms and mingling with the locals as they take care of their rice fields and livestock. Before lunch we explore the sun-dappled winding alleys of the towns central market. Here old women in conical hats haggle for ages over a chicken or a small bag of spice. Later, when the tropical heat abates, we join some saffron-robed monks as they go about their daily meditations and share in their evening meal.

04**CAN THO**

Today, after a visit to the most sacred and ornate of all the Khmer pagodas in Tra Vinh, we travel to Can Tho, the capital of the Mekong. Here we visit a rural village, unchanged for hundreds of years and admire traditional local crafts.



"One morning in Tra Vinh filled a 64Gb card... incredible opportunities!"

— Linda Meyer. South Africa





05

CAN THO

Today we rise early and cruise down the river in small boats to visit the largest floating market in the delta. Here large boats bring fresh produce from far and wide to sell to local merchants, and it all takes place on the crowded river. Later we visit a local cottage industry making rice paper and observe the whole process from the grinding of the rice to the drying of the paper. Taking to the water again we make our way through a maze of quiet backwater canals, stopping here and there to visit local farms and orchards, before returning to the city.

06

CHAU DOC

Taking a road which follows the river we travel upstream through lovely farmlands to the small town of Chau Doc. Here we enjoy the views of rice fields as far as the eye can see, from the top of an isolated mountain. You can either remain on the mountain to view the sunset or visit the Ba Chua Xu Vietnamese style pagoda in the beautiful dusk light.

07

CHAU DOC

Once again we take to the water and visit the floating houses which line the river bank, and take a look at the fish farms beneath them. We then visit a stilt village of the Cham ethnic minority before heading south to the primeval, waterlogged Tra Su forest. Finally, today ends in a quiet valley lying between two rugged forested mountains and a wander through the fields and the scattered 'tot nhot' trees, unique to this part of the delta.

08

CHAU DOC

Today we return to Ho Chi Minh City, but not before stopping at the world famous Tram Chim National Park. This is a unique delta environment and home to the very rare and endangered Sarus Crane. While we might not see the cranes, the park is home to a wide variety of other waterfowl and birds as well as some pretty unique landscapes, including vast waterlogged fields covered by tens of thousands of lotus flowers.

"Vietnam: the country, the people and the food – it's everything you could ask for and more."

– Philip Baker. United Kingdom



09**HO CHI MINH CITY | SAIGON**

This morning we take a walk through ‘Cho Lon’, the city’s traditional Chinese district. Here we explore a number of ancient pagodas and community halls and observe locals as they worship a pantheon of gods. Dark wood, red enameled art work and backlit smoking incense sticks fill our morning. The afternoon is free to relax, catch up on emails and maybe do a little shopping. For those interested there is an opportunity to visit some busy cramped shopping streets and enjoy some top class street photography.

10**TAY NINH**

After breakfast we travel out to the Northern part of the delta, near the Cambodian border. Here we attend the worship service of the Cao Dai faith, held in their massive fantastical cathedral. Later we have time to wander around the cathedral complex and admire the unusual architecture before heading into the countryside to visit a pagoda built on the shores of a vast lake.

11**TAY NINH**

Today we visit a sacred pagoda built atop the only mountain for hundreds of kilometers around. Here we interact with the monks, nuns and pilgrims as they go about their devotions. Descending to the flat plains of the delta we have the option to visit the famous Cu Chi tunnels where whole villages lived underground to escape the battles which once blighted this beautiful place. Finally we return to the city, where for those interested, there is an opportunity to visit the night market and some of the local nightspots to see the locals at play.

12**HO CHI MINH CITY | SAIGON**

Our last full day in Ho Chi Minh City provides us with the opportunity to visit some of the ‘must see’ spots like the ornate French-built post office, Reunification Palace, restored to the way it looked when the city was liberated in 1975 and the War Remnants Museum. We also have the option of some additional street photography or even visiting some local families and enjoying a meal with them in their homes.



“The most fun I’ve had doing street photography in twenty years.”

— Hennie Van Der Merwe. South Africa



13**VUNG TAU**

We begin today with a visit to the city's largest and most iconic market, watching old ladies haggle with the live produce vendors, sample the offerings of the food stalls and probably being overwhelmed by the variety of goods on offer – everything from British tweed to Russian caviar. After lunch we take a short trip to the coast where we check into our luxury hotel. The sunset can be spent at the beach watching the fishing boats prepare for the nights work or perched on a little mountain with spectacular views of the harbor and coastline.

DEPART

Today we say goodbye after two weeks of wonderful photography. We will escort you

14**VUNG TAU**

We rise before dawn and travel a short way up the coast to visit a bustling and seemingly chaotic beachfront fish market when the nights catch is landed, sorted by hand and then sold on to shoppers – all within a few meters of the water's edge. After a relaxing swim in the hotels pool we return to Ho Chi Minh City to take a high speed elevator to the viewing floor of the city's tallest building from where we will watch the sun set over the Saigon River. Then we retire to a private room in a wonderful restaurant to enjoy our last meal together.

to the airport for your flight home, or if you want to travel further, assist you on your way.



SAIGON AND THE MEKONG DELTA

DATES

Please refer to our online schedule on the website:

<http://vinapixphototours.com/tours/>

COST

The cost per person is \$2800

This is \$200 a day – **Inclusive of:**

- All accommodation - on a room share basis.* *(including your first night, before the tour officially begins)*
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner every day and general refreshments
- All transport
- All entrance fees, ferry fees etc. *(where applicable)*
- All tips and charitable contributions

This excludes:

- Your flights to and from Vietnam
- Your Vietnam tourist visa *(if applicable)*

- Your travel insurance
- Any strong alcoholic drinks, souvenirs or additional tips

A deposit of \$500 per person is required to confirm a booking. The remainder is payable upon arrival.

(No deposit is required until the minimum of six group members has been achieved and the tour is confirmed)

** Single rooms are available – the additional cost will be calculated upon demand.*

CUSTOMIZATION

The daily schedule of this tour can be adapted to some degree to meet your specific photographic interests. Should the group as a whole agree an extra day can be spent at any location. In addition many personal interests can be accommodated, such as extra time for street photography, food photography etc. Once you have confirmed your booking you will receive a customization form.



"The sunrise at Lak Lake alone was worth the whole trip. Thank you."
— David Goodman.
United States

GENERAL INFORMATION

YOUR GUIDE

Every tour will be accompanied by Ian Morton, a professional photographer who has lived and worked in Vietnam for the last twenty years.

GROUP SIZE

To enable us to meet every group member's photographic desires, and facilitate access to sensitive locations such as some pagodas and homes, the group is limited to between six to eight people.

HOTELS

We have sought out the best accommodation possible while keeping costs as reasonable as possible. Hotels are generally in the two and three star range, although we have arranged favorable discounts for top end hotels and resorts at some locations. On some tours, in more remote locations, accommodation may be a little more rustic, but all hotels have air-conditioning and

on-suite bathrooms with hot and cold water.

TRANSPORT

All transport is provided by new air-conditioned minibuses, with drivers who have been vetted for their care and attention to safety. Internal flights, where applicable, are with Vietnam Airline, a carrier with an exceptional safety record. On some tours we travel by small boats with local guides, but are never far from land and have never had any problems.

FOOD

Vietnamese cuisine is exceptional, and throughout every tour we have gone out of our way to ensure you experience the finest traditional and regional dishes available. At all locations there are a wide variety of vegetarian options, and in all but a few places Western food is available. Any dietary related issues can be detailed and resolved when you make your booking.

CLOTHING

You should bring comfortable light tropical clothing and a good pair of worn in walking shoes. Shorts are acceptable at most locations, but long trousers (including jeans) are recommended for visiting pagodas and temples. A good sun hat is a must for those arriving from cooler climes. A more detailed list will be provided when you make your booking.

HEALTH

Any person of average fitness will have no problem accessing the locations on any tour, indeed the most strenuous activity is a countryside walk along shady lanes. Heat may be an issue in some places, but mineral water is always available. If you have any specific concerns we can address these when you book your tour.



IAN MORTON



*"A great photographer,
a wonderful guy and a
terrific guide."*

*— Tim 'Slim' Selby.
United States*

Ian Morton grew up in Southern Africa. Upon leaving school he worked as a game ranger in some of the wildest and most remote areas of the sub-continent. Later he trained as a forensic photographer and was responsible for documenting war crimes and genocide throughout Central and East Africa. He arrived in Vietnam twenty years ago, and has remained there ever since.

Ian started VinaPix, a photographic business dedicated to supporting what was then, the country's fledgling tourism and hospitality business. In this capacity he has traveled to every province in Vietnam many times, visiting their most iconic locations, but also straying far off the beaten track in his endless quest for the beautiful, unique and interesting.

In 2010 Ian closed down the VinaPix website and withdrew

from commercial photographic work. As he says "I was tired of taking the photographs that everyone else wanted... I wanted to make the photographs that I wanted!" And so he set out to revisit all his favorite locations, once again traveling the length and breadth of Vietnam, taking with him his cameras and a vision of the art he wanted to create.

These days Ian's methodology is simple. He waits for the right season, searches out the best location, sets up his tripod and camera and waits, and waits, and waits. He waits until the dawn or evening light is perfect, he waits until even the clouds form part of the composition he desires, he waits until everything is just the way he wants it to be. And then he presses the shutter release.

A friend who's traveled with Ian on more than one pho-

tography trip comments that although he uses the latest digital equipment, it's more like working with someone who's shooting with an old 8x10" field camera! Sometimes things work out and Ian only spends a few hours at a specific location. More often or not, however, he will return to the same spot day after day until he makes the photograph he already has in his mind's eye.

What's he going to do with his latest work? Ian confesses that he doesn't know. Maybe an exhibition with giant one and a half meter prints, maybe a large format coffee table book, maybe something else. "I'm more than content now, just taking photographs that show the beauty of this wonderful land – I'm sure that something will evolve out of the work I'm doing one day, but for now I have another photograph to make."

YOUR OWN TOUR

In addition to our four open tours every year, we offer you the opportunity to book and customize your own tour. Why not get together with your photographer friends and come as group? These tours can be planned to run from seven to fourteen days and can follow one of our recommended schedules or be designed specifically for your group's interests. While you are welcome to arrange a tour to any of the four regions within Vietnam, we can only provide tours around the optimal time

of year for the region you wish to visit. As with all our tours, we unfortunately have to limit the number of participants to eight photographers. On the other hand, we do require a minimum of six participants on each tour.

While we can only run a few customized tours to each region every year, we do enjoy them and always try to arrange them to fulfill any given groups photographic desires. We have had a group spending a fortnight photographing waterfalls, another

documenting food production from the farm to the restaurant and one group spent a week in an Ede ethnic minority village photographing the daily life of the people. Generally, however, we recommend that you follow one of our standard schedules as these provide the widest variety of photographic opportunities and keeps down costs.

If you are interested in a customized tour, please email us and we will reply with all the information you'll need to get started.

*"Already saving for the next trip."
— Sue and Ken. United Kingdom*

