



To cook like a Master Chef cooks....

...go on holiday with a Master Chef



Vietnam

Cook and Eat your way through Vietnam with
Top 10 Master Chef finalist Dani Venn



14 day tour including all
sightseeing and entrance fees
4 star accommodation



Departing 6 April 2012

\$3899 per person twin share



**Call
Discover Asia on
1300 736 584**



Tour Itinerary

06 Apr Transfer Hanoi airport to Maison d'Hanoi Hotel – deluxe room. Your hotel is located in the heart of the Old Quarter and adjacent to Hoan Kiem Lake, which means you can stroll around the shops and market at any time. A la Carte dinner at Seasons of Hanoi (pay direct). Transfer to/from restaurant by local transport (pay direct)

07 Apr At 10.00am meet Daniel Hoyer, an American chef/culinary instructor and food writer, at your hotel lobby for a half day street food tour. Start the adventure with an overview of local ingredients by visiting a local food market. Then sit down and enjoy a Vietnamese coffee while Daniel gives an overview of the food scene and daily life activities from his experience of living in Hanoi for more than 10 years. There is the opportunity to taste Hanoian specialties including Pho Coun, a grilled beef and rice noodle roll and Bun Cho Chanh stall, open only a few hours in the afternoon. This place is run by a couple of sisters and uses real wood for the cooking. They still fan the fire by hand instead of electric fans. Situated above a narrow lane, you will sit on tiny stools at low plastic tables along with the regular crowd. Enjoy traditional grilled pork and rice vermicelli noodles with fresh herbs and greens like true Hanoians. Transfer back to the hotel mid afternoon.



08 Apr Koto cooking class (maximum 10 passengers) morning and afternoon class. Whilst one group is attending the cooking class, the rest will visit HoChiMinh Mausoleum (outside photo), Presidential Palace, HoChiMinh Cottage & One Pillar Pagoda. The groups meet again at KOTO restaurant at lunchtime and switch over

09 Apr A two hour drive to Ninh Binh province will bring you to Van Long eco-tourism area, an astounding place of natural beauty. A 2 hour boat trip along the river offers stunning scenery of the limestone karst hills and caves. Bring along binoculars as you might encounter some rare langurs or birds. Lunch at a local restaurant before continuing to drive for 4.5 hours from Van Long to Mai Chau. Mai Chau offers a splendid vista of valleys covered in lush vegetation and stilt houses inhabited mainly by the H'mong and White Thai ethnic groups. On arrival check-in and have dinner at Mai Chau Lodge – deluxe mountain view

10 Apr Morning/Afternoon Cooking Class Mai Chau Lodge (maximum 10 passengers) Morning/afternoon is optional – enjoy a relaxing walk to the nearby Thai villages of Pom Coong and Lac. There you have time for handicraft shopping from the local artisans, strolling around or enjoy a cup of coffee with the villagers.

11 Apr After breakfast, drive 45 minutes to Xalinh village inhabited by the H'mong hill tribe. Enjoy the cool breeze while walking for two hours through mountain trails. Optional visit to Pa Co primary school. Stop along the way to observe local traditions. Return to Mai Chau for early lunch at the hotel before driving back to Hanoi and the airport. Flight Hanoi to Hue. Transfer to the riverside Morin Hotel – deluxe room

12 Apr Hue served as the Imperial Capital to the Nguyen Lords, a feudal dynasty which reigned from the 17th-19th century. Drive from the hotel to visit the Imperial Citadel, a UNESCO listed site. Enter through the towering main gate and appreciate the architecture and gardens while your guide explains about the events and the intrigue of the former Imperial court. Despite being bombed heavily, there are some incredibly well preserved sections still intact while others are being restored. Continue to visit the serene Tu Duc Royal Tomb, designed to blend in with its natural surrounds and built on principals of *feng-shui*. The local tradition of food carving in Hue has been handed down from generation to generation for centuries. Head to the beautiful restaurant “Ancient Hue”, and meet with the artisan who will present the unique traditional Hue food, and the art of Hue food carving and plate garnishes. Try it yourself and practice some vegetable carving and learn a Vietnamese way to decorate your dinner table. Dinner at Ancient Hue.



13 Apr Transfer to Hoi An via the spectacular Hai Van pass en route visit the markets and tailors. Check in at the Life Resort Hoi An – superior garden view. Street Restaurant (Old Quarter) or similar for lunch – pay direct. Transfer to/from restaurant by local transport (pay direct). Afternoon free to roam the ancient back lanes and markets, or remain at the Resort and pamper yourself in the Spa. Dinner at Brothers Café (pay direct) Transfer to/from restaurant by local transport (pay direct)

14 Apr Set off to a local market with a chef from Morning Glory Restaurant and Cooking School. Your chef will share with you how to pick a fresh egg, which herbs to buy and how to select ripe fruit. Head over to the school, an elegant old building with a French colonial style exterior and traditional Hoi An interior. Enjoy an entertaining hands-on cookery course. Chat with your chef to learn more about typical ingredients of Central Vietnamese cuisine then enjoy tasting what you have prepared

15 Apr Transfer to airport. Flight Danang to Saigon. Transfer to Grand Hotel – deluxe room (luxury wing). Your hotel echoes of the old colonial style but boasts every modern amenity, including a swimming pool. It is located on the main shopping street and an easy stroll to all the main sights and the Riverside.

16 Apr Depart for a 1.5 hour drive from Saigon to Ben Tre situated in the Delta of the Mekong River. Take in the surroundings of rice paddies and fruit orchards alongside the highway as you leave behind the city. Arrive at the waterfront and embark on an enjoyable motor boat excursion, take a glimpse at the Delta scenery, houses built on stilts and local fish farms along the way. Upon arrival at Turtle Island, visit a local house, meet the owner, sample the freshly picked fruit and coconut milk while relaxing in the grounds. Take a stroll through the garden and through the village. You will have the chance to see a family-run business where they make coconut candy. Continue your journey by sampan, be paddled by a personalised rower while you take the time to discover the maze of small canals. Bid farewell to your friendly boat rower, take a short stroll through coconut gardens before reaching a rest stop to enjoy a cup of honey tea and a traditional folk song performance. Enjoy some local delicacies over lunch before continuing on a two hour drive to Can Tho and the magnificent riverside Victoria Hotel – deluxe room. Dinner tonight is in the splendid restaurant of the Victoria Hotel.



17 Apr This morning rise early and get a unique taste of life in the Mekong. Board a local boat and explore the colourful Cai Rang floating market where boats laden with fruit, vegetables and fish jostle for trade. Sellers advertise their wares by crying out across the waters or tie their goods to a tall pole attached to their boat so that buyers can see from a distance what is being sold. Relax and enjoy the cruise back to the hotel to freshen up before checking out. Return to Saigon stopping en route at a local restaurant for lunch– Grand Hotel deluxe room (luxury wing). Remainder of day at leisure for last minute shopping and exploration.

18 Apr Cooking classes - groups of 10 – one morning and one afternoon. Walking tour of Saigon. Transfer to Dong Khoi street, or Rue Catinant as it was known in the time of the French occupation, to discover some of the beautiful French colonial buildings built in the late 19th and early 20th century. Appreciate the splendidly restored exteriors of the Opera House and the former Hotel de Ville. Wander up to the Notre Dame Cathedral, based on the original construction in Paris (it is only possible to visit inside when no service is being performed). Head across the square to the Central Post Office, designed by the French architect, Gustav Eiffel, before he had risen to fame for the Eiffel Tower. Finally, the former Presidential Palace, the headquarters of the Saigon Government during the American war, is a short drive away and reveals the history of Saigon during its turbulent years.

19 Apr Transfer to the airport

Tour Inclusions

- All domestic travel arrangements as detailed in the itinerary
- Twin share accommodation with private facilities
- Comprehensive sightseeing with an English speaking Guide
- All Entrance fees
- Domestic Economy class flights as stated Hanoi/Hue; Danang/Saigon
- All transfer and domestic transportation as per itinerary
- Breakfast daily; Lunches and dinners as mentioned



Your Tour Leader

Dani Venn



Dani grew up in the leafy outskirts of Melbourne where swimming in muddy dams, catching yabbies, lighting campfires and riding motorbikes and horses were common place.

Dani's love of food and cooking came from watching her mum work the wok to create delicious meals for the family. Chinese food has influenced Dani's style of cooking, as her mum's ancestors were some of the first Chinese settlers to come to Australia. Even though this was a long time ago, food has always been seen by Dani as a way to connect to her family history.

After completing high school, Dani's keen sense of adventure led her to a volunteer role teaching English in Vietnam where she first discovered street food. Everything about Vietnamese food excited her, it was fresh, vibrant, pungent, sweet, sticky and oh so delicious! She ate as much as she possibly could for the next 7 months before her return to Australia where she was determined to learn how to cook the food she had fallen in love with.

Whilst Dani was studying a Bachelor of Communication (Media) at RMIT University, she found time to hop back on a plane and travel to Sri Lanka and India for her next serve of culinary discovery. Sri Lanka opened her eyes to a plethora of curries she never knew existed – pineapple, cashew nut, tomato, okra, snake bean and even beetroot. At every turn there was a tasty treat waiting to be eaten, spiced lentil cakes, crispy roti, fresh jumbo prawns, it was a foodies delight and Dani had found her idea of paradise.

In 2008 Dani landed her first job in the communications industry where she worked in arts marketing for Circus Oz and then later publicity for the Malthouse Theatre. Although her first professional years were often great fun, the amount of time and money Dani increasingly spent on looking up recipes and buying ingredients was alarming so she decided to pursue a career in food.

In 2011 Dani applied for the television series Masterchef Australia and made it through the stringent audition process into the top 24. The judges were impressed with her knowledge of Asian flavours, skill in the kitchen and her enthusiastic and relentless energy. Dani always wore her heart on her plate and was usually laughing or crying, but always happy.

Dani's hard work and determination saw her come fourth in the competition. Her highlights during Masterchef included being the first person ever to win two coveted immunity pins, meeting her food hero Luke Nguyen, cooking lunch for the Dalai Lama and winning the challenge by cooking Sri Lankan vegetarian curries, and having her mum come and participate in one episode.

Now that Dani has emerged from the Masterchef 'food bubble', she has plans to one day open her own Asian food store in Melbourne and have many more foodie adventures. She is also excited about potential television and media projects in the future.



Call Discover Asia on 1300 736 584 and talk to one of our expert consultants or visit our website www.discoverasia.com.au

If your partner doesn't want to cook, perhaps a few rounds of golf?

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