



open kitchen

Culinary Escapades

Annually November 1 – 16

An Invitation To Culturally Curious Travelers and Seekers of
Extraordinary, Authentic Experiences

Join James Beard Award-Semifinalist Chef Hue-Chan Karels and Open Kitchen on an inspiring, curated Culinary Escapade to Việt-Nam! Whether you've been to Việt-Nam or it's on your "bucket list," experience a deep dive into Việt-Nam's heart and soul through her spirited culinary heritage.

culinary-escapades.com | huechan@openkitchenevents.com



An Immersive Culinary Escapade to Việt-Nam

Explore the North, Central, and South through a thoughtfully designed journey rooted in personal experience. Discover Việt-Nam's rich regional diversity through cooking classes, market visits, street food tastings, and unforgettable meals, from time-honored vendors to rising chefs, alongside visits to ancient towns and UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Travel alongside Chef Hue-Chan Karels who offers personal insights and meaningful local connections, creating a deeper cultural experience and lasting memories.

Where We Go: 3 Regions/8 Cities

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| ✓ Hà Nội | ✓ Đà Nẵng |
| ✓ Mai Châu | ✓ Hội An |
| ✓ Hạ Long Bay | ✓ Sài Gòn |
| ✓ Huế | ✓ Mê Kông Delta |

Dates & Pricing

November 1 - 16, 2026

\$14,250 per person

Based on double occupancy; includes two intra-country flights, private charter cruise, unique four- and five-star accommodations, private ground transportation, and other exclusive offerings.

\$2,225 single supplement

Testimonials:

"I would not hesitate to recommend this adventure to anyone with a zest for life and exploration. I know I will travel again with this wonderfully passionate group. Thank you Open Kitchen!!!"

Dawn, Santa Fe, NM 2022

Minda and I felt that the Vietnam Culinary and cultural tour led by Hue-Chan was very well organized with excellent guides and a great itinerary. Of course the meals were fantastic and the cooking instruction was fun and informative. We had a very cordial group of people on our tour and look forward to the documentary screening which hopefully we will be able to attend.

Minda and Rick, Saratoga, CA, 2024



Book Your
Culinary Escapade now!

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ITINERARY

We Begin in Northern Việt Nam - The Cradle of Vietnamese Civilization



Day 1 November 1

Arrival Day – Welcome to Hà Nội!

Arrival to Nội Bài International Airport (HAN) and transfer to hotel by private car. That evening, we'll kick off the Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade with an Orientation Meeting where you'll be greeted by Chef Hue-Chan Karels, Open Kitchen Team, and In-Country Team Lead. You'll also meet and get to know the other guests.



A Welcome Dinner will follow at A Bản - Mountain Dew - a MICHELIN Select restaurant with a special curated menu, featuring the flavors and exotic specialties of Vietnamese Northern Highland cuisine.

Accommodations in Hà Nội: The Apricot Hotel is Hà Nội's small luxury hotel located in the historic district on Hang Trong Street, with a sweeping view of the legendary Hoan Kiem Lake.

Day 2 November 2

Day 2: Hà Nội

Phở Noodle Cooking Class, and Lunch - After breakfast at the hotel, we will venture to Đồng Xuân Market that was originally built by the French in 1889 and now the largest covered market in Hà Nội for a tour followed by a special Phở - Vietnamese fresh noodle Cooking Class. We will make Phở noodles, Phở Bò (beef pho) broth, Phở Trộn (mixed pho), and Phở Cuốn (pho rolls). We will cook and feast on a multi-course lunch.



Hà Nội by Night Culinary Adventure - Pre-sunset, we will begin our culinary tour of Hà Nội's famous Old Quarter. Our first stop will be at one of the highest rooftop sky bars for cocktails and some breathtaking views of Hà Nội at sunset. For dinner, we'll feast on "Bún Chả Hà Nội" at a MICHELIN Bib Gourmand eatery - the quintessential northern Vietnamese dish of charred pork patties and pork belly slices bathed in a steaming dipping sauce served with rice vermicelli and fresh lettuce and herbs. After dinner, we'll venture to a slick bar to experience the iconic Phở as a cocktail! We'll taste the spices and flavors that make up the best part of Phở in a flaming cocktail then stop for a flight of craft beer at one of the best craft beer taprooms in Hà Nội.



Day 3

November 3

Day 3: Travel from Hà Nội to Mai Châu

A Scenic Journey and Lunch of Local Mai Châu Cuisine - After breakfast, we will check out of our Hà Nội hotel and travel to Mai Châu by private transportation. You'll enjoy the scenic drive through small farming towns and over epic mountain passes. We'll arrive in Mai Châu and have lunch at a local restaurant.



Vibrant Culture Immersion and Adventure in Mai Châu - We'll explore Mai Châu's ethnic villages and countryside by bicycle with a local guide. We'll ride through rice paddies and farms, as well as to local craft shops for you can shop for handcrafts and meet artisans spinning traditional textiles. We'll return to our hotel for sunset cocktails followed by a relaxing dinner of local dishes.

**For guests not able/interested in bicycling, special arrangements can be made.*

Accommodations in Mai Châu: Mai Châu Mountain View Resort is at the heart of Bản Lác or Lác Village, located in a beautiful and peaceful location amid mountains and stunning views.

Day 4

November 4

Day 4: Mai Châu

Local Market Tour, Cooking Class, and Lunch - Mai Châu's cuisine is very different from what you have experienced in Hà Nội. We've designed a special cooking class this morning with a tour of the local market as a wonderful way for you to learn more about Mai Châu's diverse ethnic cultures through its cuisine.



After the cooking class and lunch, we will travel back to Hà Nội. You'll enjoy a free evening in Hà Nội to tour the city or simply rest in the hotel. We will provide sightseeing and dining recommendations.

Day 5

November 5

Day 5: Hà Nội

Hà Nội Coffee Tasting and Making Class - After breakfast at the hotel, we will be treated to a fun Coffee Tasting and Making Class at a local coffee shop. Did you know that Việt-Nam is the 5th largest exporter of Coffee in the world? You will learn how to make 2 amazing coffee drinks while munching on some delicious Vietnamese doughnuts (Bánh Rán)!

Hà Nội Famous Market and Free Time - After our Vietnamese coffee experience, we will take a walk to Đồng Xuân Market that was originally built by the French in 1889 and now the largest covered market in Hà Nội. Then, you'll enjoy some free time to explore Hà Nội on your own, shop for souvenirs, or simply rest at the hotel. We will provide sightseeing recommendations.



Hà Nội Farewell Dinner - You will experience one of the most iconic Hanoian specialty dish "Chả Cá Thăng Long" at a MICHELIN Bib Gourmand eatery - comprised of turmeric-marinated fish fillets served in a sizzling skillet table-side along with heaps of dill and scallions, rice vermicelli, roasted peanuts, rice crackers, and dipping sauces!



Day 6

November 6

Day 6: Travel from Hà Nội to Hạ Long Bay

Hạ Long Bay Adventure Day 1 – After breakfast at the hotel, we'll check out of our hotel in Hà Nội and begin our 2.5-hour journey to Hạ Long Bay on private transportation. We will arrive at Tuần Châu Marina and transfer to our privately chartered Orchid Cruise by speedboat.

We will have some wonderful welcome drinks then gather for lunch while we cruise and do some sight-seeing around the magnificent Hạ Long Bay.

After lunch, we'll explore Ha Long Bay surrounded by magnificent mountains. We'll return to our private Nostalgia Cruise for some swimming and a breathtaking sunset before sailing to our sleeping area for anchoring. A cooking demonstration is followed by a beautiful gourmet dinner. After dinner, you can enjoy time on your own at the Nostalgia Cruise panoramic bar, partaking of squid fishing, or private massage that can be arranged in your cabin.



Day 7

November 7

Day 7: Travel from Hạ Long Bay to Huế

Hạ Long Bay Adventure Day 2 - For those early risers, there will be Tai Chi at sunrise on the sundeck. We'll have a light breakfast then off for some kayaking to explore Ao Eách (Frog Lake) and the hidden charm of Hạ Long Bay.

We'll row back to the Nostalgia Cruise to pack up our luggage and check out, followed by brunch as we cruise back to Tuần Châu Pier for our next adventure.

Traveling to Huế from Hạ Long Bay - We will travel to Nội Bài International Airport by private transportation for our 1 hour-15 minute flight from Hà Nội to Huế, historic city in central Vietnam and served as the imperial capital of the Nguyễn Dynasty from 1802 to 1945. Renowned for its rich cultural heritage, Huế is home to the UNESCO-listed Complex of Huế Monuments, which includes the Imperial City, royal tombs, temples, and ancient pagodas.

Accommodations in Huế: Azerai La Residence is a lovely property close to the world heritage city of Huế and the ancient citadel.





Day 8

November 8

Day 8: Huế

Exploring Huế's Imperial City and Food Scenes on Scooter, Sampling Huế's Cuisine – After breakfast at the hotel, we will meet our local guide and venture on scooters to explore Huế's Imperial City, visiting Tu Hieu pagoda- where Master Thich Nhat Hanh lived and rested in his last days of life, and discover and taste amazing authentic Huế dishes in the most hidden places in this beautiful city.

We will experience Huế style coffee and the city's renowned culinary heritage.



Day 9

November 9

Day 9: Travel from Huế to Hội An

A Scenic Journey to Hội An with a visit to Children of Việt-Nam in Đà Nẵng, a Home Cooked Lunch – After breakfast at the hotel, we will travel from Huế to Hội An by private bus. Enroute we will make a stop in Đà Nẵng, Chef Hue-Chan's birthplace, to visit a charity that is near and dear to her heart – Children of Việt-Nam (COV) in Đà Nẵng, whose mission is to "... lift children out of poverty by eliminating barriers to fulfilling their potential through wraparound services that focus on one child, one family, one community at a time." COV serves Đà Nẵng City and the surrounding areas and focus on children with disabilities, ethnic minority and rural children living in poverty, children living in poverty at risk for dropping out of school, children living in single-mother households. Open Kitchen has arranged for a home cooked lunch by local families supported by COV programs with Đà Nẵng specialty dishes. Open Kitchen will donate a portion of our proceeds from our Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade to further COV's mission.

Welcome to Hội An! - We will arrive late afternoon to Hội An. Following hotel check-in, we will take a brief tour of this charming ancient town, including scouting out some amazing shopping venues, then we will have a Welcome Dinner at the famous Cargo Club restaurant by the acclaimed chef, restaurateur and author Trinh Diem Vy, that showcase Vietnam's and Hội An's cuisine.

Accommodations in Hội An: Anantara Hoi An Resort is set on the Thu Bồn River and less than a mile from Hội An's historic area. The resort's 94 rooms are all set in traditionally styled, two- or three-story townhouses reflecting Hoi An's history of trade with Holland, Japan, China and France.



Day 10

November 10



Day 10: Hội An

Hội An Local Organic Garden, Cooking Class, and Lunch - After breakfast at the hotel, we will meet our local chef instructor to go to Tra Que Organic Vegetable Village before our hands-on cooking class and lunch that day. Our chef has designed a cooking menu featuring Hội An's distinctive regional cuisine. We will be cooking at his family's lively restaurant in An Bang Beach, a charming beach town about 2 miles outside Hội An.

For our cooking class, our chef will discuss local spices and their uses and benefits, while working with you to prepare three delicious dishes. We will enjoy our lunch and take in the vibe of the local village.

Free time in Hội An - After our wonderful day at An Bang Beach, we'll head back to our hotel for some free time to explore Hội An, rest, and have dinner on our own. We will provide sightseeing and dining recommendations.

Day 11

November 11



Day 11: Hội An

A Visit to Hội An Fish Market and Countryside Bike Tour - For early risers, we have arranged for a wonderful excursion to a fish market by boat where you'll experience a true local way of life, from fishmongers selling fish and customers bargaining on prices.

We will return to the hotel for breakfast then meet our local guide for a Hội An Countryside Bike Tour for an idyllic ride through rice fields and rural countryside. You'll ride through beautiful emerald villages with water buffalos on farmlands and meet local artisans who will be happy to share their crafts with you, from making straw mats to milling rice into flour. There will be endless photo opportunities as we will take the most scenic country paths.

We will stop at a small village for lunch and a cold drink and enjoy the local life and weather permitting, we will take a boat ride to discover the Thu Bồn River and its waterway.

Free Afternoon, Farewell Dinner at Mango Rooms, Hosted by Chef Duc Tran- a former Vietnamese boat refugee turned internationally acclaimed chef, returned to Vietnam to create Mango Rooms in Hội An, where he pioneered a vibrant style of contemporary Vietnamese cuisine inspired by his global travels and deep love for Vietnamese culture and hospitality.





Day 12

November 12

Day 12: Travel from Hội An to Sài Gòn

Uber-Urban Cultural and Culinary Immersion, and a Welcome Lunch – After breakfast at the hotel, we'll depart for Đà Nẵng International Airport by private transportation for our 1.5-hour flight to Sài Gòn.

We'll kick off our Sài Gòn culinary adventures with a private chef's table lunch featuring one of Vietnam's rising culinary talents, offering a fresh and innovative perspective on the country's dynamic food scene.

After hotel check-in, you have the option of a tour of the Reunification Palace and War Remnants Museum by our Tour Leader OR free time.

Sài Gòn by Night - Cocktails & Nibbles Adventure - Pre-sunset, we'll meet for Cocktails & Nibbles Hopping around Sài Gòn to experience the amazing sights, sounds, and flavors of this vibrant city! We've selected some of the best cocktail bars with breathtaking views of Sài Gòn with hip vibes and cool crafted cocktails and mocktails for our outing!

Accommodations in Sài Gòn: The Myst Dong Khoi is a 5-star boutique hotel that blends the charm of old Sài Gòn with contemporary luxury, offering a uniquely local experience in the heart of the city.



Day 13

November 13

Day 13: Sài Gòn

Discovering the History of and Lunch - After breakfast at the hotel, we meet our local guide and travel 1.5 hours to visit the Cu Chi Tunnels. We will step back in time to learn how this vast underground network was used in the Vietnam war. We'll have lunch following the tour then back to our hotel to rest up for the evening exciting adventure!

Sài Gòn Scooter Foodie Tour - Pre-sunset, we'll embark on an exciting scooter foodie tour of Saigon to experience and taste some of the best and hidden places only accessible by way of scooter.



Day 14

November 14

Day 14: Travel from Sài Gòn to the Mê Kông Delta

After breakfast, we will check out of our hotel in Sài Gòn and begin our amazing adventure in the Mê Kông Delta. We will travel to An Bình Island, famous for its beautiful fruit gardens in the Mê Kông Delta (about 2 hours).

Exclusive Private Culinary Adventure at a Charming, Authentic Homestay - We will experience life on the Mê Kông River on board a traditional wooden boat with a chef demonstration and lunch of dishes reflecting Mê Kông Delta cuisine and local ingredients. We will return to our homestay to relax and explore An Bình island. For dinner, we will feast on a traditional Mê Kông Delta meal followed by a wonderful tea service to the sound of folk music indigenous to this region.

Accommodation in the Mê Kông Delta: Our home for an overnight stay is the very charming Út Trinh An Bình Homestay where the wonderful owner will be our curator for a memorial culinary experience.





Day 15

November 15

Day 15: Travel from the Mê Kông Delta to Sài Gòn Last Day of Open Kitchen's Việt-Nam Culinary Escapade!

After breakfast at the serene Út Trinh An Bình Homestay, we will journey back to Sài Gòn. We will have an incredible lunch at Bánh Xèo 46A – a MICHELIN Bib Gourmand eatery known for the famous Vietnamese rice crepes. For dessert, we'll have a chocolate tasting at Marou. You will have a Free Afternoon to enjoy your last day in Saigon and Việt-Nam. Now is a good time to do some shopping for gifts and souvenirs!

Vietnamese "Cuisine Mới" or "New Cuisine" with Chef Peter Cuong Franklin - We will meet up for our Departure Dinner to say goodbye to our friends for one last awesome meal in Việt-Nam at Anan, an elevated "Cuisine Mới," or "New Cuisine" restaurant by Chef Peter Cuong Franklin's Anan Saigon that's voted top 50 restaurants in Asia and received a one MICHELIN Star in 2023 and 2024.

Day 16

November 16

Day 16: Departure

Breakfast and Departure - After breakfast, you'll check out and make your journey back home with such amazing memories of your time on Open Kitchen's Culinary Escapade to Việt-Nam!

The closest airport is Tân Sơn Nhất International Airport (SGN).

Transfers by private car to the airport. Bon Voyage! Travel Safe!

