



# HALONG BAY AND RED RIVER

## RV PANDAW ANGKOR - UPSTREAM

**DAY 1 – HALONG BAY** Transfer from Hanoi International Airport to Halong Bay to embark the cruise. Cast off in the late afternoon for an evening sailing to drop anchor in a sheltered bay amidst the amazing island scenery. PLEASE NOTE: The itinerary for this expedition is indicative only and subject to reconnaissance. As we travel to remote areas, changes to the itinerary will inevitably occur. A flexible approach is required if you book this cruise.

**DAY 2 - HALONG BAY & ARCHIPELAGO** Morning sail around in Halong Bay and beyond with its 1,500 dramatic limestone islands and extraordinary rock formations, dating back 20 million years. We will visit by local boat a floating fisherman village, a floating school and limestone caves.

**DAY 3 – THE KINH THAY RIVER** Enter the Kinh Thay River and moor at Yen Duc Village, a beautiful spot set amidst poetic scenery on a charming stretch of rivers with historical mountains coupled with sacred legends and relics related to Ly and Tran dynasty. The village was recognised as a national relic in 1993.

**DAY 4 – THE DUONG RIVER** From Dong Trieu town we continue the expedition towards Hanoi on the Duong River. Here we will explore the Dong Ho village, where we can witness the Dong Ho Vietnamese folk painting, dating back to the 11th century, on paper made from sticky rice and oysters. All colouring is natural as well, from coal for example or burned bamboo leaves. Further down we will visit the Bat Trang ceramic village where traditions of producing ceramic items are passed on from generation to generation.

**DAY 5 – HANOI** Docked in the bustling city of Hanoi, passengers will visit some highlights of this Asian metropolis, must see's like the notorious Vietnam war prison known as the Hanoi Hilton, the water puppets show, temple of literature where Confucius did his thinking and the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.

**DAY 6 – FURTHER EXPLORATIONS OF HANOI** Further explorations of Hanoi visiting the Van Phuc Silk Village with personal time to explore the Old French Quarter with its café life and many interesting boutiques.

**DAY 7 – THE LOWER RED RIVER** Sail through day from Hanoi up the Red River to Viet Tri, not the most picturesque of towns but an excellent base for going deeper into Highland Vietnam. Going a shore we visit a timeless Arcadian Vietnam with emerald green rice paddies punctuated by lime stone rock formations. Of particular interest is the Tay village, hardly known, yet with exquisite temples dating from the 8th and 11th century and home to some fine Buddhist statuary carved from jackfruit trees. In the afternoon we a visit to an orphanage in Viet Tri. The kids are encouraged to live together with own responsibilities in manageable family units under a foster parent. The orphanage lies amidst lush gardens.

**DAY 8 – THE UPPER RED RIVER** The Red River flows down from China's Yunnan province and has for centuries been a key trade route between nations. Between Viet Tri and Hoa Ha the mountains loom large and the river narrows and flows fast. Hoa Ha is a typical riverine village and a pleasant place for a hike ashore.

**DAY 9 – THE DA RIVER** Enjoy a day sailing downstream admiring the unspoilt beauty of the Da River. We pass the Ba Vi National Park with its rich and diverse tropical and sub tropical flora and fauna before arriving at Hoa Binh.

**DAY 10 – HOA BINH** Hoa Binh was the site of a major battle in 1951 and 1952 with the French and is home to the Muon ethnic group. We visit a museum and a local village where villagers still wear traditional dresses. The largest power station in South-East Asia was built here buy the Russians between 1979 and 1994 and is still fully operational and subject to security clearance tours can be arranged deep inside the mountain where at one point 1,000 Russian engineers toiled. We will also visit a 400 ton statue of Ho Chi Minh which commands spectacular views over the Hao Binh valley.

**DAY 11 – MAI CHAU** Early morning we will take a coach trip to Mai Chau through staggeringly lovely scenery. The sleepy town of Mai Chau is home to the Black Thai and White Thai, an ethnic minority who still live in Thai bamboo stilt houses. In the afternoon we return downstream towards the town of Viet Tri for Disembarkation.