



## ***2009 Discover Vietnam :*** **Volunteer, Immerse, & Explore in Vietnam**

Location	Orientation near Hanoi; sites vary depending on project/activities selected
Start Dates	All year round. Minimum 2 weeks. Maximum 6 months. Volunteer projects start every 1 <sup>st</sup> Monday of the month in Nam Dinh, near Hanoi.
Program Fees (in US\$)	2 weeks: \$1210 1 week Orientation + 1 week Volunteer \$1365 1 week Orientation + 1 week Trek \$1365 1 week Orientation + Beach 3 weeks: \$1465 1 week Orientation + 2 weeks Volunteer \$1660 Orientation + 1 Wk Volunteer + 1 wk Trek or Beach Extra Weeks: \$255-Volunteer, Cultural activities \$450-Trekking, Beach
What's Included	All-inclusive orientation + volunteer, cultural or adventure travel Pick-up/drop-off and transfer to/from project site Accommodations (homestay or volunteer center) All meals during program Pre-departure and bi-lingual local support Traveler's Medical Insurance
What's not Included	International airfare
Accommodations	Safe, comfortable, clean basic accommodations in volunteer housing or host family. Shared bathroom. 2-3 meals per day available with projects or homestay.
Country Facts:	
Capital city	Hanoi
Population	~61.5 million
Currency and exchange rate	Vietnamese đồng (VND) <a href="http://www.xe.com/ucc/">http://www.xe.com/ucc/</a>

***Cultural Embrace's "Discover Vietnam"*** program consists of an exciting way for you to customize your own way to explore this beautiful country. A minimum of two weeks includes a week orientation to help you familiarize yourself with Vietnamese culture, lifestyle, language, people, food, attitude, habits, and environment. Then choose to volunteer teaching English to young Vietnamese students or you can also choose to do a

trek or a beach week. All options are available for at least one week, so you can mix and match the different options so it will match your preferences and skills.

## **Projects & Activities Description**

### **Orientation Week**

The orientation week is the first step for a successful stay in Vietnam. Therefore, the first week is dedicated to getting to know Vietnam and getting to know the other participants. During this time, we will also engage in the following activities: Vietnamese culture and society "do's & don'ts" in Vietnamese society, team building activities, Vietnamese language and cooking lessons and visit local tourist places.

We will also have time to meet the local people, taste the food and learn about the Vietnamese customs. During this period, everyone will also be informed in detail about the program chosen and the different projects.

After the introduction program participants should be able to understand more about Vietnam and be ready to continue their trip in Vietnam with one of our programs or by themselves.

### **Culture Week**

During this week, you will have the chance to learn more about the cultural diversity in Vietnam. You will also visit a typical Vietnamese village and spend time interacting with the locals. This will be a unique experience that you will remember for the rest of your lifetime.

### **Volunteer Week**

Our Volunteer Vietnam Program is a fantastic opportunity to be a responsible traveler and make a positive contribution during your stay. You will be placed in a local school, where you will have the possibility to give a positive input into the life of the Vietnamese children. Volunteers are invited to teach English in a creative way.

### **Trekking Week**

You will explore the most of the remote Vietnam! Visit the Sapa region and experience a homestay in a remote village and camp in the forest. You will also do an Environmental Trek through the jungle, with the chance to swim in a waterfall.

### **Beach Week**

Vietnam has amazingly beautiful beaches and it is also home to one of the Worlds Heritage - Ha Long Bay! We will enjoy a day out on the boat, seeing the wonders of Ha Long Bay, swimming and relaxing. During the daytime everyone can do as they would like to: relaxing, reading, swimming or anything else you wish. This is also the time to be together with the other Active in Asia participants and to make an evaluation of the previous weeks.

The itinerary will change accordingly to the season; in case of cold weather (October-March), the visit to Ha Long Bay will be shortened, and we will visit instead the Thanh Thuy Hot Mineral Water Mine, located in La Phu and Bao Yen communes, Thanh Thuy district. Hot mineral water contains sodium, calcium, etc, especially radon - a rare and precious kind of radon for the first time discovered in Vietnam, which is very good for health!

## **Program Details & Highlights**

### **Volunteer in Vietnam Offers:**

- A first-hand experience to see and improve Vietnam.
- A broader perspective on world views.
- Opportunity to learn about Vietnamese lifestyles and community initiatives as well as other cultural activities (ie: language, crafts, dance, etc)
- Memorable experiences while traveling and seeing exotic sites
- Lifelong friends from all around the globe
- International work and cultural experiences that strengthens your resume
- Support and development of self-confidence and personal skills

### ***Cultural Embrace Offers:***

- **Guaranteed Program Placement Prior to Departure**  
*Cultural Embrace* pre-arranges your complete program before you leave home to ensure an easy and hassle-free transition to your new life abroad.
- **Room & Meals**  
All accommodations and meals are included during the program. Housing will be located at either host family or volunteer sites.
- **Arrival Assistance**  
You will receive an airport pick-up and transfer.
- **International Traveler's Health Insurance**  
We include a medical comprehensive policy for all of our volunteers abroad.
- **Arrival Orientation & Training**  
An one-week all-inclusive comprehensive orientation will be included. The orientation introduces the local community, Vietnamese cultures, basic Vietnamese language, and Vietnamese cuisines/cooking.

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- **Volunteer, Cultural Activities and/or Excursions**

Choose from one-week options to volunteer, take cultural activities and/or go on local excursions. You may mix and match these options to maximize your time in Vietnam, or opt to spend more time at a specific location to become familiar and involved with the activity

- **Visa Assistance**

*Cultural Embrace* will assist you with the information to obtain a visa, but we have no control nor the ability to guarantee of government issuances and visa availability.

- ***Cultural Embrace's* Culture Kit**

Useful tips, advice, and information to prepare you for the amazing adventure of living and working abroad.

- **Full-time Representation**

*Cultural Embrace* provides English-speaking representation in the United States and Vietnam before, during, and after your time abroad.

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## **Program Requirements**

- Volunteers must be at least the age of 18. Or, if younger than 18, you must have parental or guardian consent
  - Minimum commitment of 2 weeks, maximum 6 months
  - Enjoy working and serving others in an underprivileged and struggling environment
  - Open to foreign cultures and living abroad.
  - Responsible and dedicated to full-term of commitment
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## 2009 Schedule & Fees

Program	Length	Price
Orientation (1) + Volunteering (1)	2 wks	\$1210
Orientation (1) + Trekking (1)	2 wks	\$1365
Orientation (1) + Beach (1)	2 wks	\$1365
Orientation (1) + Volunteer (2)	3 wks	\$1465
Extra week – Volunteer, cultural activities	1 wk	\$255
Extra week – Beach, Trekking	1 wk	\$450

*\*Prices listed in US Dollars*

*\*\*Please note-prices are subject to change according to world currency exchange rate.*

## How to Apply

- 1) Obtain Volunteer Program Information and Application Forms.
  - Download the forms on our website. - OR -
  - Fill out our easy online application request form and the forms will be mailed to you within 7-10 days. - OR -
  - Call 1-512-469-9089/1-888-214-8570 (US toll-free) to have the forms mailed to you in 7-10 days.
- 2) Read the instructions carefully and complete all forms.
- 3) Submit your completed application packet to:

**CULTURAL EMBRACE**  
**7201 Bill Hughes Road**  
**Austin, TX 78745 USA**

- Completed packet should include
  - Volunteer Application
  - Signed Volunteer Program Agreement
  - Copy of your passport - information page only
  - Copies of diploma or certificates related to field of interest (if applicable)
  - Resume/CV
  - Cover Letter explaining why you want to join this program, and provide a service in Vietnam.

- Two references: preferably professional references and/or character reference
- Doctor's certificate verifying that you are in excellent mental and physical health
- Copy of Police Clearance (obtainable from your community's local police station)
- Two 1½" x 2" official passport style photos (with name printed on each photo's back)
- One smiling full-length picture of yourself
- \$200 Non-refundable application (credited towards your program fee)

Upon receipt of your application, a **Cultural Embrace** coordinator will contact you for a 20-30 minutes phone interview. Once we accept you in to our program, you will receive an invoice for the remainder of your program fee. In order for us to contact our local partners to start your placement process, we require at least 50% of your program fee.

We recommend submitting your application and program fee at least 12-16 weeks prior to your desired start date in order for us to organize and arrange your volunteer placement.

\***Cultural Embrace** requires an expedited application fee for those applying 12 weeks or less before the desired date of departure. Applications received 8-12 weeks prior to desired departure date will be charged \$150. Applications received less than 8 weeks before the desired departure date will be charged \$250.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1) *Why should I pay Cultural Embrace to volunteer?*

**Cultural Embrace** and our local partners specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your volunteer project. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Fees vary according to project, destination, and length of stay. Most of the costs go toward operational project and field expenses, (ie: housing, food, transportation, supplies, etc) plus the administrative fees to cover office and local support (ie: legal, accounting, insurance, advertising, etc) and donations to the local project communities. **Cultural Embrace** does not add on any profits on their volunteer programs

### 2) *What are the living conditions like?*

Accommodations vary with each project and location. The orientation week will take place in a regional center and you will have shared rooms. You will also have meals together with your group. Other project and cultural activities' accommodations vary, but expect basic standards. Some of the regions have poor living conditions (ie: straw and padded mattress, non-flushable toilets, limited running water, etc), but they still maintain a clean and safe environment.

3) *What are the meals like?*

All food during your “Discover Vietnam” program is included. Vietnamese food is delicious and tasty, for those that have a knack for spicy and flavorful dishes. Vegetarian and dietary meals may be met, however, if you have specific allergies, you may need to provide your own food. Please list any special dietary requirement on your application.

4) *What type of visa assistance does **Cultural Embrace** provide?*

A tourist visa can be used for this program, and many countries do not need anything to enter the country. Please check with your local consulate.

Please note, that any visa fees are the responsibility of the applicant. And, while **Cultural Embrace** can assist you during the process, ultimately it is your responsibility to ensure that you have obtained the appropriate visa for your volunteer experience. **Cultural Embrace** has no control over the visa process and cannot guarantee that your visa application will be accepted.

5) *How long will it take to make my placement?*

We ask applicants to apply at least 12-16 weeks in advance of your desired start date. The placement may take less time than this, but we want to ensure that we have enough time to find a great placement for you! There are additional administrative fees if you apply less than 12 weeks in advanced, and we do not contact our local partners until we receive at least 50% of the program fee payment.

6) *What should I wear and bring to Vietnam?*

Depending on the time of year and location of your placement, you will need to dress accordingly. Since space is limited at volunteer sites, we ask that you keep your luggage to a minimum. We strongly recommend safety work boots with protective toe caps, and clothes that are loose and comfortable that will also fight out the harsh sun rays. Please note that shopping in Vietnam is a highlight for many participants, and clothes as well as other crafts are inexpensive and easily available. **Cultural Embrace** will provide you with more details in your **Cultural Embrace** pre-departure kit.

7) *Can I volunteer and/or live with a friend or partner?*

Yes, you can enroll in this program with other people, and we encourage it since it will enhance your experience and memories. Additionally, you will receive a discount for referring friends and family to join you on the same or other CE programs. Although you may state your preferences for shared housing, you will need to be flexible and respectful of local customs.

8) *When should I buy my plane ticket and does **Cultural Embrace** provide any resources to help with plane tickets?*

Plane tickets should not be purchased until after your placement has been confirmed. **Cultural Embrace** volunteers with consolidators and discount travel agencies that can help find cheaper tickets than those that are available to the general public.

9) *What do I do when I get to Vietnam?*

**Cultural Embrace** will provide you with a handbook prior to your departure with the names and contact information of your local representative, company, and other useful resources for your time in Vietnam. You will be picked up from the airport on a Sunday, and transferred to the orientation home, located in Nam Dinh (outside of Hanoi). You will attend a week-long orientation at this site, with more specific details of what to expect at the other locations you opt for. If you plan to arrive earlier than the program start dates and need assistance in Hanoi, please contact your CE coordinator, and we will assist you with more local options. Additionally, you will have an on-site local supervisor for any questions.

10) *What do I do if I have a problem or complaint within my volunteer placement?*

You must speak to your local bi-lingual volunteer coordinator or representative to give them an opportunity to explain or investigate the situation. If the complaint still exists, please let **Cultural Embrace** (Austin office) know so we can mediate on your behalf.

11) *Why should I pay to volunteer abroad, and where does my money go to with **Cultural Embrace**?*

**Cultural Embrace** and our local partners in Vietnam specialize in arranging a guaranteed volunteer placement, housing and insurance prior to your departure. This will alleviate the troubles and stress of getting everything organized in a new country, so you will have more time and energy to spend on your internship and living abroad. Your time abroad will still be an independent and memorable one, but we are here to guide you to a safe, healthy and comfortable experience before, during, and after your adventure.

Your program fee includes your customized volunteer placement, comfortable, clean, and safe accommodations with all meals, comprehensive international traveler's health insurance, orientation, training, cultural activities and excursions, and all of the administrative and logistical costs to set up your placement in the States and Vietnam. **Cultural Embrace** also pro-rates the expenses for marketing, advertising, and site visits/communication among all of our programs within our fees.

*For any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at [info@culturalembrace.com](mailto:info@culturalembrace.com) or you can call us at 1-512-469-9089 or 1-888-214-8570 (US/Canada toll-free)*

*Discover the Similarities. . .  
Share the Differences. . .*