

Onto the Imperial City of Hue

DAY 4

We travelled between Hanoi and Hue by airplane rather than our original method of overnight sleeper train - last time we got 9 hours into this uncomfortable journey before evacuating off because of a typhoon further down the line! Read about it [here](#)

This time, and partly because of time constraints and itinerary- but also because the sleeper train really isn't very comfortable at all!- we waived our usual rule of avoiding in-

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ternal flights, so, 4 hours after our alarm
went off in Hanoi, we touched down in Hue.

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Our hotel, the Indochine Palace sent a car to retrieve us from the airport and by 10am we were arriving at the MAGNIFICENT hotel.

There's posh, and there's POSH, and we immediately decided this was the latter- and at £60pn it was unfathomable! Our room became upgraded to a suite, and is as big as the downstairs of our house!

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We enjoyed a cocktail, before a freshen up and by midday we were ready to head into the city.

We stopped for lunch at Les Jardins de la Carambole, set in a colonial style property and dined on traditional food from Hue such as Banh Khoai (Hue Crispy Rice Pancake),

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Banh Nam (Flat Steamed Rice Dumpling),
Banh Beo (Steamed Water Fern Rice Cake),
Banh Ram It (rice dumpling /cake with shrimp).

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We absolutely devoured every dish- even ordering seconds from the menu. It was absolutely delicious and totally different to other foods we've eaten around Vietnam and the world.

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After lunch we went into the Imperial City- not for a big explore as we had booked a tour for tomorrow. Instead we headed to the theatre in the hope of catching the music show at 3pm.

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Imperial court music is an integral entertainment form in the Vietnamese court during feudal times. The most outstanding form of royal music is “refined music” or “Nhã Nhạc”, which is recognized as a Masterpiece of Oral and Intangible Heritage by UNESCO. The refined music was first performed in the 13th century and uses an array of instruments, ranging from string instruments such as “dan ty ba” (pear-shaped lute with four strings), “dan nguyet” (moon-shaped two string lute), “dan nhi” (two stringd vertical fiddle) to wind instruments like “ken bau” (conical oboe), “sao” (bamboo transverse flute), not mention to the appearance of some percussion instruments, drums of many kinds for example.

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The performance feature not only musicians but also colourful dancers wearing beautiful traditional costumes and telling stories with themes such as love, and prosperity.

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I am honestly not exaggerating when I describe how much we both enjoyed the show. It was INCREDIBLE. The whole piece, from the historical theatre to the musicians, costumes and lighting was just magnificent. The only thing that we didn't enjoy was the lottery about whether it would run or not. They try for a performance at 10am and 3pm every day, but need 10 audience members to run the show. We were DESPERATE to see it, but hated the uncertainty waiting from 2:15pm until 2:50 when they finally announced it could run! We considered ourselves extremely lucky to see the show and actually afterwards came away rather emotional and overwhelmed by the whole experience. It was MARVELLOUS.

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We made our way back to the hotel for a swim and change- before walking back in to the restaurant and bar area of Hue. We stopped for a drink in a bar, had dinner at Madam Thu- which again consisted of more Hue delights, and at a ridiculously cheap price! Before mooching round some of the shops and taking a walk down the river.

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The restaurant and bar area of Hue was a bit of an attack of the senses. Music blared out from bars, and waiters tried to encourage you in by waving menus. It felt a different world to the elegance of the royal theatre and music we'd enjoyed in the day- instead we felt like we'd entered a club 18-30s hotel! Still, if you like lively, you'd probably enjoy a

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night or two in Hue! We loved the food but not so much the atmosphere in town.

After the best nights sleep of our trip so far (jet lag booo!) we woke up to day 5 feeling refreshed and raring to go!

DAY 5

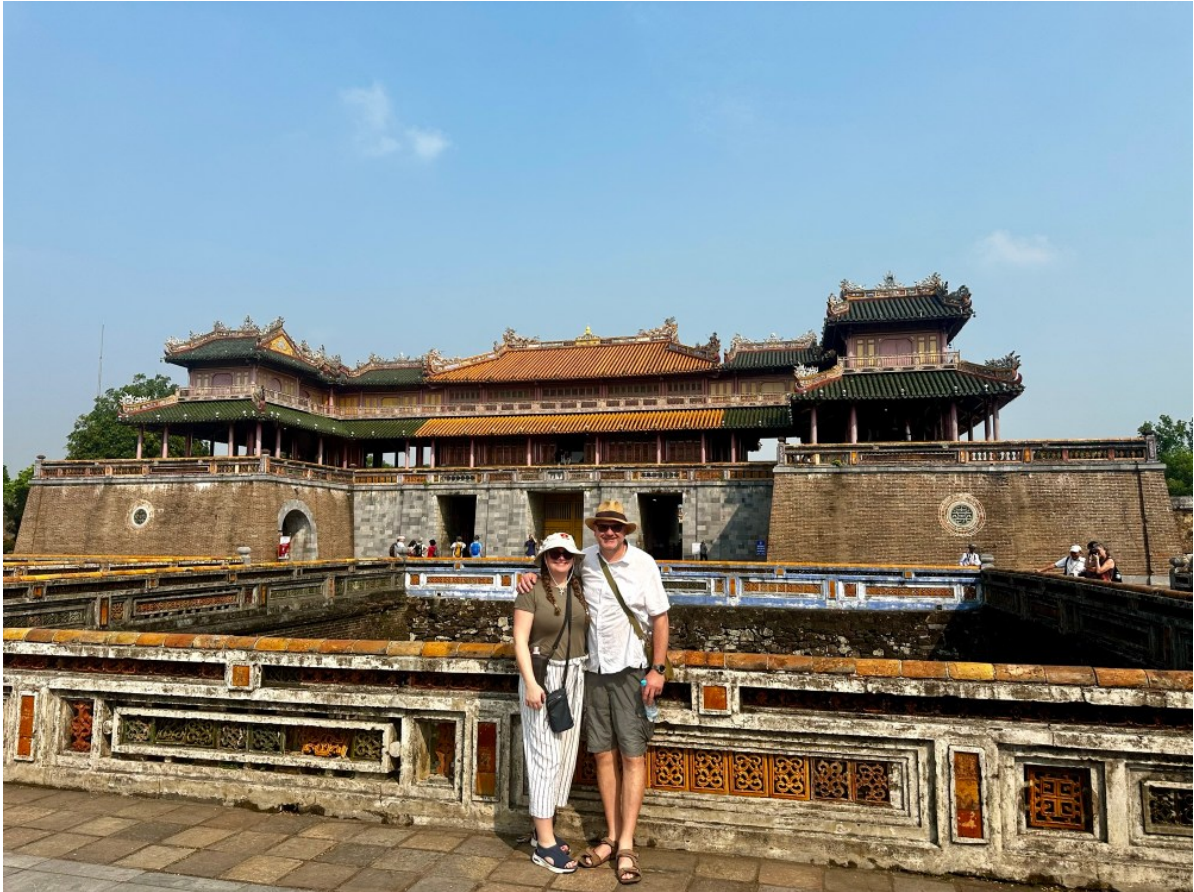
We'd booked a day tour via Viator to soak up the sights and history of Hue, and I'm really glad we did as there is a lot to see in the area and it's rather spread out, so doing it on our own would have been a challenge.

**Hue City Deluxe Group Tour (Daily
Tour-12 pax max)**

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We were picked up by our guide Ruby, at 08:25 and once we'd got everyone – us, a lovely family of 4 and a Vietnamese couple, we made our way to the Imperial city. We spent a good 2 hours here learning about the different areas and kings. We were particularly bowled over by the palace, which is covered in the most stunning and colourful pottery mosaics I think I've ever seen.

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Giày của vua Khải Định.

Da, bọc lụa vàng; thêu trang trí đồ án long - phúc triều thọ.
1916-1925.

Shoes of Emperor Khải Định.

Leather, covered with yellow silk; embroidered with decorative designs
of dragon and bat attending to longevity character.
1916-1925.

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Hà cá và voi thối thối
Đã bị găm đến, thì tăng trỉ 60 in kơng lâu trỉe tho
1916-1925

Boots of Emperor Khai Dinh
Leather, covered with black brocade, embroidered with decorative
designs of two dragons entwined to signify character.
1916-1925

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We went for a walk through the market, tried the local salt coffee, had a boat ride down the perfume river and visited the magnificent Thien Mu pagoda.

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Our lunch was at a local home and consisted of more local food and a herbal foot bath which was very relaxing. After lunch we visited the colourful incense village and even had a go at making one (let's say I'm not a natural!).

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Following this we went to a couple of the King's tombs- one showcasing large and

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beautifully landscaped gardens - Thieu Tri Tomb,



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and the other showcasing incredible architectural design and more splendid pottery mosaics – Khan Dinh Tomb.

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It was a wonderful day, and we enjoyed the company of Jas and his family too- we shared lots of giggles and a mutual interest and collection of tribal masks too!

We were dropped back off at the hotel around 4.30pm and enjoyed cold showers and a couple of drinks in the hotel bar before heading back into town for dinner, once again at Madam Thu's.

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We'd really been blown away with the history and UNESCO sites of Hue and were super satisfied to finally be able to tick it off our list.

Next stop.. Hoi An.

Until next time

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