Halong Bay:

Mysteries of the Emerald Waters

Halong, meaning "where the dragon descends into the sea", is steeped in myth and magic. Legend tells of a time when the Jade Emperor summoned dragons from the heavens to defend Vietnam against invaders. The dragons scattered jade and emeralds across the water, which transformed into the bay's spectacular limestone pillars. Today, more than 1,900 craggy islands rise dramatically from the Gulf of Tonkin, their jungle-covered cliffs and hidden caves cloaked in mist.

The best way to experience this UNESCO World Heritage site is by taking to the water. A traditional cruise offers the perfect vantage point to explore hidden lagoons, grottoes, and serene beaches. When the fog rolls in, Halong Bay feels like a living watercolor painting—ethereal, timeless, and unforgettable.

A Journey with The Au Co Cruises

A two-day voyage aboard The Au Co reveals not just the natural splendor of Halong Bay, but also its culture and sustainability efforts. After a warm welcome and safety briefing, the journey sets sail into the heart of Halong and Lan Ha Bays.

Kayaking through the tranquil Ho Ba Ham area is a highlight—gliding past towering karsts into secluded lakes, or pausing on private beaches where silence is broken only by the lapping tide. Another unforgettable stop is the Cua Van Floating Culture Center, once hailed by Travel + Leisure as one of the world's most captivating destinations. Here, visitors can paddle on traditional rowing boats or kayaks, discovering a way of life that has existed in harmony with the sea for centuries.

Back on board, the sundeck becomes the stage for one of Halong's greatest shows—the sunset. As the sky turns crimson and gold, the bar opens for Happy Hour, offering cocktails with a view that lingers long after the glass is empty.

Floating Fishing Villages

Perhaps the most poignant experience is a visit to a floating fishing village, home to just 70 residents from 30 families. For generations, life here has followed the rhythm of the ocean: boats set out at dusk, return at dawn, and the rest of the day is spent mending nets, sharing meals, and raising families on floating homes. Entire communities were once built on the water—complete with schools, shops, and gathering places—all sustained by the bounty of the sea.

In recent years, many villagers have been resettled inland to improve access to education and healthcare, and to help preserve the bay's fragile ecosystem. Yet, the floating villages remain a testament to human resilience, offering a glimpse into a way of life that is deeply connected to the tides.

Halong Bay is more than just a natural wonder; it is a living tapestry of myth, history, and culture. Between its towering cliffs, emerald waters, and enduring traditions, it leaves visitors with the sense of having touched something truly timeless.