



The golden paddies of the north

[2200 M]

Trek along the northern Vietnamese border



The golden paddies

A discovery trek in the mountainous region of north Vietnam; landscapes dominated by luxuriant forests and terraced paddies, amongst the tribal minorities of the H'mong and Nung. You will catch the sleeper train from Hanoi to Lao Cai. From Bac Ha, your trek will follow the border region eastward, passing through isolated villages, surrounded by beautiful sceneries, with hundreds of terraced paddies sliding down the hills like waterfalls. End of the trek in Sin Man. Homestay accommodation and meals in traditional stilt houses.

Amongst the H'mongs and Nungs

Black, red or flower H'mongs; they all migrated from China and live in the border region, taming the rocky hills into blooming paddies and corn fields. The Nungs and Tays also migrated from China, originally descendants of the Zhuang people. Last to migrate to the mountainous regions of northern Vietnam, the H'mongs display a great tribal solidarity, tenacity, courage and ingenuity in transforming their rocky hills into irrigated rice paddies and corn fields. In the past, their main activity was producing poppy in the flourishing golden triangle trade. Their handicraft heritage is quite rich and diverse.

DAILY PROGRAM SCHEDULE**Day 1 : Flight to Hanoi**

Regular flight to Hanoi.

Day 2 : Arrival in Hanoi

Arrival in Hanoi. Meet our tour guide at the airport and transfer to downtown Hanoi for hotel check-in. In the evening, we will have a welcome dinner with Vietnamese delicacies. Tour briefing at the dinner. Overnight in Hanoi. (D)

Day 3 : City tour – Night train to Lao Cai

Breakfast at the hotel. Today we will enjoy a city tour that will introduce you to the Vietnamese culture and history. We will visit the HoChiMinh complex, Temple of Literature, Ethnology Museum and an interesting "xich lo" tour in the Old Quarter of Hanoi. After dinner, we will catch the night train to Lao Cai. Overnight on train. (B, L, D)

Day 4 : Lao Cai – Bac Ha – Lung Phinh Village - Ta Chai Village – Pa Chu Ty 2 Village (4h)

Arrival in Lao Cai early morning. We take a 2h bus ride to Bac Ha. Breakfast in Bac Ha before the trek. Our trek will start in Lung Phinh Village, which is 30mn drive from Bac Ha. The morning trek is on easy terrain and in beautiful nature setting. We reach Ta Chai Village of the Fula ethnic minority. Fula is a small group with beautiful traditional dress and still very authentic. We will visit a local family to learn about their culture. Picnic lunch on the way. In the late afternoon we reach the H'mong ethnic minority village of Pa Chu Ty 2 where we spend the first night in a local house. (B, L, D)

Day 5 : Pa Chu Ty 2 Village – Then Van Village – Lung Cai Village (5h)

After breakfast at homestay, we begin our trek today thru a rough area of mountains and rice terraces. The narrow dirt path leads us to the H'mong village of Then Van. We have a break at the village with the villagers to learn the culture and lives of the H'mong. Picnic lunch on the way. Continue on dirt path, passing some villages before we reach Lung Cai, a peaceful village of the H'mong. Dinner and overnight in the village. (B, L, D)

Day 6 : Lung Cai village - Hoang Nhi Pho village - Ban Gia village (6h)

Breakfast at the homestay. We leave Lung Cai for Hoang Nhi Pho Village. The beautiful trek is on dirt path that run through rice paddies and corn plantations. We will encounter locals who go to their farm or go to the market. We will have lunch in Hoang Nhi Pho Village. After lunch, we continue the trek toward Ban Gia Village. Reaching the village in the afternoon. Dinner and overnight in local house. (B, L, D)

Day 7 : Ban Gia village - Nan Ma village (5h)

Breakfast at the homestay. Today we trek on tougher terrain in beautiful landscapes. We reach the hidden village of Nan Ma in late afternoon. The village has been hosting very few foreigners thus the villagers are quite curious about us. We will have dinner and overnight in local house. (B, L, D)

Day 8 : Nan Ma - Nan Lung - Coc Pu (5h)

Breakfast at the homestay. Our trek today is easier as the terrain is slightly undulating. We will trek thru an area that is dominated by the Nung ethnic minority. We will have a break for lunch in Nan Lung Village. After lunch we continue trekking to Coc Pu 2 Village. Overnight in traditional house of a Nung family in Coc Pu Village. (B, L, D)



Day 9 : Coc Pu - Sin Man - Bac Ha - Lao Cai

After breakfast, we walk 3h to Coc Pai Town where we will meet our van and drive shortly to Sin Man for lunch. After lunch we drive to Lao Cai via Bac Ha. Washing and refreshing before dinner in Lao Cai. Night train back to Hanoi. (B, L, D)

Day 10 : Hanoi

Arrival in Hanoi in the morning. Transfer to hotel for check-in. Breakfast at the hotel. Free at leisure in Hanoi. Overnight in hotel. (B) (Possible 2 days extension to Halong bay)

Day 11 : Hanoi - Return flight

Breakfast and free time until airport transfer. (B)

Day 12 : Arrival



TECHNICAL LEVEL 3

MODERATE

Trek for all people who want to discover a country in authentic and sporty conditions: walks of 3 to 6 hours per day, night in tents, moderate altitude difference, low altitude. Those trips are intended to people with a good physical condition and which practice sport regularly sport without having a competition level ... A good physical endurance with a sporty spirit!

Dates and Prices

For dates and prices, please go online at www.trekonline.com www.trekonline.com
or contact our customer service department

☎ by phone : +33 (0)1 43 25 27 74 ☎ by fax : +33 (0)1 46 33 24 77

✉ or by mail : contact@trekonline.com

SERVICES INCLUDED

Accommodation	On double room basis, taxes and breakfast included. Standard category hotels in cities and during excursions. Tents, lodges (tea houses), during treks and expeditions. If you wish a single room, please advise upon booking (extra charge).
Air transport	Price includes international flight and domestic flights.
Excursions	Entrance fees to museums and tourist sites
Guides	Local English speaking guides.
Meals Vietnam	Meals as mentioned in the itinerary.
Service team Vietnam	Local porters to carry equipment and supplies, additional porters can be hired to carry personal effects. At homestay, cook will prepare meals with fresh local products. Local tribal guide and experienced guide in adventure tours from Hanoi (licensed and trained in first aid). Mattresses and mosquito nets provided.
Transfers	Our staff will pick you up at the airport and drive you to your hotel. After the program, we will ensure your transfer back to the airport.

SERVICES NOT INCLUDED

Beverages & other personal expenses	Alcoholic drinks, soft drinks and all other personal expenses are not included.
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Insurance	Insurance coverage is not included. Make sure you are properly covered when booking your program.
Mini group Vietnam	Guaranteed departure starting from two participants. Extra charge of 200€ per person for groups under 4 participants.
Sleeping bags and personal equipment	Not included
Tips	Are highly appreciated by the team that assisted you.
Visa Vietnam	6 months validity after return date. Invitation letter to apply for the visa.

CHECKLIST PHARMACY

- Antiseptic - Mercurochrome, dry spray, antibiotic powder
- Aspirin or Panadol - for pain or fever
- Bandages and plasters - for minor injuries and wounds as well as special plasters for blisters.
- Disinfectant Spray - (e.g. Dettol)
- Hydroclonazone, Micropur - water purifier
- Imodium or Lomotil - for diarrhea, stomach aches, dehydration
- Intestinal Antiseptic (e.g. Ganidan)
- Mosquito repellent
- Rehydration mixture - for treatment of severe diarrhea and dehydration
- Your usual medicine

CHECKLIST GEARS

Clothes

- Bottle neck jumper
- Parka Coat
- Polar jacket

- Rain gear
- Swim wear
- Synthetic underclothes
- Trekking wear

Head

- Hat / Cap
- Sunglasses with UV protection

Hands

- Goretex gloves (2 pairs)

Foot

- Sandals - tennis shoes
- Synthetic socks
- Trekking boots
- Walking Shoes

At camp

- Sleeping bag

Travelling

- Camera & binoculars
- Headlamp with spare batteries
- Small backpack

Hiking

- Rucksack 50L



Geographic Information

Vietnam

Capital : Hanoi

Highest summit : Mt Fanzipan (3 143m)

Location : Vietnam is located in south-east Asia. Bordered by China to the north, Laos, Cambodia to the west, and the China sea to the east and south.

Population : 90 million in habitants. Vietnam is the 13th most densely populated country.

Administrative Requirements

A visa is compulsory to visit Vietnam. Need a 6 months valid passport after return date. Visa approval letter is necessary to apply for the visa.

You may have your visa on arrival, please check following website:

<http://vietnam.embassyhomepage.com/>

Travelling hints

No specific vaccinations required. Recommended vaccinations are: DTP (diphtheria, tetanus, polio), yellow fever. Up to date BCG, typhoid, meningitis A/C, hepatitis A/B, tuberculosis. An anti malarial treatment for those who are planning a long stay or a trek in the southern regions. Be sure to carry a mosquito repellent & micropur pills.

In any case, for your safety, we advise you to refer back to your doctor and local sanitary authorities. In order to avoid any food poisoning, you are advised to drink bottled mineral water, cooked food, avoid fresh fruits and salads.

www.cdc.gov/travel/destinationList.aspx

Useful Information

Gastronomy :

Vietnamese cuisine is light and delicate. Compared to the Chinese cuisine, it has less sauce and fat. In southern Vietnam, dishes are sweeter than in the north, due to the use of coconut milk in cooking. In the

center lands, sea food is the basis of the traditional dishes. Hué is considered as the gastronomic capital of Vietnam. Among traditional dishes, you will find the nems (rolled rice pancakes stuffed with crab, minced pork meat, onions and aromatic herbs, served fried, hot and crunchy. Banh cuốn (steamed rice raviolis) stuffed with pork and black mushrooms. The Cha ca, northern specialty (fried fish fillet served with rice noodles, aromatic herbs and grilled peanuts). The Canh chua (sweet and sour fish and vegetable soup). The Cho (dog meat and sausages) in certain regions. Vietnamese desserts are mainly fruits: pineapple, mangoes, bananas, oranges, papaya, grapefruits, mangosteen, rambutan, longan. The national drink is green tea and beer; Tiger beer, Saigon beer, 333 (Ba ba ba).

Handicrafts :

The Vietnamese handicrafts are reputed for lacquered objects (frames, plates, vases, jewelry boxes). In Hanoi you can buy beautiful embroidered napkins, towels and bed sheets, silk. Bronze or copper pots in Hué or Hanoi. The most beautiful china is in Hue, where you can also find some very old pieces, but difficult to take out of the country.

Language :

The official language is the Vietnamese, one of the most uncommon Asian languages. Difficult in its pronunciation and accentuation, but uses the Latin alphabet. Each of the 53 ethnical minorities of Vietnam has its own dialect. French is still spoken, English is common in hotels, restaurants, banks and administration.

Currency :

The national currency is the « Đông », exchange rate is approx :

1€ = 26 766,00 «Vietnamese dong» (VND)

1£ = 29 712,00 «Vietnamese dong» (VND)

The demand is very high on the American dollar, which can be used all over the country. Nevertheless, we advise you to pay in Dongs or by credit cards in hotels.

Credit cards :

Most commonly used credit cards are MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Diners Club. You can also withdraw cash from ATM machines in cities.

Climate :

In general Vietnam has a relatively hot and damp climate from north to south. But you have to expect some wide variations from one region to another. The mild climate in the center gives way to fresh temperatures further north and even very chilly temperatures in the mountainous northern region. In the south, temperatures can be very hot and very damp weather like in the Mekong delta.

North Vietnam has a subtropical weather with two seasons: fresh and damp between November and April; hot and rainy between May and October. The capital Hanoi; has a humid tropical weather, hot and rainy between May and September.

South Vietnam has a tropical humid climate with three seasons: a rainy season between May and November. A fresh and dry season between May and November. A dry and hot season between February and April.

Temperatures range from 21°C to 28°C.

On the opposite, the central coast has its dry season between February and July and its rainy season between August and January.

The best period to visit the country is April / May and from September to December in the north. Central Vietnam (Hue / Da Nang) end of February to May and the south from November to March.

Be sure to adapt your dress to the region you are visiting, keep handy your rain gear.

Time difference :

There is a time difference of + 7h in summer and + 6h in winter between the UK & Vietnam.

Electricity :

Voltage is 220 volts, standard european sockets. You may find American sockets in the south. An adaptor could be useful.

Clothing :

Warm clothes if you are heading to the northern region (fall and winter). Light cotton clothes for the central and southern regions. Always keep your rain gear handy.

Telephone :

From the UK : 00 + 84 + city code (4 for Hanoi, 8 for Saigon, etc.) + n° of your correspondent (6 or 7 digits)

From Vietnam : 00 + 44 + n°

Working hours:

Banks : Monday to Friday 7h30 to 11h and 13h30 to 16h, and Saturday morning

Insurance:

Make sure your insurance covers assistance, search and repatriation if you are participating in a trekking program or an expedition.

Useful words :

Good morning sir : Chao ông

Good morning madam : Chai bà

Goodbye : Chao

Please : Làm ơn

Thank you : Cam ơn

Yes: Vâng (in the north) Co phải (in the south)

No : Không

Coffee : Cà phê

What time is it ? Mấy giờ rồi ?

Key addresses

UK

Vietnamese Embassy

Visa section

12-14 Victoria Road

London W8 5RD

Tel: 020 7937 1912 / 020 7565 3853

Fax: 020 7937 6108

Vietnam

British Embassy

Central Building

4th floor

31 Hai Ba Trung

Hanoi

Telephone: (+84) (4) 3936 0500 or (+84) (4) 3936 0500

Fax: (+84) (4) 3936 0561 (for Embassy in general)

Office hours, Monday-Friday:

08:30-12:30 / 13:30-16:30 (Local time)

01:30-05:30 / 06:30-09:30 (GMT)