

Remote far North Vietnam – 9 days

Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	HANOI – DUONG LAM VILLAGE – NGHIA LO	L/D
Day 2	NGHIA LO – MU CANG CHAI	B/L/D
Day 3	MU CANG CHAI – SAPA – GIANG TA CHAI VILLAGE	B/L/D
Day 4	SAPA – BAC HA – HOANG SU PHI	B/L/D
Day 5	HOANG SU PHI	B/L/D
Day 6	HA GIANG – DONG VAN – MEO VAC	B/L/D
Day 7	MEO VAC – BAO LAC – CAO BANG	B/L/D
Day 8	BAN GIOC WATERFALL – BA BE NATIONAL PARK	B/L/D
Day 9	BA BE NATIONAL PARK - HANOI	B/L

Note*: B: Breakfast / L: Lunch / D: Dinner

Detailed Itinerary

Day 1 HANOI – DUONG LAM VILLAGE – NGHIA LO

We leave Hanoi Old Quarter and travel for about 2 hours to Duong Lam, which is an ancient village with UNESCO protection as of 2006. The houses date back 100-400 years, and the temples and gardens are edged with laterite walls. This is an important historical site with temples in honour of two kings, national heroes, who defended the land against the Chinese about 1200 years ago.

We will have lunch in a local house here, before continuing our drive through the rural countryside, first

Note*: this is a copy of itinerary on Indochina Treks Travel' Official Website and not the final itinerary.

surrounded by flat paddy fields, then, as we gain altitude we will begin to see tea plantations, and then finally corn or maize amongst the karst limestone outcrops. We will overnight with a delightful White Thai family in a traditional stilt house in Nghia Lo.

Meal: Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Nghia Lo

Day 2 NGHIA LO – MU CANG CHAI

We will rise early and take an early morning bike ride around the paddy and corn fields, enjoying the peaceful sight of ducks, chickens, pigs and buffalos, and observing the quiet manual labour of the villagers. Breakfast will be enjoyed in the open air, looking over the fields, before we check out and set out over the dramatic Khau Pha mountain pass.

The rice fields of Tu Le are spectacular and we stop at a local restaurant for lunch. We continue the drive to Nam Co village where we'll see the flower H'mong ethnic minorities in their lovely traditional costume, as well as the local market if it's the right day. We drive to La Pan Tan and the Mam Soi terraced rice fields and take a short walk up the hill to a viewpoint. Then finally dinner and overnight at Mrs Chon's Homestay in Kim Noi village, another White Thai family home.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Mu Cang Chai

Day 3 MU CANG CHAI – SAPA – GIANG TA CHAI VILLAGE

After breakfast we will drive from Mu Cang Chai through Tan Uyen and then to Sapa. The road is very dramatic with many hairpins, each opening up a new vista of the mountains, and also crosses the Sin Ho pass. You will have lunch in Sapa and a chance to look around, before we trek to Giang Ta Chai village, where you will have dinner and overnight in a Dao's ethnic house.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Sapa

Day 4 SAPA – BAC HA – HOANG SU PHI

We set off bright and early with a drive to Bac Ha. If it is a Sunday we will make for the market, one of

the most colourful markets in the north, where you can become expert in spotting the different ethnic costumes, and enjoy the antics of the livestock market. There are marvellous photo opportunities at these markets, and after lunch in a local restaurant, we will visit the palace of Hoang A Tuong, a curious mixture of baroque and oriental, built in 1920 with the aid of the French.

Then we will drive up a small mountain road with views of the most amazing rice terraces, with villages dotted here and there. We reach Ban Phung village and have a chance to see the La Chi ethnic people, their ladies in black knee length skirts and jackets, with a little delicate coloured embroidery, and their heads wrapped in a strip of cloth knotted about their hair. They have a truly hard life up in these mountains often carrying a heavy load in a bag from a band on their heads. We will descend to Hoang Sun Phi for dinner and overnight at a hotel.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Hotel in Ha Giang

Day 5 HOANG SU PHI

Hoang Su Phi is also a very famous area for rice terraces which curl around the hills like contour lines. There are also beautiful tea plantations, some of which have been there for a hundred years. We continue via Tan Su Phin pass and Cong Troi pass, which are incredibly dramatic and the whole area is full of magnificent views with plenty of photo opportunities.

We will have lunch on the way at a local restaurant, then continue north again to Ha Giang. We will overnight at a stilt house of a Tay family.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Ha Giang

Day 6 HA GIANG – DONG VAN - MEO VAC

We set out in the morning for Dong Van, passing through Cong Troi heaven gate and then continuing on to Yen Minh. On the way we will also visit the King's Palace in the H'mong village of Sa Phin, built in the early 20th century. The area is also notable for its many corn plantations, where the harvest is collected by hand.

As we pass reach Dong Van we disembark for a lunch break in the colourful old market. Here you can admire the Ancient houses and the local people in their traditional garments. After lunch we set off again and pass through the spectacular Ma Pi Leng Pass, on the way to Meo Vac

This road is justly considered one of the most beautiful in the country, and the views are appropriately stunning. Once we reach Meo Vac we settle in for an overnight stay.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Ha Giang

Day 7 MEO VAC – BAO LAC – CAO BANG

Meo Vac is a small town, home to the ethnic groups Tay, Dao, H'mong and Lo Lo. If we are here on a Sunday we will visit the market, another fantastic riot of colour. There is a lot of clothing and fabric sold here, and sometimes men making the men's indigo dyed jackets on old sewing machines can be seen among the stalls. There is a livestock section which is a frenzy of squealing pigs, screeching birds as well as cows and horses.

We drive to Bao Lac for lunch with some stops in ethnic villages along the way. The road is again pretty mountainous with several passes. Then we visit the Nung ethnic village of Pac Rang, a traditional farming village which is known for its blacksmiths and their work in making farm tools. We'll have dinner and overnight at a Nung house.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Cao Bang

Day 8 BAN GIOC WATERFALL- BA BE NATIONAL PARK

After breakfast we continue from Cao Bang and journey to the Ban Gioc waterfalls, a photo of which must be in every hostel and tour agent's office in Hanoi! The falls mark the border with China, so this is truly the frontier.

There will be time to appreciate the breath-taking sight of these falls before making our way to Nguom Ngao "Tiger Cave", with its amazing limestone formations, and stalactites of various shapes and sizes. This is the most famous limestone grotto in the province of Cao Bang, and you will be awestruck by its sheer size! We then drive to Ba Be National Park and feel the peace and serenity of the lake, before dinner and an overnight stay at Mr Linh's Homestay.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

Accommodation: Homestay in Cao Bang

Day 9

BA BE NATIONAL PARK - HANOI

After a breakfast on the terrace, we will walk a short distance between rice fields, through the village of Bo Lu to the boat station to embark on a 3 hour boat trip across the lakes of Ba Be. If you need to cool down, it's a great time to jump into the peaceful water. The boat takes you along a river with time to gaze up at the dramatic karst limestone outcrops which will have become quite familiar to you by this point.

The park is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna so you are likely to catch sight of birds and butterflies, and you'll definitely be aware of the thousands of bats in Puong Cave which tunnels its way through the mountain and through which the river flows. We return by boat to Bolu and then you will have a chance to relax on the drive back to Hanoi, stopping on the way for lunch. We should arrive back in Hanoi about 5.30PM and you will be ped off at your hotel.

Meal: Breakfast/Lunch

Accommodation: n/a

Important Note*

- PROGRAMS & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE
- The itinerary can be customized basing on your interests (you can extend your stay at each location, add/remove activities)

Inclusions & Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Overnights in selected hotels or similar
- All in-tour stationed local English speaking guide.
- Entrance fees for sightseeing mentioned in the itinerary
- Excursions as mentioned in the itinerary
- Transfers as mentioned by private air-conditioned vehicles (including pick up & see off)
- Meals as indicated in the itinerary

Exclusions:

- Meals and services other than those noted in the itinerary
- Visa stamping fee
- International flights pre/post tour
- Laundry, telephone calls, and personal expenditures
- Gratuities for guides, drivers, porters, boat crew, and personal, non-itinerary services

Cancellation Policy

- Cancellation received 60 days or more before arrival date: 10% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 20% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 30% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 50% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

Children Policy

- For infant (<02 years old): FOC
- 02 – 10 years old without bed: 50% adult rate
- 02 – 10 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate
- 02 – 10 years old in twin share: 90% adult rate
- from 11 years old: 100% adult rate

Important Information

Emergency Contact

Should you need to contact us during a situation of dire need, it is best to first call the travel consultant whom you deal with and then our hot line contacts. If for any reason you do not receive an immediate answer, please send us a detailed message and contact information by email to the agent and to info@indochinatreks.com, we may check and return your call and assist you as soon as possible.

Our all travel consultants use WhatApps. Please ensure that you have the contact number. It's best to buy a local sim-card upon arrival. Most hotels offer free wifi. So it's very easy to contact in urgent case.

Emergency contact numbers

Mr. Kelvin Do: +84 986759655

Ms. Thuy Pham: +84 984654964

Internal Flights

For all internal flights, we would use Vietnamairlines, Vietjesair, Jestar, Cambodia Angkorair or Laos Airlines. Most domestic flights in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar, airlines would use small 70 seat ATR72 for short distances. Most airlines in Vietnam use the Airbus A321. 20kg for checkin luggage and 7kg for hand-bag is included in the price.

International flights before/after the tour must be booked by yourself before travelling date.

Accommodation

We would use different hotel categories and you can select any basing on your budget. So your travel companions would not stay at your hotel. A Hotel Voucher will be provided once your tour is confirmed with all hotel details.

Packing List

- Conservative Dress
- Modest clothing that covers knees and shoulders (Long pants, long skirts, shirts that cover shoulders)
- Shawl or scarf (for temple visits)

Note*: Please pack clothing for the season in which you will be travelling. From Dec-Feb weather can be cold, so please pack warm clothing. From May-Nov it is the wet season, so please bring waterproof clothing.

Documents

- All tickets (required)
- Passport (required) (With photocopies)
- Required visas
- Hotel & Tour Vouchers
- Meeting sign (with your names and flight details that we will use for transfers)

Train Travel

Train travel in Vietnam is very basic and train cleanliness is often not a priority for train staff. Sleeper trains normally have 4 seats per compartment, which convert into sleeping bunks (two upper and two lower). A sheet, pillow and blanket are provided, although many people prefer to bring their own sleeping sheet. At times, passengers of different genders may be required to share a sleeper train berth and/or share a compartment with people not travelling in your group. For short distance - 3 hours (as Hue to Danang or vv), you will do the trip on soft/hard seat carriage.

Simple food is available on the train but many people like to stock up on freshly baked bread, cheese and fruit prior to departure. Water should also be bought before the journey.

Train journeys in Vietnam are an experience and allow you to get a real taste of Vietnam.

Airport transfers

All airport transfers are included in the tour price. You should provide us your arrival/departure flight details and we will arrange things basing on the information. A meeting sign with your name and all flight details will be sent to you. Please be ready at the lobby at pointed time for pickup.

Driver/guide should always be present at the airport before your arrival time. If you could not find the driver, please contact your travel consultant who you deal with. For any reason that airport transfer could not be arranged, please take the taxi to the hotel. We will refund the money then.

Travel insurance

Travel insurance is not included in our tour price. When travelling with us, you are suggested to buy insurance that covers all medical coverage, cancellation, personal liability, curtailment and loss of luggage and personal effects.

Trip Specific Safety

We strongly recommend the use of a neck wallet or money belt while travelling, for the safe keeping of your passport, air tickets, travellers' cheques, cash and other valuable items. Leave your valuable jewellery at home - you won't need it while travelling. Many of the hotels we use have safety deposit boxes which is the most secure way of storing your valuables. A lock is recommended for securing your luggage.

Be aware that petty theft can be an issue in some towns and cities especially late at night. A common tactic is opportunists on motorbikes that drive by and snatch bags. Please always leave valuables and passports etc in your hotel in safety boxes if available and only carry with you enough cash to spend for the day. Bags should always be carried over the neck and not left to sit on your shoulder.

Warming

Please do not buy gems unless you know what you are doing. Even if genuine you should not expect to be able to sell them at home. If you fall victim to a gem scam, we are unable to assist you.

Visas and Entry Requirements

Please note that visas for Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos are the responsibility of the individual traveller. The visa requirements for your trip vary depending on where you are from and where you are going. For the most up to date information please check your Governments Foreign Ministry website or with you travel agent as rules do change.

CAMBODIA - Visas can be obtained at the Cambodian border or Siem Reap Airport for approx. \$35 USD very easily. Please have *at least* 2 passport photos with you as well.

VIETNAM - As of March 2017, a select 80 nationalities are now eligible to enter Vietnam with an E-Visa. Please contact your Foreign Ministry or Vietnamese consulate to see if your nationality is eligible. Please note that you should ONLY apply for a Vietnam E-Visa if you are entering Vietnam by international airport - either Noi Bai International Airport (Hanoi) or Tan Son Nhat International Airport (Ho Chi Minh City).

If you are entering Vietnam by land border, please apply for a regular visa for Vietnam. Many of the land borders we travel through do not accept the Vietnam E-Visa. Please view this link to apply E-Visa: <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/web/guest/trang-chu-ttdt>

LAOS - Visas are issued upon arrival in Laos. You will need two passport size photographs and approx \$35. Tourists are generally admitted to Laos for 15 days with a visa on arrival or for 30 days with a visa issued at a Lao embassy. Please bring visa photos with you.

Please be aware that you will require four clean pages (minimum) in your passport and at least six months validity.

Tipping

It is customary in Asia to tip service providers such as waiters, at approximately 10%, depending on the service. Tipping is expected - though not compulsory - and shows an expression of satisfaction with the people who have assisted you on your tour. Although it may not be customary to you, it is of considerable significance to the people who will take care of you during your travels. There are several times during the trip where there is opportunity to tip the local guides or drivers we use. Recommendations for tipping drivers and local guides would range from \$3-\$5 USD per person per day depending on the quality and length of the service.

Electricity

Indochina Countries use 220V, and a mixture of flat 2-pin, round 2-pin or 3 pin plugs. It is recommended to bring a universal plug adapter.