



North Vietnam Highlights - 11D/10N (Ref. NV11A)

Overview:

The north of Vietnam offers a wide range of impressively beautiful sites which are definitely worth to be explored. This trip is focused on presenting some of the most favourite destinations including Hanoi - the capital city, Sapa - the outstandingly stunning mountainous area and Halong Bay - the nature world heritage site. Throughout the trip, you will experience the bustling city of Hanoi, visit one of the most colourful ethnic minority markets in Lao Cai, explore the most hidden parts of Sapa by taking overnight trek and cruise among thousands islands and rocks emerged from tranquil water in Halong Bay. At the mean time, it is also a nice opportunity for distinguishing multi cultures, experiencing friendly people and their daily lives and enjoying spectacular nature beauty in the comfort of provided services.

Itinerary:

Day 1: Hanoi Arrival (-,-,-)

Upon your arrival at the airport/ train station, you will be met and transferred to hotel in Hanoi Center. The rest of the day is at your leisure.

Accommodation: Hong Ngoc hotel

Note: the guide runs an information meeting with the group upon arrival at the hotel.

Day 2: Leisure day in Hanoi. Night train to Lao Cai (B,-,-)

Today is at your disposal.

Later in the evening you go to the station to take night train to Lao Cai, a busy town on the Chinese border.



INCLUSIVE

- English/French Speaking Guide during airport/station transfer and on excursions only
- Porter(s) and other necessary equipment for trekking
- Accommodation based on twin sharing rooms in indicated hotels
- Tent based on twin sharing basis
- All indicated transportation
- All indicated meals (B: Breakfast; L: Lunch; D: Dinner)
- Sharing boat cruises in Halong Bay
- Return train ticket (soft sleeper in 4-berth AC cabin)
- Entrance fees
- Homestay fees and permits

EXCLUSIVE

- Insurance
- Pre and post trip accommodation
- Private expenses
- Drinks and Beverage
- All other services not mentioned as inclusive



Accommodation: on board the train (soft sleeper in 4 berth-cabin)

Notes:

- *Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed on Mondays and Fridays. It's annually closed time for maintenance is October and November.*
- *All Hanoi Museums are closed on Mondays.*

Day 3: Full day market visit. Transfer to Sapa (B,L,-)

The train arrives at Lao Cai Station approx 5h30 where our guide and driver are waiting. You will have your breakfast in a local restaurant in Lao Cai.

You will then depart Lao Cai for one of the markets, depending on which day today is. There are Coc Ly (Tuesday), Lung Khau Nhin (Thursday) Can Cau (Saturday) and Bac Ha (Sunday) market, all located in the surrounding mountainous area, 70 – 90 km from Lao Cai. All of the markets are colorful with many different hill tribes living surrounding the market, gathers in a morning of the week. They come to the market not only for purchasing their local products, but also for their special social event.

In the mid afternoon you will have a transfer to Sapa, where you stay tonight in a small hotel.

Accommodation: Cat Cat View hotel

Day 4: Trek: Sapa – Y Linh Ho – Seo Mi Ty (B,L,D)

You will have a transfer along the Muong Hoa valley for about 15 minutes before taking a descent by a dirt trail to Y Linh Ho village, inhabited by Black H'mong minority. You are now surrounded by magnificent scenery of rice terraces, high mountains, streams and wide valley dotted by local ethnic minority villages. After crossing a suspension bridge, your trek will be uphill on a small trail amongst the rice terraces. At any time you can enjoy short breaks for viewing the terraced valley below. You will enjoy your lunch on the top of a hill or in a local house, depending on the weather.

The trek will be softer in the afternoon. But the scenery becomes even more beautiful. You pass by Seo Mi Ty village of Black H'mong minority before you arrive in a campsite, which locates nearby a river outside the village. While the porters help putting up tents and cook dinner, you can take a walk to stretch the legs.

Approx: Grade 3 of 5/ 15 mins driving/ 5 hours walking

Accommodation: Tent/ local house

Day 5: Trek: Seo Mi Ty – Den Thang – Ta Trung Ho (B,L,D)

The trek today takes you through beautiful rice paddies and over old suspension bridges. You will trek on a small village path by the side of rain forest. You arrive at the Den Thang village of Black H'mong by noon. Here you stop for lunch either nearby a river or in a local school depending on the weather.

After lunch, the trek becomes tough on tinny footpath going up and down, which requires some concentration. You will eventually reach the Ta Trung Ho village of Red Dao minority where you spend the night in a local house. Both the valley and the village have only recently received foreign visitors. The night will be even more interesting when you are in the wonderful hospitable atmosphere of the Red Dao.

Approx: Grade 3 of 5/ 6 - 7 hours walking

Accommodation: local house

Day 6: Trek: Ta Trung Ho - Nam Toong – Thanh Phu (B,L,D)

You are now at the fringe of the rain forest by the Hoang Lien Son mountain range in which located by the highest peak of Indochina - Fansipan Mount with the height of 3143 meters above sea level. You will start the trek today by ascending to Nam Toong village of Red Dao minority. Here your lunch will be prepared in a local school.

After lunchtime, you descend to the valley where locates My Son village of Xa Pho minority, one of the smallest ethnic groups in Northern Vietnam. From there you take a short walk to Thanh Phu village, inhabited by Tay minority. Here you spend the night in traditional stilt house of the Tay. You can take a walk around the village to explore local daily life before having Vietnamese-dish dinner.

Approx: Grade 3 of 5/ 6 - 7 hours walking

Accommodation: local house

Day 7: Trek: Thanh Phu - Thanh Kim – Topas Ecolodge (B,L,D)

The trek today is probably the most challenging one. You rise up early, and after saying good-bye to the friendly villagers, commence the trek by a descent to Thanh Phu Bridge; from there you follow a small trail running uphill, surrounding by rice



terraces. On the way you may see some animals of the local people like buffalo, goat, pig, chicken living their wild life in the area. Your lunch will be served en route, at a nice spot of nature. You then continue the walk on the trail running along hill-sides to Topas Ecolodge.

Topas Ecolodge is ideal place for relaxing after your exertions of the last few days. From the lodge there are breathtaking views across the scenic valleys below, which are home to villages of the Tay and Red Dao minorities, some of them you just visited on previous days. Your dinner is served at the lodge's restaurant.

Approx: Grade 3 of 5/ 5 hours walking

Accommodation: Topas Ecolodge

Day 8: Relaxing day at Topas Ecolodge. Night train to Hanoi (B,L,-)

The morning is at your leisure. You will enjoy lunch at the lodge's restaurant.

At 16h30 you will have a transfer by shuttle bus Sapa and then further to Lao Cai station for the night train to Hanoi.

Accommodation: on board the train (soft sleeper in 4 berth-cabin)

Day 9: Hanoi – Halong. Start cruising (B,L,D)

You arrive early enough in Hanoi to take a stroll around Hoan Kiem lake and witness the local population preparing for their day's work doing gymnastics (Tai Chi) and playing badminton in the cool morning air. You will have breakfast at your hotel.

At 8h00 - 8h30 AM, you will commence from Hanoi by taking a shuttle bus trip to Halong. After around 3 and half hours, you will arrive in Halong where you get on board the Huong Hai junk. After enjoying a well-prepared lunch with the local fresh seafood, you will have a fantastic cruise among hundreds of Islets such as Dinh Huong, Ga Choi, Dog and Finger Islets., as well as visiting the Surprise cave, the largest and finest cave in Halong Bay. You will then having a swim at Titov beach (or Soi Sim beach) and watching sunset from the Junk's desk, before enjoy your dinner.

Accommodation: on board the boat (Air-conditioning private twin shared cabin with attached shower room)

Day 10: Finish the cruise. Transfer Halong - Hanoi (B,L,or Brunch,-)

You would rise up early to enjoy a morning view of Bay's landscapes. It is amazing to sit on the upper deck to watch the sun rise through the rocky Islands on the crystal-clear waters of the Bay in the sound of natures. At 8h00 am you will visit the Luon Cave on small bamboo boat and enjoy the quiet atmosphere enclosed by high islets and mountains. The junk will continue its weaving around the Bay, among thousands of islets. Today you will enjoy the view of the Man's Head, Tortoise, Lion Islets and Bai Tho Mountain. After you enjoy your lunch, the Junk will disembark at the Halong wharf before noon, where your bus is waiting to your journey back to Hanoi. The rest of the day is at your leisure.

Accommodation: Hong Ngoc hotel

Day 11: Departure Hanoi (B,-,-)

Today is at your leisure.

You will have a transfer to Hanoi Airport/ station for your onward travel.