

# Off the beaten track North Vietnam – 10 days

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## Itinerary Overview

Day	Destination	Meals
Day 1	HANOI – SAPA – FANSIPAN - SAPA	L/D
Day 2	SAPA – Y LINH HO – LAO CHAI – TA VAN – SAPA	B/L/D
Day 3	SAPA – HA GIANG	B/L/D
Day 4	HA GIANG – HEAVEN GATE – H’MONG KING PALACE – DONG VAN	B/L/D
Day 5	DONG VAN – MA PI LENG PASS – NHO QUE RIVER – CAO BANG	B/L/D
Day 6	CAO BANG – BAN GIOC WATERFALL – NGUOM NGAO CAVE	B/L/D
Day 7	CAO BANG – BAC KAN – BA BE NATIONAL PARK	B/L/D
Day 8	BA BE NATIONAL PARK – HANOI	B/L
Day 9	HANOI – HALONG BAY – NIGHT ON BOARD	B/L/D
Day 10	HALONG BAY - HANOI	B/L

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

## Detailed Itinerary

### Day 1 HANOI – SAPA – FANSIPAN - SAPA

Our guide and driver will pick you up around 7:30am for your 5 hour drive to Sapa. Simply sit back, relax, and enjoy as the scenery transforms from bustling metropolis to rolling hills and endless rice

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

paddies.

Around midday you will arrive in Sapa, at which time you'll get to enjoy a local lunch. Then for your first trip use the longest cable car system in Asia, departing from Sapa Town to the highest mountain top of Southeast Asia, Fansipan, once known as the 'Roof of Indochina'. The highest point of the mountain culminates at 3,143m above sea level.

The ascension by cable car takes about 30 minutes offering you on the way a stunning view of terraced rice fields as far as the eye can see. Once arrived, you will be able to visit the temples and finish the climb by foot, just 600 stairs, or by funicular before you head back to Sapa Town by car for an overnight stay in a hotel.

**Meal:** Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Sapa

## Day 2 SAPA – Y LINH HO – LAO CHAI – TA VAN - SAPA

Today you will trek to rice paddy fields Ý Linh Hồ, flower valleys and Black Hmong villages, located in the mountains with amazing panoramic views. You will visit a local house to meet the villagers and discover their daily life.

After lunch in a local restaurant, you will continue through the rice terrace fields to Lao Chai and Ta Van Village of Zay people to discover their culture. This is the biggest valley and features most impressive rice terrace fields in the whole of Sapa. You will have dinner and spend the night in a homestay in Ta Van Village.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay in Sapa

## Day 3 SAPA – HA GIANG

Today we'll leave Sapa in favour of Vietnam's final frontier, Ha Giang. On the way we'll make a stop at Pho Rang for lunch before we have a walking tour to Vinh Yen inhabited by Tay communities.

We continue our drive deeper into Ha Giang, enjoying the spectacular scenery along the way, before finally reaching the Tay village for another walk where we will spend the night around 6pm, just in time for a home-cooked dinner. You'll overnight in this traditional Tay stilt house.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay in Ha Giang

#### Day 4 HA GIANG – HEAVEN GATE – H’MONG KING PALACE – DONG VAN

Once we have purchased the mandatory permit at the Immigration Office, you will begin the journey to Dong Van following a spectacular series of passes which wind through the mountains and valleys.

En route you enjoy exceptional views of the rolling landscape and interesting flora and fauna. After that, we will have Lunch in the small mountain town of Tam Son visiting the villages of the H’mong Lung Cam B. After that, you will have the chance to see the former palace of the H’mong King, Vuong Chinh Duc who was an ally of the French.

You will arrive in Dong Van around 18:00 where you will have dinner at a local restaurant and spend the night in a hotel.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Ha Giang

#### Day 5 DONG VAN – MA PI LENG PASS – NHO QUE RIVER – CAO BANG

You’ll start the day off with breakfast and a visit to the Dong Van Market, where locals come from all the surrounding villages to purchase and trade for essentials they cannot produce themselves.

Then you will be making the trek up to Pu Lo fortress which was built in 1890 and evacuated in 1945. From here you can enjoy spectacular views of the entire region, before climbing 8 km to the top of Ma Pi Leng Pass, through a gigantic maze of limestone peaks, stone forests, and canyons (the Sky Path at the Nho Qué River Viewpoint) before descending into the valley of Meo Vac.

Winding our way through the valley, we’ll eventually reach Bao Lac village, where we’ll rest for a bit and have lunch before being driven to Cao Bang where you’ll spend the night in a hotel.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Cao Bang

#### Day 6 CAO BANG – BAN GIOC WATERFALL – NGUOM NGAO CAVE

This day is likely to be your highlight of the tour, as we take you to one of the most incredible natural wonders in Northern Vietnam; Ban Gioc Waterfall. The drive here from Cao Bang is roughly two hours, and this breath-taking 300-metre wide cascade sits right on the border between China and Vietnam, amidst a beautiful mountainous landscape.

While you’re here you can spend your time relaxing in the glow of the natural beauty, take some amazing photos, and board a bamboo boat that will take you so close to the falls you’ll feel the spray on your face, practically sitting at the very edge of Vietnam, so close to China that you can actually

touch it.

After enjoying the waterfall, you will venture deep underground into the magical Nguom Ngao Cave to discover the rock formations which have been carved by erosion over millennia.

After visiting the waterfall and cave, you will travel down a beautiful road which is unknown to many, which winds through the mountains before reaching the Nung village of Quang Uyen.

You will be welcomed by Mr. Hung Dao, an amazingly friendly blacksmith, before having dinner at his house and settling in for the night in this cosy traditional Nung house.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay in Cao Bang

## Day 7

### CAO BANG – BAC KAN – BA BE NATIONAL PARK

Today we leave Quang Yen behind and drive through Ma Phuc pass on our way to Ba Be National Park. Once in the park, you'll have time to explore the many wonders located here, such as the lake itself, the caves of Puong Grotto, the rapids of Dau Dang Waterfall and finally the tiny Widow Island located on the lake.

We'll be staying in a traditional Tay stilt house overnight, staying with a local host family.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Homestay in Bac Kan

## Day 8

### BA BE NATIONAL PARK - HANOI

After breakfast, we'll take you on a stroll along the riverfront to visit some surrounding villages, followed by a hike up one of the higher points around the lake, providing you with some impressive views surrounded by limestone formations and mountain peaks.

Following this we enter Hua Ma Cave, famous for its thousands of stalactites and stalagmites, and also known for being the biggest dry cave in Northeastern Vietnam. After lunch in a local restaurant, it's sadly time to head back to Hanoi and say our goodbyes, arriving at your hotel around 5pm.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hanoi

**Day 9**

**HANOI – HALONG BAY – NIGHT ON BOARD**

08h00: Pick up from your hotel in Hanoi. Drive to Halong City through the paddy fields in the Red River Delta.

10h00: Stopover on the way for a refreshment break

12h00: Arrive at Tuan Chau wharf – Break and photography time

12h30: Board the Cruise for departure. Welcome drink will be served

13h00: Lunch is served while cruising through the bay

15h30: Visit exciting Cua Van fishing village. The village is free of busy roads and streets, electric lights, houses and high rise buildings. Instead, there are only herds of little boats and rafts. You will have the chance to discover the traditional culture and customs of the fishermen.

16h30: Enjoy kayaking or swimming (if the weather permits).

17h00: Back on board and continue cruising.

19h00: Dinner is served.

21h00: Take some leisure time to enjoy chatting at the bar or enjoy some night fishing.

**Note\*:** the itinerary and activities on board would vary depending on the boat you choose. Please see the choice of boat in Hotel Inclusions.

**Meal:** Breakfast/Lunch/Dinner

**Accommodation:** Overnight on board

**Day 10**

**HALONG BAY - HANOI**

07.00: Coffee and tea will be served

08.00: Continue cruising

08h15: Visit splendid Sung Sot Cave

09h00: Check out and enjoy a fantastic cruise on the bay, passing Dinh Huong Island, fishing villages, Ga Choi Island, Dog Island and Sail Island.

09.30: Buffet brunch (breakfast/lunch) while cruising back through Halong Bay to the pier

11h30: Arrive at the pier. Time to say goodbye to the crew.

12.00: Return from Halong to Hanoi. Arrive Hanoi at about 15pm.

**Note\*:** the itinerary and activities on board would vary depending on the boat you choose. Please see the choice of boat in Hotel Inclusions.

**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
- Halong bay 2 day cruise package

### **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](mailto: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 your 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.