

Vietnam

PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR



Vietnam is a country full of photographic opportunities. The landscape is diverse and includes a very long and beautiful coastline, magnificent rock formations, and mountains. Having not developed like China and Thailand it still has plenty of opportunity to observe and photograph traditional lifestyles. Vietnam is raw and still relatively unspoilt, with a photograph and story to be told at every bend of the road that you travel. Because of this, now is a great time to visit Vietnam.

Having travelled to Vietnam on numerous occasions over the last 15 years, I have specifically designed this tour with photographers in mind. Come and discover the hidden charm of Vietnam and the endless photographic opportunities. Just like me, I am sure you will find it to be an experience never to be forgotten and one which leaves you hungry for more.



Highlights

- Bustling commercial city of **Ho Chi Minh City**
- Charming ancient town of **Hoi An**
- Ancient sites of Hue's Nguyen Dynasty and My Son's Cham Kingdom
- Mountainous landscapes and terraced rice fields of **Sa Pa**.
- Colourful ethnic minority markets and scenic northern highland hill tribe villages
- The capital city of **Hanoi**
- Jagged isles, hidden lagoons, and sea caves of **Ha Long Bay**

Details

- Duration: **14 days** including arrival and departure
- Departure date: **April 2024**
- Because of the special nature of this tour, the number of participants will be limited to approximately 12 with two photographic leaders.
- Price: \$ XXXX per person twin share
- We will make every effort to match up single travellers who wish to travel at twin share rates. For anyone requiring a single room, there will be an additional charge of ??? for travellers departing Australia, or ??? for international travellers.

Included

The complete tour as per itinerary, two domestic flights, clean twin share accommodation (3-4 star or best available in isolated areas), arrival/departure transfers, in country ground transport by private air-conditioned vehicle with driver, boat cruise as indicated in itinerary, professional Australian photographic tour leader, local Vietnamese tour guide/s, meals as specified in itinerary (B/L/D), drinking water, plus taxes and admission fees.

Not included

International return airfare, visa, personal travel insurance, meals not indicated in itinerary, additional beverages such as soft drinks and alcohol, activities during free time, items of personal nature, tips and gratuities, excess baggage fee.



CELEBRATING



of photographic tours

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: ARRIVE HO CHI MINH CITY (D)

On arrival in Vietnam, we check into our hotel in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Sai Gon.

After freshening up, we will go to a local restaurant for dinner.

Overnight in **Ho Chi Minh City**.



Day 2: HO CHI MINH CITY (B/L/D)

This morning we rise early to visit a local market before exploring a labyrinth of laneways to see how the local people live. We then make our way over to Cholon (China Town) to visit Thien Hau Pagoda, a 150-year-old Chinese Temple, and if time allows, Binh Tay Market. Afterwards we visit Saigon Canal where a floating village has developed over the years with more modern buildings in the background.

After lunch we continue downtown to visit Notre Dame Cathedral and the Post Office immediately across the road. We then continue to Jade Emperor Pagoda, one of the five most important shrines in Ho Chi Minh City. We end our day with a cold drink watching sunset over the city. Overnight in **Ho Chi Minh City**.

Day 3: HO CHI MINH CITY – DANANG – HOI AN (B/L/D)

We will arise early to make our way to the airport for our flight to Da Nang. Once we have checked out of Da Nang airport, we will commence our journey to Hoi An, stopping briefly at Marble Mountain and the Non Nuoc stone fine art village. On arrival at Hoi An, we will check into our hotel. After lunch we enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An, visiting ancient homes, pagodas and the Japanese Bridge. After dinner you are free to explore and photograph Hoi An at night, with its beautiful lanterns. Overnight in **Hoi An**.



Day 4: HOI AN (B/D)

We will arise early and enjoy a boat trip up Thu Bon River and around Hoi An markets near Duong Hoang Van Thu Dock. After breakfast, you're free to explore the town at your leisure or for those who are interested; a cooking class will be offered to give you a much-deserved break from photography.

Late afternoon we will enjoy photographing local school girls wearing their traditional white school uniforms (Ao Dai) before photographing the sunset over the river and Ancient town. Overnight in **Hoi An**.

Day 5: HOI AN – MY SON – HUE (B/L/D)

We will walk to Cam Nam Bridge and photograph the sunrise with boats travelling up and down the Thu Bon River.

After breakfast, we travel to My Son, a world heritage series of ruins remaining from the Champa Kingdom which flourished from the 400AD to 1200AD. We will then commence our journey to Hue, where we will check into our hotel before having some down time to relax. Overnight in **Hue**.



Day 6: HUE (B/L/D)



This morning we head inland to visit two elaborate tomb complexes of past Kings of the Nguyen dynasty. Our first will be the royal tomb of Minh Mang who was the second ruler of the Nguyen Dynasty and reigned from 1820 to 1840. We then make our way back towards Hue and visit the tomb of Tu Duc who reigned from 1848 to 1883, the longest reign of any monarch in the Nguyen dynasty. Tu Duc's tomb is regarded as the most picturesque of all the royal tombs.

After lunch we visit the Imperial Citadel where Nguyen Dynasty ruled between 1802 and 1945, with numerous attractions such as the Flag Tower, Noon Gate, Nine Dynastic Urns, Nine Holy Cannons, Thai Hoa Palace, and Forbidden Purple City. We then travel back up the river to Thien My Pagoda for sunset. Overnight in **Hue**.

Day 7: HUE – HA NOI – SA PA (B/L/D)

We rise early for our flight to Ha Noi. On arrival we board our ground transport and immediately commence our drive to Sa Pa along the motorway. This is a somewhat lengthy drive, so it will be a good opportunity to sit back and relax, or catch up on some photography talk.

Upon arrival in the border town of Lao Cai, we stop briefly at the border gate with China to stretch our legs before commencing our drive up the mountain pass to Sa Pa. Overnight in **Sa Pa**.



Day 8: SA PA (B/L/D)

For those really energetic, you may wish to rise early to climb Ham Rong Mountain (Botanical Gardens) to photograph Sa Pa in the early morning light. At the top of the mountain you can discover and photograph unique rock formations discovered in 1925.

Today we trek down the mountain to Ta Van village. Along the way we photograph the magnificent terraced rice fields and local ethnic minority people going about their day-to-day activities. After an enjoyable lunch we will explore and photograph the village and conduct photo shoots with the local Black H'mong and Red Dao people. Late afternoon we commence our drive back to Sa Pa town, stopping at strategic places to photograph the sunset over the valley and terraces. Overnight in **Sa Pa**.



Day 9: SA PA – MUONG HUM MARKET – HA NOI (B/L/D)

Today we depart early and travel to the remote Muong Hum market where we will see H'mong, Red Dao and Ha Nhi families socialising and going about their weekly shopping. Our journey to and from the market will be through some spectacular landscape so expect many photo stops. After enjoying some time at the market, we make our way along the border to Lao Cai where we stop for lunch.

After lunch it's time again to sit back and relax as we make our way back to Hanoi. Overnight in **Ha Noi**.



Day 10: HA NOI (B/L/D)

For the keen and energetic, we rise early and enjoy a casual walk around Hoan Kiem Lake, photographing early risers meditating, dancing, doing tai chi, exercising and playing badminton. After breakfast we visit to the Temple of literature where we explore the grounds of this 945-year-old temple and Vietnam's first national university. We will also be accompanied by a local girl wearing traditional Ao Dai who will be more than happy to pose for us.

After lunch enjoy a special cyclo ride around the streets of the old quarter, providing a unique photographic perspective as they weave their way in and out of the traffic. Our ride concludes at railway street where we explore the unique, narrow railway snuggled in amongst the residential area by foot. Overnight in **Ha Noi**.

Day 11: HA NOI – HA LONG BAY (B/L/D)

This morning we enjoy a very special photo opportunity, visiting and photographing a family that manufactures bamboo fish traps. This no doubt is a craft that will eventually disappear, and you are guaranteed to get images that tourists never see. Afterwards we make our way to Ha Long Bay, stopping at a local restaurant for lunch. Our travel is mostly on the highway and apart from not really being photogenic, we are not allowed to stop. Our goal however is to get to Ha Long City for the night.
Overnight in Ha Long City.



Day 12: HA LONG BAY (B/L/D)

We will rise early for a special visit to a local fish market for sunrise, with the beautiful islands of Ha Long Bay in the background.

After breakfast we casually prepare for our overnight boat on Ha Long Bay. We will arrive at the dock around noon and board our junk just in time for a delicious gourmet lunch of fresh seafood on board as we sail out into the mystical bay.



In the afternoon, cruise around some of Ha Long's many islands, including Dinh Hung and Ga Choi. Along the way visit one of the bay's 3 largest caves (Thien Cung, Dau Go or Sung Sot) and then stop at an island cove with a sheltered white-sand beach and take a dip in the warm waters of the Tonkin Gulf (weather permitting).

After watching the sunset from the deck of the boat, we pass the night away on the junk, lulled to sleep by the gentle rocking of calm waters.

Overnight on Ha Long Bay.

Day 13: HA LONG BAY – HA NOI (B/L/D)

We can awake early to participate in Tai Chi on the top deck or simply relax and enjoy the sunrise over the bay's towering islands. After enjoying a morning cup of coffee or tea, we set out to explore nearby islands by rowboat. On return to the junk we enjoy breakfast before taking advantage of the sundeck where we can continue to admire the amazing rock formations of Ha Long Bay as we navigate back to Ha Long City. Brunch will be provided on board the boat before returning to Ha Long dock. Our driver will meet us at the dock where we commence our journey back to Hanoi.
Overnight in Ha Noi.



Day 14: HA NOI - DEPARTURE (B/L)

This morning we head out one last time to explore the streets of the old quarter as they prepare for the day ahead. All the vendors will be setting up their stalls in preparation for the morning breakfast rush and shopping. This is the best time to explore and photograph, and as quickly as it appears, it disappears when the rush is over.

It's now time to return to the hotel, do some last-minute shopping and prepare for our journey back home. After lunch we transfer to Noi Bai Airport for our flight back home.

If you are interested in joining me on this fantastic photographic tour or require additional information, please contact:

Malcolm Fackender
0410 573 819 (Australia)
+61 410 573 819 (International)

or

info@spotlightonasia.com
www.spotlightonasia.com

