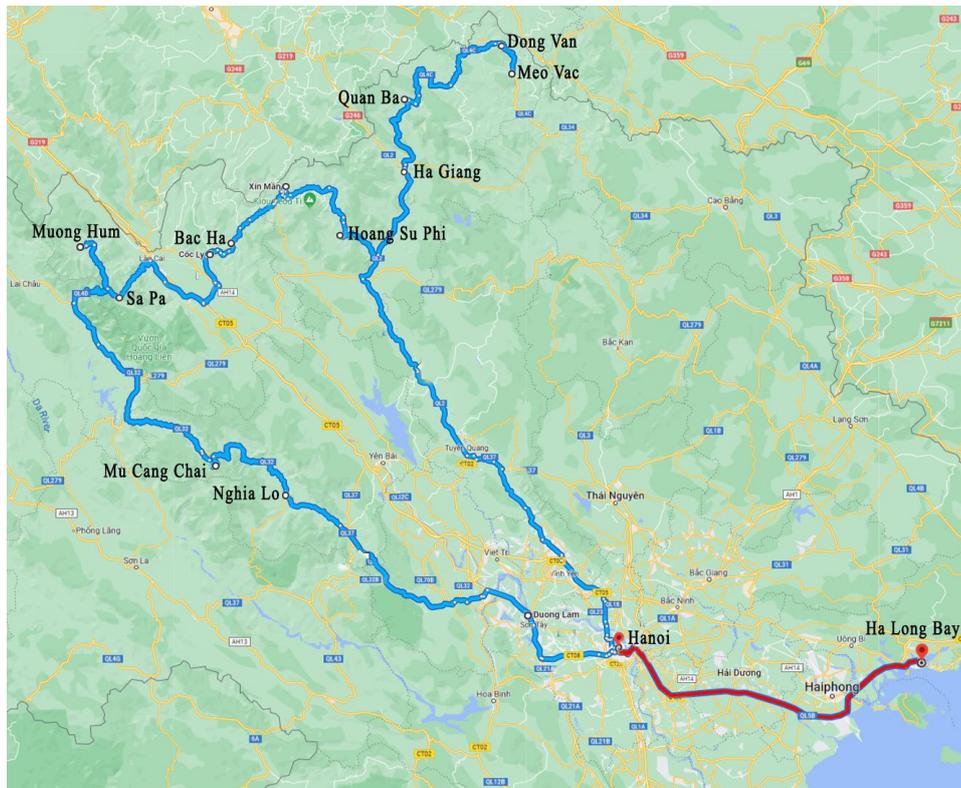




Vietnam is a country full of photographic opportunities. The landscape is diverse and includes a very long and beautiful coastline, magnificent rock formations, and mountains. Having not developed like China and Thailand it still has plenty of opportunity to observe and photograph traditional lifestyles. 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.

From the terraced mountains of gold coloured rice to the colourful ethnic minority people and dynamic markets, North Vietnam is truly a smorgasbord of colour. It however does not end there. You will see and photograph scenic mountains extending as far as the eye can see and spectacular karst formations rising from turquoise waters. This tour truly is a feast for the lens that should not be missed.



Highlights

- Meet numerous colourful ethnic minority groups
- Spectacular rice terraces of Mu Cang Chai and Hoang Su Phi
- Ethnic minority markets and scenic northern highland hill tribe villages
- Experience the life of minority people through a home stay
- Magnificent mountainous landscape of Ha Giang province

Optional extension trip

- Jagged isles, hidden lagoons and caves of Ha Long Bay

Included

The complete tour as per itinerary, clean twin share accommodation (3 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 airfare, visas, personal travel insurance, meals not indicated in program, additional beverages such as soft drinks and alcohol, activities during free time, items of personal nature, tips and gratuities, excess baggage fee.

Details

- Tour dates: **20 September – 4 October 2023 (15 days)**
Optional extension: **4 – 7 October 2023 (4 days)**
- Group size will be a minimum of **3 people** and maximum of **8 people**.
- Price: **US \$5995** per person twin share. The optional extension tour is **US \$1595** 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 **US \$550** on the main tour and **US \$270** on the optional extension tour.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: ARRIVE HA NOI (D)

On arrival at Ha Noi, you will be transferred to the hotel for the night. Depending on the time of your arrival, you're free to relax and recover from your long flight or you can explore the Old Quarter of Hanoi immediately outside the hotel. We will gather at night for a welcome dinner.

Overnight **Authentic Hotel.**



Day 2: HANOI – DUONG LAM VILLAGE – NGHIA LO (B/L/D)



We will arise early to go to Hoan Kiem Lake where we will be able to photograph early risers meditating, doing tai chi, exercising and playing badminton. After breakfast we board our bus and make our way to Duong Lam Village, famous for having approximately 300 houses build three to four centuries ago. We then continue our journey to Nghai Lo where we will begin to witness the spectacular mountainous scenery of North-West Vietnam and colourful ethnic minority people. Depending on arrival time, we may visit the local market before checking into our hotel.

Overnight **Dragonfly Resort.**

Day 3: NGHIA LO – TU LE – MU CANG CHAI (B/L/D)

We depart early for what will be an incredible day of travel and landscape photography. In the morning we begin to slowly make our way up windy mountain roads, through remote villages surrounded by fields of gold coloured rice. There will be numerous stops to photograph the scenery and local ethnic minority people, including local Dao, Green H'mong and Thai.

After Tu Le, we commence our journey up the long and winding Khau Pha Pass, offering numerous vantage points to stop and photograph one of the most spectacular valleys in all of Vietnam, with rice terraces for as far as the eye can see. We then continue to Mu Cang Chai, home of what is regarded as the most beautiful rice terraces in all of Vietnam. We will time our travel to arrive mid to late afternoon so we can make the most of the warm afternoon light.

Overnight **Mu Cang Chai Ecologde.**



Day 4: MU CANG CHAI – SA PA (B/L/D)



Again, we depart early to visit the terraces of Mu Cang Chai in the morning light, before continuing our long day of driving to Sa Pa. After lunch at Tam Đường town, we enjoy special visits to local Black Dao and Lu ethnic minority villages before driving up Tram Ton pass, the highest mountain pass in Vietnam. At the very top of the pass we stop at Heaven's gate, offering a spectacular view of the valley and mountain pass in warm late afternoon light. We then continue to Sa Pa for the night.

Overnight **Hotel de Sapa.**

Day 5: SA PA – MUONG HUM – SA PA (B/L/D)

Today we 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. On return to Sa Pa you will have some free time to explore the town and meet the local ethnic people, including Black H'mong and Red Dao.

Overnight **Hotel de Sapa.**



Day 6: 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 will 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 **Hotel de Sapa.**

Day 7: SA PA – COC LY MARKET – BAC HA (B/L/D)

This morning we say goodbye to Sa Pa and start our journey down to Lao Cai on the border with China. After a brief stop at the border we continue to Coc Ly Market, situated between stunning mountains by the Chay River. This is a weekly market attracting local Flower H'mong, Dao Tuyen and Nhung ethnic groups. We then continue to Bac Ha where enjoy visiting a local Flower H'mong Village and Hoang A Tuong Palace, built in 1914 by Emperor Hoang Yen Tchao of Tay ethnic minority.



Overnight **Bac Ha Dragon Hotel**.



Day 8: BAC HA – HOANG SU PHI (B/L/D)

Today we take a road less travelled by tourists, winding our way up narrow, windy mountain roads. During our travels we will pass numerous remote villages and fields of terraced rice. Stops will be provided as we travel to meet and photograph the locals going about their daily lives, as well as make the most of the landscape opportunities. Our destination is Hoang Su Phi and its spectacular terraced landscape.

Overnight **Hoang Su Phi Lodge**.

Day 9: HOANG SU PHI (B/L/D)

After a busy week of travel, today our pace will slow a little, as we take time to visit the nearby rice terraces as well as local villages. Pa Then, Giay, H'mong, Phu La and Dao ethnic groups reside in the area, and we will make the very most of our opportunities.



Overnight **Hoang Su Phi Lodge**.



Day 10: HOANG SU PHI – QUAN BA (B/L/D)

After enjoying our sunrise shoot and breakfast, we commence our journey to the city of Ha Giang, temporarily leaving the mountains and terraces of rice behind us. After lunch in Ha Giang we continue our journey to Tam Son town in Quan Ba District. About 40km's out of Ha Giang, the road zigzags its way up the amazing Quan Ba Pass, providing spectacular views of the surrounding landscape. We will continue to wind our way through fields of rice, small villages and towns, stopping at one of the rarer ethnic minority groups, the Bo Y.



As we near Tam Son town, we commence our journey down into the valley. Midway we stop at a lookout offering a great view over the town and Twin Mountains. Tonight, we enjoy the unique experience of staying in a Dao village.

Overnight **Dao Lodge & Homestay**.

Day 11: QUAN BA – DONG VAN (B/L/D)

We arise early to shoot sunrise over Quan Ba Town. After breakfast at our lodge, we will enjoy a short portrait shoot with one of the local Dao Ao Dai girls wearing traditional costume. Today we experience a spectacular day of driving through amazing mountainous landscapes nestled up against the border with China. Many stops will be provided along the road to photograph the ever-changing landscape.



We will also stop at the H'Mong Kings Palace (Vuong's Palace) with its mixture of European and Chinese architecture. We end our day's journey at Dong Van, an isolated town where we stay for two nights.



Overnight **Hoa Cuong Hotel**.

Day 12: DONG VAN – MEO VAC – DONG VAN (B/L/D)



Today we're fortunate to visit and photograph two of Vietnam's most colourful weekly markets. We arise early to visit and photograph Dong Van market, a short walk from our hotel. After breakfast we commence our journey down Ma Pi Leng pass, regarded as the most stunning mountain pass in North Vietnam. We eventually descend into a beautiful valley that encloses Meo Vac where we will visit the local market before having lunch. After lunch we commence our return journey back to Dong Van, again stopping at strategic places for photographs.

Overnight **Hoa Cuong Hotel**.

Day 13: DONG VAN – HA GIANG (B/L/D)

Early this morning we commence our journey back to Ha Giang town, winding our way back along the same road we came in on, however on this occasion we enjoy many stops to visit and photograph local ethnic minority people. In the morning we stop at Sung La Village where we enjoy a special photo shoot with local Lo Lo girls wearing their colourful traditional costumes. Don't be concerned about missing those landscape opportunities, there will still be opportunity to stop and photograph them from a different angle.



Our next stop is a White H'mong village before stopping at Yen Minh for lunch. After lunch we continue our drive, with numerous stops to photograph the landscape and local culture. Our aim will be at Quan Ba Pass before sunset, affording us an opportunity to take photos of layers of rolling hills.



Overnight **Silk River Hotel**.



Day 14: Ha Giang – HA NOI (B/L/D)

We have a casual start this morning, before commencing our long journey back to Hanoi. Around an hour into our journey, we will take a minor excursion to visit a Pa Then village where we will enjoy a visit and special photo shoot of this rarely visited ethnic minority group. We then continue our journey to Hanoi, and whilst our travel will quickly become less interesting, stops will be provided if we see something of interest.

Overnight **Authentic Hotel**.

Day 15: HANOI – DEPARTURE (B)

We will rise early to walk the streets of the old quarter one last time and photograph the locals commencing their daily activities. After breakfast, those ending their journey will prepare for their flight. For those continuing on the optional extension tour, they will depart for Ha Long Bay.



Optional Extension tour

Day 15: 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 ?????.



Day 16: 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 Huong 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 cruise ship.

Day 17: 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 **Authentic Hotel**.



Day 18: HA NOI – DEPARTURE (B/L)

We end our photographic journey with a visit to 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 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:

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All images were taken on past North Vietnam tours

