



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 past 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

- Meet numerous colourful ethnic minority groups
- Spectacular rice terraces of Sa Pa and Mu Cang Chai
- 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 sea 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: **1 – 14 September 2023 (14 days)**
Optional extension: **14 – 17 September 2023 (3 days)**
- Group size will be a minimum of **3 people** and maximum of **8 people**.
- Price: **US \$4995** per person twin share. The optional extension tour is **US \$1495** 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 \$495** on the main tour and **US \$300** on the optional extension tour.

Tour Itinerary

Day 1: ARRIVE HA NOI (D)

On arrival at Ha Noi, you will be transferred to our 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 our welcome dinner.



Day 2: HANOI – SA PA (B/L/D)

We arise early to go to Hoan Kiem Lake where we can photograph early risers meditating, doing tai chi, exercising and playing badminton. After breakfast we commence our long journey north-west to Bac Ha where we visit a traditional Flower H'mong Village. After exploring and photographing the village and people we continue to Sa Pa where we stay for three nights.

Day 3: 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.



Day 4: 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.

Day 5: SA PA – MU CANG CHAI (B/L/D)

This morning we depart as early as possible, as we have a long day of travel. After breakfast we drive to Heaven's gate and the highest mountain pass in Vietnam. This location will afford us amazing views over a deep valley with rice terraces. After slowly making our way down the pass, we visit local Black Dao and Lu ethnic minority villages before proceeding to Tam Đường town for lunch.



After lunch we continue to Mu Cang Chai where we will arrive in time to shoot the rice terraces in the late afternoon light. The heritage listed Mu Cang Chai has some of the most beautiful rice terraces in Vietnam. We stay here two nights.



Day 6: MU CANG CHAI (B/L/D)

Today we continue to explore and photographing the local terraces, making the most of the early morning and late afternoon light.

During the middle of the day we venture out and explore some of the local ethnic minority villages, particularly the local Green H'mong.

Day 7: MU CANG CHAI – TU LE – NGHIA LO (B/L/D)

We will rise early and return to the terraces in time for sunrise. After breakfast back in town, we commence our drive to Tu Le and Nghia Lo. About an hour into our journey we find ourselves at the top of Khau Pha Pass, affording us views over one of the most beautiful valleys in Vietnam. Our journey down the pass will be slow, stopping on numerous occasions to admire and photograph the amazing terraces. If lucky we may even be able to photograph all stages of rice cultivation in one image.



After lunch in Tu Le town we continue driving along 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.





Day 8: NGIA LO – HA GIANG (B/L/D)

After 5 days of intensive photography, today will be a lengthy day of travel to Ha Giang. We will have an opportunity to share a story or two as we travel, and attend to any photographic related questions you may have. There however will be numerous stops along the way to photograph the landscape, remote villages and ethnic minority people we encounter. Rest assured, the day will continue to be an amazing experience with great photo opportunities.

Day 9: HA GIANG – DONG VAN (B/L/D)

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. A couple of hours into our journey we will also stop briefly to visit Quyet Tien market which attracts Indigo Dao, Nhung and White H'mong people from surrounding villages.

We will continue to pass numerous villages as we wind our way up and down mountains and through valleys, however our time today will mostly be dedicated to the landscape. Later in the day we stop to visit the H'mong King 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.



Day 10: DONG VAN – MEO VAC – DONG VAN (B/L/D)

Today we are fortunate to visit and photograph two of Vietnams 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, providing us with what is 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.

Day 11: DONG VAN – QUAN BA (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.



Day 12: QUAN BA – HOANG SU PHI (B/L/D)

After an early breakfast we enjoy a photo shoot with a local Indigo Dao girl before commencing our journey to Hoang Su Phi. A stop will be provided early on in our journey to visit one of the rarer ethnic minority groups, the Bo Y.

As with every other day on our journey, stops will be provided as we travel to experience and photograph local landscape and culture. Our destination for the day is Hoang Su Phi, a village in a very remote region offering us more amazing landscape opportunities with terraces.

Day 13: HOANG SU PHI – HA NOI (B/L/D)

We rise early to photograph sunrise over the nearby villages and rice terraces. After breakfast we commence our long journey back to Hanoi, taking a detour to visit another of the smaller ethnic groups, the Pa Then.

As we make our way back to Hanoi, we ever so slowly leave the mountainous region and the ethnic minority people we have become familiar with become less frequent. It's time to relax and take a moment to process all the amazing things we have experienced.



Day 14: 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 14: 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.



Day 15: 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.

Day 16: HA LONG BAY (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.



Day 17: 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

