



VIETNAM

mountain biking

9/14 days Inn-to-Inn

This 14-day fully-supported mountain bike tour is designed to capture the very best that Vietnam offers the adventurous traveller – challenging cycling and a diverse cultural experience.

Your journey takes in the charming ancient cities of Hanoi and Saigon, the verdant expanse of the Red River Delta and Cuu Long with their fertile banks farmed by generations of peasants. You cycle amongst massive limestone mountains adorned with ancient forest, jungle and steep rice terraces, cultivated by hill tribes as they have been for thousands of years. Places where a tourist is still a stranger and curiosity.

Rest your weary legs with a couple of days kayaking on the incredible calm, emerald waters of Halong Bay, a geological phenomenon and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The slow unhurried pace of life will seem light years away from the stresses of the modern world. A rejuvenating and enriching adventure into this beautiful, un-spoilt corner of Asia awaits you.

DAY 1 – Hanoi

Arrive Hanoi Airport. Transfer to the city (45 min.) and check-in at Huyen Trang Hotel. Assemble your bikes prior to a sightseeing tour, including Ho Chi Ming Mausoleum, Temple of literature, and a traditional water puppet show. Accommodation: Hanoi Hotel, no cycling, meals: dinner

DAY 2 – Hanoi – Nghia Lo

This morning we drive in Russian Jeeps to Ba Khe (180km/4hrs+). Warm up by cycling to Nghia Lo (52km tar sealed), viewing HMong hill tribes and beautiful landscapes of the northern countryside.

Accommodation: Nghia Lo guesthouse (basic – ensuite bathroom), Elevation / Cycling: 710m up, 810m down, 52km/4 hrs riding, Meals: Breakfast, Lunch , Dinner



DAY 3 – Nghia Lo – Than Uyen

Cycle from the hotel on single trails for 2 hours (12km) followed by a 4 hour drive to Mu Cang Chai. Cycle on the Than Uyen.

This is a great day out with awesome views of mountain ranges, lakes, rivers, jungle and tiered paddy fields rising and falling as far as the eye can see. Today you will see the HMong, Dzao and Tay hill tribes.

Accommodation: Than Uyen Hotel, Elevation/Cycling: 315m up, 640m down, 50km/4 hrs riding, Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

DAY 4 – Than Uyen – Sapa

Spectacular single trail riding in the morning through small villages. As you get closer to the Hoang Lien Son peak, you will cycle between these 1000m-3000m mountains, to finally reach the highest pass in Vietnam (at 1900m). Then descend to Sapa (at 1600m). The deeper into the mountains you go, the more hill tribes you will see, wearing amazingly elaborate and colourful costumes with huge earrings. These are people who have been living in the hills for a thousand years and their ways of life have hardly changed from generation to generation.

Accommodation: Sapa Hotel (3 star)

Elevation/Riding: 1520m up, 590m down, 63km/5.5 hrs riding



Day 5: Sapa - Muong Bo - Sapa (B L)

A half day trip combining dirt roads, single trails, and a steep downhill (1000m). You will be walking and/or cycling from village to village, (meeting Hmong and Tay hill tribes) - trails sometimes passing through a local's backyard. (Don't worry, they don't mind! If you are the first rider into a village their jaws just drop with amazement, but as the last rider passes, everyone will be outside and showing great excitement).

The afternoon is free (although the 2 hour single trail ride can be extended to a 6 hour ride).

Accommodation: Sapa Hotel

Elevation/Riding: 500 up, 1100m down, 37 km / 3.5 hours riding

Day 6: Sapa-Ban Khoang-Lao Cai (Chinese boarder)-Bac Ha (B,L,D)

A high country road with just deep blue skies and fluffy white clouds all around, as we wind our way up higher and higher into the mountains. You will be cycling HIGH for half a day at 1400-1600m, followed by the big descent to Lao Cai. Then we drive to Bac Ha (1400m) which takes 2 hours.

Accommodation: Bac Ha Hotel (2-3 star)

Elevation/Riding: 900up, 2250m down, 79 km / 5.5 hours riding

Day 7: Bac-Ha (B,L,D)

The Sunday market is a great opportunity to view local life-styles, just make sure you bring enough film! From 10am, cycle for 4 hrs on trails through villages, admiring stunning scenery of mountains and forest. Wherever you stop you will become a major focus of attention. Stopping to admire the view seemingly in the middle of nowhere, people will suddenly appear from the hills. The main tribe you will see today is Flower HMong, the most colourful one in Vietnam.

Accommodation: Bac Ha Hotel (2-3 star)

Elevation/Riding: 370up, 560m down, 25 km / 2.5 hours riding



Day 8: Bac- Ha – Lao Cai - Hanoi (B,L,D)

Today is the “ Single trail day” - 1.5 hours in the morning and after lunch a fantastic ride along the hill ridges through evergreen forests and ancient hill tribes. We then pack up the bikes and drive to Lao Cai in time for the night train back to Hanoi. Bikes will be sent to Saigon.

Accommodation: Overnight train (1st Class sleepers)

Elevation/Riding: 900up, 1600m down, 54 km / 5.5 hours riding



Day 9: Hanoi - Halong Bay (B,L,D)

Leave Hanoi (at 5.00am) by van for Hai Phong where we stop for breakfast before boarding the 10 cabin dschunke (sailing boat). After lunch try some sea kayaking.

Accommodation: Sailing boat



Day 10: Halong Bay (B,L,D)

A whole day paddling and exploring the Bay at your own pace, having a closer look at the amazing karsts. There are heaps of deserted beaches out there just for you. Explore the nightlife of Halong Bay

Accommodation: Hai Phong hotel



Day 11: Halong Bay- Saigon (B,L)

We take the bus to HaiPhong airport (3hrs) in time to catch the mid afternoon flight to Saigon. On arrival in Saigon, we transfer to the Hotel and assemble the bikes, before embarking on a City tour.

Accommodation: Grand Hotel

Day 12: Saigon – Island in Mekong River (B, L, D)

We drive to MyTho (2.5hours) and cycle 45 km - mostly on single trails.

Departing MyTho we cycle beside the Mekong River to CaiBe, with a lunch break along the way. In the afternoon, ride to CaiBe, take a ferry across the Mekong River to an island, and ride along the canals to our homestay.

Accommodation: Guesthouse

Riding: 45km



Day 13: Mekong River Island – CanTho (B,L,D)

Enjoy an early morning Island sunrise. View river life and the bustling local market by the Church. Then we cycle for 1 hour under the natural green canopy to the ferry, before crossing to VinhLong and riding through BaKe, TamBinh, TraOn and on to CanTho.

Accommodation: Victoria Hotel (4 star)

Riding: 70km



Day 14: CanTho – Saigon Airport (B,L)

We take an early morning boat trip to the CaiRang floating market, before taking a 'xe loi', (the local colonial era cab pulled by motorbike) back to CanTho for another ferry crossing. Lunch is en route and in the afternoon we transfer by bus to Saigon Airport (4 hours)

Depart from Saigon airport

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Trip Cost

Prices depends on length of stay and services included. From \$1995 CAD

Includes:

- Inland Flight to Saigon as outlined in itinerary
- Seakayaking
- Support vehicle (Russian Army Jeep per 4 cyclists) and support truck
- All meals listed: (B=Breakfast L=Lunch D=Dinner)
- Accommodation: Hotels and Guesthouses (2-4 star)
- Admission fees and permits
- Overnight train: 1st class air-conditioned compartment (4 bunks in 1)
- English speaking guide

Excludes:

- Bikes, Drinks, Travel Insurance, Personal expenses.

2011 Tourdates:

Please let us know when you would like to travel and we will arrange a tour package with our trusted local partner.

Vietnam - General Information

Introduction:

Vietnam is a tropical country in Southeast Asia. It extends south from China in a long, narrow S-curve. Laos and Cambodia lie west of Vietnam, and the South China Sea lies to the east. Hanoi is the capital of Vietnam, and Ho Chi Minh City is the largest city.

Brief History:

France occupied all of Vietnam by 1884. Independence was declared after World War II, but the French continued to rule until 1954 when they were defeated by communist forces under Ho Chi MINH, who took control of the north.

US economic and military aid to South Vietnam grew through the 1960s in an attempt to bolster the government, but US armed forces were withdrawn following a cease-fire agreement in 1973.

Two years later North Vietnamese forces overran the south. Economic reconstruction of the reunited country has proved difficult.

Geography:

Lying on the Indochinese peninsula, Vietnam borders China to the North, Laos and Cambodia to the West and faces the sea to the East and South.

Vietnam has the shape of an elongated S and has five main land regions: (1) the Northern Highlands, (2) the Red River Delta, (3) the Annamite Range, (4) the Coastal Lowlands, and (5) the Mekong Delta.

Vietnam owns 329,600 square km in the tropical and subtropical zone and benefits from a great amount of sunshine all year round.

Its 3,300 km of coastline offers a satisfactory choice of resorts, hotels and wonderful sandy beaches.

Climate:

The North of Vietnam has 4 seasons but the South only has a dry and wet season.

The highlands have a temperate climate with the humidity varying from 80% to 100%.

Every year, Vietnam receives approximately 600 billion tons of rainfall and the average temperature ranges from 22 to 27 degrees centigrade.

Some places like Dalat and Sapa have a maximum temperature of 20 degrees in the summer.

Visitors can travel to Vietnam all year round with no climatic disadvantages.

People:

Thousands of years ago, people moved into the Vietnam area from the north and from islands to the south. The Vietnamese people probably developed from these two groups. Today, they make up almost 90 per cent of Vietnam's population. Tay, Thai, Chinese, and Khmer are the largest minority groups in Vietnam.

The population is over 70 million comprising around 54 ethnic groups with largest group being Viet or Kinh, accounting for 80% of the whole population.

Language:

Vietnamese is the official language. The people speak three major dialects (local forms) of Vietnamese — northern, central, and southern. But these dialects differ little from one another. Many members of the country's minority groups speak Vietnamese in addition to their own languages.

Religion:

The Communist leaders of Vietnam discourage all religious practices. Most of the Vietnamese people who practise a religion are Buddhists.

There are no national religions. However Buddhism is relatively popular in Vietnam. Some Catholic churches and Buddhist pagodas are attractive to tourists.

Administration:

The present constitution, promulgated in 1992, asserts the political supremacy of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The 496-member National Assembly is responsible for legislation.

The Assembly is elected every five years from candidates proposed by the CPV. Executive power is exercised by the Council of Ministers. The Assembly elects a President, who acts as head of state and also appoints a Prime Minister from among the members of the Assembly.

Facts for the Traveler

Visas: Required

Health: Check requirements with your Health professional

Electricity: Mainly 220V and 50Hz

When to Go: There are no good or bad seasons to visit Vietnam. When one region is wet, cold or steamy hot, there is always somewhere else that is sunny and pleasant.

Reservations: 1-800-661-BIKE (2453) / e-mail: res@rockymountaincycle.com



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