

Earthbound Expeditions

Hanoi To Sapa Trekking In Vietnam

7 days, from US$995 per person

Duration	Group size	Country
7 days	**15 people**	**Vietnam**

Hanoi To Sapa Trekking In Vietnam Overview

Trekking in Vietnam

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This tour combines trekking from Hanoi to Sapa with a visit to Halong Bay, taking in two of the best-known destinations in northern Vietnam.

You explore Hanoi, the capital, sometimes called the Paris of the East, with its tree-lined avenues, more than two dozen lakes and thousands of French colonial buildings. You then travel to Sapa, a mountain town in Lao Cai Province about 350 km northwest of Hanoi.

Around Sapa, you see the Hoang Lien Son mountain range, including Fansipan, the highest peak in Vietnam, as well as a number of ethnic minority groups, rice paddies, terraced landscapes and the green forest of Hoang Lien National Park.

As well as Hanoi and Sapa, the tour takes you to Halong Bay in Quang Ninh province, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the main tourist destination in northern Vietnam. The bay is dotted with 1,600 tall limestone islands and has remarkable natural scenery.

This tour is a good way to see Hanoi, Sapa and Halong Bay within a week.

Itinerary

Day 1

Arrive in Hanoi

Our local guide will meet you on arrival at Noi Bai International Airport and transfer you to your hotel for check-in. Dinner is served at a local restaurant. Overnight at a hotel in Hanoi.

Altitude: 20 m On foot: None, arrival day Night: Hotel, Hanoi Meals: Dinner

Day 2

Hanoi and Bat Trang Ceramic Village, night train to Lao Cai

This morning you tour Hanoi, visiting the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (closed on Mondays and Fridays and for the whole of September and October), his former residence and the House on Stilts, the One Pillar Pagoda, and the Temple of Literature, known as the first university of Vietnam and built more than 1,000 years ago. Lunch is served at a local restaurant. Note: when the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum is closed, on Mondays and Fridays and throughout September and October, we visit Tran Quoc Pagoda instead. In the afternoon, you travel 15 km from the centre of Hanoi to Bat Trang Ceramic Village, the centre of traditional "An Nam" ceramics. At the village, you can watch ceramics being made and browse for fine porcelain. In the workshops, you can see workers mixing clay or dipping fired vases into glaze to bring out their crackle pattern, and painters, usually young women, decorating raw terracotta before it is fired in kilns at 900°C to 1,700°C. The coal-dust cakes pressed onto the village walls make good photographs. The daily life of the village, with its small market and the wharf on the Red River where the products are shipped, is also well worth seeing. Return to the centre of Hanoi. At around 20:00, you are transferred to Hanoi Railway Station for the overnight train to Lao Cai, in superior 4-berth compartments shared with other passengers. The train departs at about 21:50. Notes: train schedules are subject to change. Private compartments are available on request for a surcharge. Train travel is part of the local experience. Cabins are shared with other passengers unless you request a private cabin and pay for all berths, at a supplement. There are toilets at each end of the carriage.

Altitude: 90 m On foot: Easy walking, 2–3 hrs Night: Overnight train, Hanoi to Lao Cai Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 3

Lao Cai to Sapa, trek to Lao Chai and Ta Van

The train arrives early in the morning (about 06:30) at Lao Cai, the border town with Yunnan, China. From there, we drive 38 km on winding mountain roads up to Sapa, at about 1,500 m above sea level. On clear days, you can see Fansipan, the highest mountain in Vietnam. After breakfast at a local restaurant, we drive from Sapa town down to Lao Chai village. The road has views of the Muong Hoa Valley and the surrounding mountains and rice terraces. Along the way, you are likely to meet people from several ethnic minority groups (H'mong, Zay and Red Dao), and there are stalls selling tea, fruit and sweets. We then turn off the main road onto a local path and soon reach the Black H'mong village of Lao Chai, where you see the daily life of the villagers. We continue trekking from Lao Chai to Ta Van village, home of the Zay people. Here you rest and have lunch, prepared by your local guide, in a local house. After lunch, we trek on to the meeting point for the transfer back to Sapa town. The rest of the day is free. You can explore Sapa town on your own: its busy market, the colourful dress of the ethnic minority people, its tea and coffee shops, and local life in this mountain town. Overnight at a hotel in Sapa.

Altitude: 1,500 m On foot: 3–4 hrs Night: Hotel, Sapa Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 4

Trek to Ma Tra and Ta Phin, night train to Hanoi

A full day of trekking. You visit Suoi Ho village, with its tea plantations and cardamom gardens, then follow buffalo trails to the welcoming Black Hmong villages of Ma Tra. After passing a school and some fine views, you stop for a picnic lunch. After lunch, we trek on to Ta Phin village, home of the Red Dao people, who are known for their weaving. We then continue to the meeting point and transfer back to Sapa. After a short rest, if time allows, you transfer to Lao Cai Railway Station to board the overnight train to Hanoi at around 20:15. Sleeping compartments are shared with other passengers, with 2 lower and 2 upper berths in each. Notes: train schedules are subject to change. Private compartments are available on request for a surcharge. Train travel is part of the local experience. Cabins are shared with other passengers unless you request a private cabin and pay for all berths, at a supplement. There are toilets at each end of the carriage.

Altitude: 20 m On foot: 5–6 hrs Night: Overnight train, Lao Cai to Hanoi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 5

Hanoi to Halong Bay, overnight on a cruise boat

The train arrives in Hanoi early this morning. We pick you up at the station and take you to a local 3-star hotel for breakfast and a shower before leaving for Halong Bay, 165 km east of Hanoi. Halong Bay is a World Heritage Site of outstanding natural beauty. On the way, you pass through countryside dotted with villages, rice fields and farms that supply much of the country with rice, fruit and vegetables. After a short rest stop, you reach Halong city after about 3.5 hours. 12:00: arrive at Tuan Chau Wharf. 12:00 to 12:30: board the cruise boat, followed by a short briefing. 13:00 to 15:30: seafood lunch on board among the limestone islands. 15:30 to 16:30: kayak through the quieter parts of the bay around Luon Cave, then return to the V'Spirit Classic. 16:30 to 17:30: cruise to Soi Sim island, where you can swim and relax on the beach or climb to the top of the island for a view over Halong Bay. 17:30: return to the main boat for a shower, and relax or take photographs as the sun sets. 19:00: seafood dinner. You can spend the evening with other guests, fish for squid or rest. Overnight on board.

Altitude: Sea level On foot: None, 3–4 hr drive Night: Junk boat, Halong Bay Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 6

Halong Bay to Hanoi

06:30 to 07:00: tai chi or photography on deck. 07:30 to 08:30: breakfast at sunrise. 08:30 to 09:30: visit Sung Sot Cave, the finest cave in Halong Bay. 09:30: return to the boat, freshen up and check out of your cabin. 09:30 to 10:30: continue cruising through the bay, passing Ba Hang fishing village, Dog Islet and other sights. 10:30 to 11:30: on the way back to the harbour, watch a cooking demonstration, followed by a seafood lunch. 12:00 to 12:30: disembark and transfer back to Hanoi, with a short stop at Dai Viet, Hong Ngoc or ABC shopping centre on the way. The cruise includes: welcome drinks, the cruise itinerary and programme, entrance and sightseeing fees, an English-speaking tour guide, deluxe air-conditioned cabins with en suite bathrooms, Vietnamese and international breakfast, lunch and dinner, kayaking, and insurance, taxes and service charges. On arrival in Hanoi, you explore the Old Quarter and its 36 streets and have time for shopping before a performance of the water puppet show. Vietnamese water puppetry dates back to the 10th century, when it began in the Red River Delta in northern Vietnam. Farmers in the region performed it to celebrate festivals and harvests. The skill of working the puppets is usually passed down within families as a secret. It takes great skill, and because the puppeteers' hands are under water, their methods stay hidden. The stage is below the water line, and the puppeteers stand in waist-deep water behind a rattan curtain, through whose bamboo slats they can see the stage and the audience. Overnight at a hotel in Hanoi.

Altitude: 20 m On foot: Easy walking, 1–2 hrs Night: Hotel, Hanoi Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7

Departure

Free time until your transfer to Noi Bai International Airport for your international flight home. We hope you enjoyed your holiday with us.

Altitude: 20 m On foot: None, departure day Night: No overnight Meals: Breakfast

What's included

- Accommodation in shared twin, double or triple air-conditioned rooms with private bathrooms,
- meals as stated in the programme (B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner),
- transfers and tours with local English-speaking guides in private air-conditioned vehicles,
- all entrance fees listed in the programme,
- 2 bottles of mineral water per person per day and fresh towels on the vehicle, and a traditional Vietnamese gift.

Not included

- International flights, domestic flights, optional tours, personal travel insurance, personal expenses such as drinks, souvenirs, laundry, camera fees, communications, postage and gratuities, meals and services not listed in the programme, drinks with meals, compulsory gala dinners during festive seasons, peak season surcharges (advised at the time of booking), and early check-in and late check-out at hotels unless listed in the programme.

Photos, videos and reviews of this trip: earthbound.rajansimkhada.com/hanoi-to-sapa-trekking-in-vietnam