

# travel with a difference

## north vietnam trek



### trip highlights

Enjoy the hustle and bustle of Hanoi

Trek the remote north western region of Pu Luong Reserve

Meet Vietnam's fascinating ethnic minority groups

Retreat to the serenity of Halong Bay

Experience a cooking class at the famous K.O.T.O (Know One Teach One) restaurant

Staying in Vietnams top hotels including the wonderful 5\* Sofitel Metropole



**Trip Duration** 9 days

**Grade** Introductory to Moderate level

**Activities** 4 days trekking, Cruising

**Accommodation** 1 night 4 1/2\* hotel in Silk Path Hotel premium deluxe room, 2 nights in 5\* luxury Sofitel

## welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for your interest in our Travel with a Difference North Vietnam Trek trip. At World Expeditions we are passionate about our off the beaten track experiences as they provide our travellers with the thrill of coming face to face with untouched cultures as well as wilderness regions of great natural beauty. We are committed to ensuring that our unique itineraries are well researched, affordable and tailored for the enjoyment of small groups or individuals - philosophies that have been at our core since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. Our itineraries will give you the very best travel experience, designed by people with incredible local knowledge who share our vision of authentic exchange and real exploration with a responsible tourism approach. Whether you like your adventures to include trekking, touring, cycling, mountaineering, kayaking or cruising World Expeditions can make it happen for you. We hope you will join us for a life changing experience!!

### why travel with World Expeditions?

World Expeditions are one of the few companies to offer trekking in the remote, stunning region of Ha Giang near the Chinese border. Our vehicles and guides are the best available and to ensure the smooth operation of all trips, our partners in Vietnam are continually work with us to improve our itineraries to ensure we are taking the 'paths less travelled'. The rapidly developing and ever changing face of Vietnam makes this an ongoing challenge. We have never sought to be the biggest travel company and we proudly guard our independence, which leaves us in a position to really focus on being creative with our small group itineraries, reducing risk and ensuring that our adventures have a minimal impact on the environments and cultures that we come in contact with.

# travel with a difference

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*Combine a stunning trek with the highlights of Vietnam.*

Single travellers are required to pay a single supplement when joining this adventure. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Trip cost joining Hanoi AUD\$1795 per person

\*Based on a minimum 8 passengers traveling

Single supplement AUD\$489 per person

Vietnam visa fee AUD\$70

Visa processing fee AUD\$25

### the trip

For an in-depth, active adventure in Vietnam this trip is a must! From Hanoi we transfer to the remote north western region of Pu Luong Natural Reserve. This area is home to some of Vietnam's 15 ethnic minority groups whose fascinating cultures and warm hospitality is experienced first hand as we trek through villages and stay as guests in their homes. Pretty scenes of lush prime rain forests, silver waterfalls, bamboo forests and tea and rice terraces complete our backdrop. From here we retreat to the serenity of Halong Bay where we spend the night aboard a traditional wooden 'junk' boat floating amongst its 3000 limestone islets and emerald waters. We return to Hanoi and experience a cooking class at the famous K.O.T.O not for profit restaurant. We then celebrate with a farewell dinner and some free time for last minute shopping!

### at a glance

DAY 1	JOIN HANOI
DAY 2	HANOI DRIVE TO PU LUONG, TREK TO HANG VILLAGE
DAY 3	TREK FROM HANG VILLAGE TO KHO MUONG VILLAGE
DAY 4	TREK FROM KHO MUONG TO HIN VILLAGE
DAY 5	HIN VILLAGE TREK TO CANH NANG VILLAGE, DRIVE TO NINH BINH
DAY 6	NINH BINH, DRIVE TO HA LONG BAY
DAY 7	CRUISING HA LONG BAY, DRIVE TO HANOI, AFTERNOON AND EVENING AT LEISURE
DAY 8	MORNING AT LEISURE, COOKING SCHOOL AT K.O.T.O, AFTERNOON AT LEISURE
DAY 9	TRIP CONCLUDES IN HANOI WITH A TRANSFER TO THE AIRPORT

### what's included

- 8 breakfasts, 7 lunches and 7 dinners
- Airport transfers
- Expert bilingual guide
- Medical kit
- Comfortable well located accommodation and local homestays
- Private air-conditioned vehicles
- Sightseeing and site entry fees as listed in itinerary
- Traditional 'junk' boat in Halong Bay
- Porters during trek
- Cooking class at K.O.T.O

Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators in the adventure travel industry. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices we have chosen a policy not to ask for such payments.

### detailed itinerary

#### DAY 1 Join Hanoi

Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transfer to our group hotel in the old quarter. Please look for the WORLD EXPEDITION welcome sign in the arrivals hall. Due to your late arrival there are no activities planned today.

Overnight Silk Path 4\* hotel in Hanoi [www.silkpath.com](http://www.silkpath.com) in premium deluxe rooms.

**meals: NIL**

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## **DAY 2 Hanoi drive to Pu Luong, trek to Hang Village**

This morning you will meet your guide at breakfast and have a pre trip briefing. After breakfast, we depart Hanoi for Pu Luong Natural Reserve via Mai Chau. This scenic drive takes around 4 hrs. Along the way we pass fields of tapioca and sugar cane as well as rice paddies. We will reach Mai Chau valley by lunchtime. Following lunch in Pom Coong Village, we drive 22km further into the reserve where we begin our trek. We trek for approximately 3 hrs before arriving at Hang Village, which is home to Thai ethnic minority. We spend the night with a local Thai family who will be our hosts in a traditional house built on stilts. Before dinner we can stroll around the village to observe daily life activities of the locals.

Accommodation will be in a simple homestay, dormitory style.

Trekking details: Distance: 12km

**meals: B,L,D**

## **DAY 3 Trek from Hang Village to Kho Muong Village**

Rising to the sound of the local rooster we will enjoy breakfast at our home stay before we set off for our trek. Today we will be walking for around 6 hrs on a rocky path running through the jungle. Our lunch stop will be in a small traditional village along the way. After lunch we will pass through several Thai villages before arriving at the village of Kho Muong. As the name suggests this is a Muong minority village and we will be their guests for the night.

Overnight Muong traditional family house

Trekking details: Distance: 24 km

**meals: B,L,D**

## **DAY 4 Trek from Kho Muong to Hin Village**

We bid farewell to the our hosts and set off for the most challenging day of trekking yet. We will climb to the summit of Pu Luong mountain along undulating trails through the tropical rain forest. En route, we will pass several small hamlets with the villages of Muong ethnic minority. On arrival at the summit, we can admire the panoramic view of Pu Luong. After admiring the scenery we climb down and continue our trek to the Hin village of White Thai ethnic minority for our overnight stay.

Overnight: Thai traditional family house

Trekking details: Distance: 18 km

**meals: B,L,D**

## **DAY 5 Hin Village trek to Canh Nang Village, drive to Ninh Binh**

Today we enjoy a trek through the verdant countryside passing through ethnic villages and open rice fields. The trek route is on undulating dirt paths through the Puluang Natural Reserve. We have the opportunity to interact with the local people in the villages that we pass through during our trek. Our guide is bi lingual providing an insight into the lives of the hill tribe peoples. We will reach Canh Nang point where our driver is waiting to take us to Ninh Binh.

Overnight Ninh Binh

Trekking details: Distance: 12 km

**meals: B,L,D**

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## fast facts

### Countries Visited:

Vietnam

### Visas:

Yes\*

### Vaccinations:

Please consult a travel vaccination specialist for up to date information

### Private Groups:

Private group options are available for this trip\*

### Singles:

A single supplement is available for this trip\*

### Leader:

Expert local leader

### Brochure Reference:

Active Adventures

\*Ask our staff for more information

## DAY 6 Ninh Binh, drive to Ha Long Bay

After breakfast at our hotel, we leave Ninh Binh for 3-hour drive to the Halong Bay, a natural wonder with thousands of islands rising out of the water, creating an unique and beautiful landscape. On arrival, we board our traditional junk for a journey through the 3,000 limestone islands dotted with caves and grottoes.

After lunch your captain will find a secluded spot and from here the choice is yours. There is time for exploring the Bay at a leisure pace: swimming, sunbathing, relaxing and experiencing the magic of falling asleep on board in this beautiful part of the world. After you have finished exploring we retire to the junk and relax on the top deck and enjoy a refreshing drink from the bar.

In the evening your cook will prepare a delicious seafood extravaganza using beautifully prepared fresh ingredients straight from the sea as we find a secluded place to anchor for the night.

Overnight on Bhaya Classic 4\* Junk, Ha Long Bay

Remark: Cruise itinerary and schedule are subject to change due to weather, tide levels and operating conditions.

meals: **B,L,D**

## DAY 7 Cruising Ha Long Bay, drive to Hanoi, afternoon and evening at leisure

Early risers can enjoy a morning swim in the beautiful turquoise water. You may like to start your day with the free Tai Chi Class on the sundeck before enjoying the complimentary tea and coffee. We continue to enjoy cruising through the Bay passing beautiful spots like Trong (Drum), Trinh Nu (Virgin) and the Mekong Caves. We have the opportunity to explore the Sung Sot cave (Surprise cave), one of the highlights of the bay. Buffet brunch is served on board before the vessel cruises leisurely back to harbor.

We drive back to Hanoi aiming to arrive mid afternoon. Our stay for the next 2 nights is at the stunning classic Sofitel Metropole. Voted in the top 50 hotels in the world this French Colonial building has been home to movie stars, authors and dignitaries for the last 100 years. Whilst here we can enjoy the peaceful surroundings and old school charm and relax by the pool.

Overnight 5\* Sofitel Metropole Hotel luxury

meals: **B,L**

## DAY 8 Morning at leisure, cooking school at K.O.T.O, afternoon at leisure

After a relaxing morning we can visit a local market in central Hanoi to choose the ingredients for our cooking class. This is a lot of fun and very interesting with many Vietnamese people visiting the market to purchase ingredients for their daily cooking. The fresh herbs, colours and smells at this vibrant market will enthrall. We then will join the cooking classes at K.O.T.O Restaurant.

K.O.T.O (Know One Teach One) is a non-for-profit restaurant and vocational training program that is changing the lives of streets and disadvantaged youth in Vietnam. It's a place where customers enjoy delicious Vietnamese and European cuisine and where the staff (mostly former street and disadvantaged youth) are so full of energy and enthusiasm that it's contagious.

The rest of the day is at leisure.

Tonight we will enjoy a farewell dinner.

Overnight 5\* Sofitel Metropole Hotel luxury room

meals: **B,L,D**

## DAY 9 Trip concludes in Hanoi with a transfer to the airport

Today is at leisure until you will be met and transfer to the airport for your outbound flight

meals: **B**

This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

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## responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible and sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com)

## trip grading

These trips involve a combination of what is described in our INTRODUCTORY and MODERATE levels in our Active brochure.

The emphasis is on introductory activity with some moderate stages. This trip involves trekking for up to six or seven hours on undulating and hilly slopes on small dirt tracks at a slow but steady pace and should never be misinterpreted to mean it is an easy trek. You will need a good level of fitness and good health.

\* Suggested preparation: 30 minutes of aerobic type exercise, (either cycling or jogging) three times a week for three months leading up to your trip. For trekking, hill walking with a daypack in variable weather conditions is also recommended.

## important note

These trip notes represent the most current information for this itinerary, and may supersede any information in the current brochure, including but not limited to the itinerary and price. The itinerary should be seen as a guide only. This itinerary may change at any time due to inclement weather, forces of nature and other circumstances beyond our control.

## suggested extensions

- Luang Prabang to Hanoi by Bike
- Phnom Penh and Angkor
- Angkor Wat Extension
- Angkor Wat Cycle

## country information

Vietnam is a country of immense beauty and geographical diversity. The country is roughly divided into three main areas – Bac Bo (north), Trung Bo (centre) and Nam Bo (south). The main feature of the north of Vietnam is mountains and forests along with the vast Red River Delta. The north is also home to the Gulf of Tonkin and a maze of islands in the bay. Central Vietnam is made up of agricultural plains wedged between the Truong Son Mountains and the South China Sea making some dramatic mountain passes overlooking ocean vistas. The Mekong Delta dominates the south of the country. Vietnam has been the site of battles and invasions for over 2000 years. Influences of invaders or modern day 'liberators' have left the country with a unique cultural identity and a complex and fascinating history. This history has given Vietnam a diverse population made up of different ethnic groups. The predominant ethnic group is known as 'Kinh' and make up about 90% of the population. There are dozens of other ethnic groups including Cham and Khmer particularly in the south of the country. Since the early 1990's, Vietnam has been opening its doors to tourism. Although the relatively long periods of isolation and a history of war has not produced a laid-back tourism paradise like Thailand facilities and infrastructure in the country are changing rapidly. Vietnam is still a communist country although the Government is at times very pragmatic and forward thinking. You still need to carry with you an abundance of patience and a good sense of humour to overcome the overt bureaucracy and the inevitable delays, however, the fascinating history and culture; the resilient and proud people; and the beauty of the varied landscape help to overcome any possible frustrations.

## climate

Vietnam's climate can vary markedly from region to region due to its length stretching 1650 km from north to south. Generally two distinct seasons prevail in Vietnam. From November to April, the temperatures are usually fairly cool, especially in the north of the country. In the mountain areas temperatures can be as low as 0oC (32 degrees Fahrenheit) and there can be a constant light drizzle. Hotter temperatures and heavy monsoon rains characterize the months from May to October although you can experience rain at any time. The hottest months of the year are June, July and August. Southern Vietnam's weather patterns are more constant with a rainy season from May to October and a relative dry season from November to February. The temperatures in the south can rise as high as 35oC (95 degrees Fahrenheit) from March to May.

## what you carry

During the trek you will just need to carry your small day pack with essential items such as sunscreen, raincoat, sunglasses etc, porters will carry the rest of your gear. This means you will need to provide a soft bag for your gear e.g a duffle bag or backpack. Hard suitcases are not suitable. Please pack a minimum for the porter to carry. Additional luggage not needed for the trek can be left in Hanoi. For the rest of the trip you will need to be able to carry all your luggage on and off transport and to and from your hotel room. During the day when out touring you will just need to carry your day pack with essentials.

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## equipment required

Specialist gear required include walking boots and day pack (a comprehensive gear list is provided in the pre-departure information provided on booking).

## what's not included

- Items of a personal nature such as laundry, postage, alcoholic beverages
- Guide tips and gratuities
- Additional transport required due to any emergency situation
- Sightseeing and entry fees not listed in the itinerary or listed as optional
- Visa fees
- International flights and departure taxes
- Travel Insurance (compulsory)

## info nights

World Expeditions invites you to attend our inspiring adventure travel information nights. These special evenings are designed to inform and entertain and are hosted by our most experienced and passionate adventure travellers and mountaineers. Ask our staff for a info night schedule or register on our website - [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com). Shows can fill early so it is important to register your attendance so we know to save a seat, or two!

## private groups

The adventures featured in our brochures, and on our website, are just a starting point for many of our private group travellers. Working closely with our Groups Department we can organise custom designed itineraries for groups of friends, clubs, charity's, schools or even work colleagues. Our team will assist you with all aspects of your private group adventure from itinerary design to group flights. Contact our team today.

## subscribe to our e-newsletter

To keep up to date with our new and exciting adventure opportunities, special promotions and adventure news, subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter! You can do this on line through our website, [www.worldexpeditions.com](http://www.worldexpeditions.com) or contact our office.

## how to book

To book this private adventure contact Karen at TRAVEL WITH A DIFFERENCE on 5254 1279.