

## Vietnam's Northernmost Challenge

Trip Code

Version: HPB Peaks of the Balkans



WALK & TREK



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### Tour highlights:

Northern Vietnam has long attracted adventurers in awe of its vistas, but vastly improved roads have caught the attention of the cycling adventurers. And it's not hard to see why road cycling in Asia is developing: an endless green expanse of climbs and descents, ribbon roads through forests, rice paddies to peaks and cloud-skimming mountain passes. Our road cycling Northern Vietnam trip from Hanoi to the Northeast takes riders through the very best of Southeast Asia's next cycling paradise, for a truly unforgettable cycle tour.

### OVER VIEW

Group Size 1 to 16

5 days biking

380 kilometres

75% surfaced road - 100% vehicle supported

Max altitude - 2,311metres

Join In Hanoi, Cao Bang, Hanoi.

## **ACCOMMODATION & MEALS**

04 Breakfasts  
05 Lunches  
04 Dinners  
04 nights Hotel

### **What's Included**

- ? English speaking cycling guide ( other languages upon requests)
- ? Accommodations are based on outline itinerary
- ? Meals details in itineraries
- ? A/C transfer/ and transportation
- ? Eco homestay with private mat, share WC and bathroom.
- ? Van or bus supported during the cycling times.
- ? Truck supported for the group size from 6 and above.
- ? Trek mountain bikes – X-Caliber with disc brake, front suspended and helmets
- ? Sightseeing excursions as outlined itineraries
- ? Bike tour pump, bike tools, spares tubes, spare bikes
- ? First aid kit
- ? Cold water box, small fresh towel.
- ? Mineral water for drinking
- ? Fruit and snack for cycling days

### **Tour excluded in:**

- ? International airfare
- ? Travel insurance
- ? Items of personal nature
- ? Alcoholic beverages and soft drinks in meals
- ? Mineral water beyond that supplied
- ? Optional excursions
- ? Additional transport required due to any emergency situation

? Personal expenses such as telephone, laundry bills.

#### Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Hanoi.

Chi phí là \$ US NET, ph? phí 3% n?u thanh toán b?ng th? tín d?ng. Các kho?n ph? phí khác có th? ???c áp d?ng nh? d?p l? T?t.

#### Legal Aspects

**Booking Terms & Conditions:** Tour itinerary and tour prices are subject to change Notice required before departure. Please click here for more information.

A single group transfer is provided from/to Hanoi Airport on Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary and on the final day of the Land Only itinerary.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

#### Meal Plan

All meals from dinner on Day 1 to breakfast on Day 05 are included in the holiday price.

#### Food & Water

It is not recommended to drink untreated water from the taps. If you are on a trekking or cycling holiday, water is supplied to fill up your individual bottles. This will be boiled, filtered or provided in large jerry cans or 5 litre bottles. Additionally you should take purification tablets or a filter bottle (such as a Water-To-Go bottle) to treat your water when in towns or where water is not supplied. We do not encourage the purchasing of single use plastic bottles.

You can expect to feast on an A to Z of delicious Vietnamese cuisine during the course of your holiday. Start practising your chopstick technique now, as there may be no knives and forks for parts of this holiday! Vietnamese cuisine is fresh, fragrant and flavoursome. Typically, for included meals, a selection of dishes or varying flavours will be served together and each person takes a little of each dish – so there will usually be something to please everyone (vegetarians included!) at every meal. Whilst at the homestays breakfasts might be pancakes with banana, eggs and bread or (more traditionally) ‘Pho’ a noodle soup. Lunches will sometimes be taken at a wayside eatery and other times will be a picnic, usually rice with steamed chicken/pork, stir-fried vegetable and spring rolls. A typical evening meal will also include Pho, a choice of pork or chicken dishes, a selection of stir fried or boiled vegetables with rice, and usually fresh fruit for dessert. Whilst cruising on Bai Tu Long we will certainly be treated to a variety of fresh and delicious sea food.

#### Accommodation

We stay and for the night beside Ba Be Lake we will stay at a simple guesthouse/homestay with twin rooms and shared facilities. There will be a total of 2 nights in simple village homestays, where you will require a light sleeping bag or a sleeping bag liner. At these homestays sleeping arrangements will be communal with everybody sharing one large room and all footwear left outside; in Ba Be villages it is possible that males and females will be asked to sleep separately or (same room, but not next to each other). Each person will have their own mattress (sometimes on the floor, sometimes on a raised bed), with bedding and mosquito net provided - there will be plenty of colourful blankets should the temperature fall in the evenings. The bathroom facilities will be basic, with a mix of western and squat toilets. There will also be basic shower facilities, although electricity and hot water can be intermittent. Charging phones or cameras is also usually possible. Whilst the facilities are basic, the unique experience of staying with the villagers in their homes, in stunning and remote locations, will more than make up for the lack of modern amenities. There is also 2 night on the very comfortable Cao Bang Hotel. All accommodation is twin share (except for the 2 simple homestay nights). If you are travelling by yourself, you will be paired up with someone of the same sex.

Single rooms at all of the accommodation (including the homestays) are available for a supplementary cost. If you are planning on extending your holiday additional nights at the group hotel are available on request.

### **Group Leader & Support Staff**

The trip will be led by an experienced local English-speaking cycling guide and there will also be one or more support vehicles and drivers.

### **Altitude**

This holiday does not involve any significant ascent to altitude and we would not expect any altitude issues with this trip.

### **Spending Money**

Approximately £150 (or equivalent in \$/€) should be allowed for miscellaneous expenses including tips for local staff, homestay hosts, guides, drivers, boatmen etc. It is not necessary to obtain local currency (Vietnamese Dong) prior to travelling. Money can be changed at one of the banks in Hanoi or you can withdraw funds from an ATM, either at the airport or in the city. For ease of exchange we recommend that you carry your travel money in US dollars. US dollars are acceptable for exchange in Hanoi and can also sometimes be used to pay directly for goods and services.

### **Guidance on Tipping**

Tips are the accepted way of saying 'thank you' to your local guides and to your support crews and drivers. They do not form part of their wages. We always pays local staff the best rates of pay, no matter what country they are in and any tips they receive are seen as a personal thank you from group members. For our part, we advise local teams that tips are not a duty or a prerequisite but are a bonus and entirely dependent on the service that was given. For your support crews we recommend that you give a tip if you feel that their services have met your satisfaction. It is best to tip as a group and it is useful to have a group pool for this. As a rough guide we suggest you allow a total of £80-100 for tipping. Note that you will have a guide and one or more drivers and other staff. It is also not unusual to tip the families at homestays if you feel that they have provided a great service; around \$1-2 per group member, per homestay is reasonable.

### **Bike Hire**

Bikes are provided locally within the cost of the holiday. These bikes are Trek Excaliber and E-bikes in a full range of sizes. They are good quality and well maintained bikes with Shimano components, triple chainsets (27 gears), 100mm Suntour front suspension, Shimano hydraulic disc brakes and fast-rolling all-round tyres. Spare parts (tubes, tyre, chains etc.) will be available in the support vehicle along with a tool kit and track pump. The guide will also carry some spares and tools for fixing punctures etc. The bikes are equipped with flat pedals. If you prefer to use spd or clip-in pedals, you will need to bring these with you, along with your regular cycling shoes and cleats. Another item which you might choose to take with you on the holiday is your saddle. The hire bikes have standard saddles and anyone requiring more comfort, or a women-specific saddle, should consider taking their own. Helmets can also be provided free of charge if you request one.

### **Vehicle Support**

Throughout this trip we have the back up of one or more support vehicles. Each morning our main baggage will be loaded onto the support vehicle which will follow the group on the day's ride. The local biking leader and the support vehicle driver will watch over the group and will carry mobile phones, allowing you to contact them in the case of a breakdown or other incident. We want everyone to enjoy their cycling experience on this trip and we recognise the importance of group members being allowed to cycle at their own pace. At times there can be a fair distance between the front and rear cyclists in the group, with the support vehicle and cycling leader out of sight. The support vehicle will pick up any group members who wish to take a break from cycling at any time. There will be local fruit and snacks and drinking water available from the support vehicle at all times.

### **Baggage Allowance**

You should travel with one main item of luggage, such as a robust holdall, as well as a small day pack or mountain bike-specific hydration pack. The day pack can be used to carry valuable items such as cameras and GPS devices whilst travelling and will also carry your day-ride essentials during the rides.

### **Group Size & Holiday Status**

For each holiday there is a minimum number 1 required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

Four seasons of travel:

Seasonal Preparation: The best time to travel in Vietnam is between September and May.

In Cao Bang City, the wet season is hot, stuffy and covered in clouds and the dry season is comfortable and almost clear. As the year progresses, temperatures usually vary from 11°C to 31°C and rarely below 6°C or above 34°C.

Based on tourist destination, the best times of year to visit Cao Bang City for warm weather activities are from early March to April and early October to late December.

The hot season lasts for 5.3 months, from June 25 to September, with average daily high temperatures above 29°C. The hottest month of the year in Cao Bang City is July, with an average high temperature of 31°C and an average low temperature of 25°C.

The cold season lasts for 2–4 months, from December 11 to February 22, with average high temperatures below 20°C. The coldest month of the year in Cao Bang City is January, with an average low temperature of 11°C and an average high temperature of 18°C.