

# VIETNAM

## 'Tribal North'



The northern most region of Vietnam is truly a motorbike paradise for on- and off-road riding. The rugged Mountains of northern Vietnam are home to colourful hill tribes and some of the best rice terracing in the whole country, if not the whole of Southeast Asia. Every bend in the road reveals something new and adventure is guaranteed! Below follows some information that you should know before we meet in Hanoi.

### **General riding abilities.**

You don't need to be a hard-core off-road/enduro *expert* to join our tours. You *do* need to be experienced with travelling on a motorcycle and with riding on gravel / off-road for our tours.

### **Level riding Vietnam - Tribal North**

This tour we do in co-operation with Cuong, our local guide. Local expertise that makes this experience only better!

We have different levels for our different tours and Vietnam is level 4 (out of 5). Besides tarmac and single-lane paved roads, it has lots of unpaved trails with technical tracks, steep climbs and descents with loose stones and single-tracks with drop-offs on one side. It's not for the fainted hearted (or people with vertigo). Switch-backs up and down hill on dirt roads/tracks you should be able to do without any problem.



When it has rained dirt roads and tracks get muddy which makes it even more challenging. Having good clutch- and gas-control and be able to balance your bike on narrow stretches is a *must* for this tour.

The days can be long, depending on many factors, so you have to be comfortable in most situations in order not to suffer fatigue too quickly. The pace is relaxed, it is not a competition, as we are traveling and will take a break frequently. There will be time enough to take pictures, movies, rest etc.

We do want to emphasise that for our off-road tours you need to be *healthy* and have a *good* physical condition. It can be tough from time to time.

Self-assessment is not easy, especially when you haven't been riding with other people or have been on other tours. So when in doubt please don't hesitate to contact us. We are more than willing to explain you more about it.

### **What kind of bike?**

During this tour you will ride on light Honda CRF 250/300L off-road motorcycles (they can be lowered a couple of cm's). They are easy to handle and perfect to do the job. We'll ride on different kind surface from perfect curvy tarmac, gravel roads and (technical) single tracks that can be steep and stony. Combined with water-crossings, remote tribal villages and jaw-dropping views it is an amazing tour that will move all your senses.



**PRICE**

Rider:

€ 3890

Pillion:

not possible

**Included**

- Airport pickup & drop off
- 3 nights in Hanoi (single room) in luxury hotel.
- 1/2 day Hanoi city tour by US Army Jeep (incl lunch)
- 11 riding days
- Motorcycle: Honda CRF 300L / 250L
- Experienced English, Swedish, and/or Dutch speaking guides
- Experience Vietnamese (local) guide)
- Mechanic and all spares on bike on the trails.
- Vehicle for luggage transport from hotel to hotel.
- All accommodation (home stays, resorts, guest-houses and hotels on tour (single room where available)
- All meals on tour (local food for breakfast and dinner, picnics for lunch, etc.)
- All drinks during the day (except alcoholic drinks)
- Welcome dinner and final night dinner
- Third party insurance motorcycle (full coverage is available at extra costs)

**Excluded**

- Flight ticket
- Medical/travel/cancellation insurance.
- Comprehensive motorcycle insurance is optional (ask for details)
- Visa (if needed)
- Alcoholic drinks
- Personal expenses



## ITINERARY

Day 1: Arrival (Hotel) - welcoming dinner  
Day 2: Guided Hanoi city tour by US Army Jeep (hotel) – ½ day  
Day 3: Hanoi - Ba Be, 220 km (Home-stay)  
Day 4: Ba Be - Dong Van, 210 km (Hotel)  
Day 5: Dong Van - Ha Giang, 200 km (Home-stay)  
Day 6: Ha Giang - Pan Huu, 110 km (Resort)  
Day 7: Pan Huu - Xin Man, 180 km (Guest-house)  
Day 8: Xin Man - Sapa, 140 km (hotel)  
Day 9: Sapa - Mu Cang Chai, 140 km (Home-stay)  
Day 10: Mu Cang Chai - Ngoc Chien -Nghia Lo, 230 km (Hotel)  
Day 11: Nghia lo - Moc Chau, 200 km (home-stay)  
Day 12: Moc Chau - Mai Chau, 90 km (Home stay)  
Day 13: Mai Chau - Hanoi, 180 km (Hotel)  
Day 14: Departure

## DAY BY DAY:



### Day 1: Arrival Hanoi (hotel)

We will meet you at Noi Bai International Airport and transfer you to your hotel for 2 nights. Evening free.



**Day 2:** Hanoi 1/2 Day city tour and orientation (hotel)

We will come meet you at your hotel in our classic US army Jeeps to take a 1/2 day city tour Hanoi Opera House, The French quarter Army Museum and the Museum of Ethnology. Lunch included. We drop you at your hotel late afternoon and pick you up again for orientation dinner at a local restaurant.

**Day 3:** Hanoi - Ba Be Lake National Park, 220 km ( home-stay)

Leaving Hanoi we head off on paved roads climbing up into the mountains, Lunch on route before turning off to the small road that takes us to the Ba Be Lake National Park, This spectacular clear lake surrounded by jungle covered mountains is great for a swim and is cool in the summer. Overnight and dinner with a local Tay hill-tribe family.

**Day 4:** Ba Be lake National Park - Dong Van, 210 km, (hotel)

After breakfast we head north through hill-tribe villages, forest and rivers to Bao Lac. The gate way to the Ha Giang plateau. We leave the main road and join paved roads (off road options available) to the high passes and black rocks that make up the landscape of Ha Giang, Here you see many colourful hill-tribes and spectacular scenery. We have time to stop take photos and visit some villages or local markets. Overnight in Dong Van.

**Day 5:** Dong Van - Ha Giang, 200 km (Home-stay)

Early start today and we head to up the mountains, the road here hugs the cliff face and we climb up to the Ma Phi Lieng Pass, here we can take time for a snack and enjoy the views into China, Take time to stop in the ancient village market of Dong Van. Lunch en route, we stop at Nha Vua Meo and visit the Hmong Kings palace back to the 1840's. More amazing paved roads through the rocky landscape on our way down to Ha Giang. Overnight in home-stay.

**Day 6:** Ha Giang - Pan Hou, 110km, (resort)

Today we leave on main Hanoi highway for 50km then turn off and climb through the rice terraces to Hoan Su Phi and down to the Dao hill-tribe village of Pan Hou. Overnight in French run resort with its gardens and relaxing lounge, take time to explore on bikes or the surrounding villages.

**Day 7:** Pan Hou - Xin Man, 180km, (guest house)

We leave the resort after breakfast and head through the terraced mountains, stopping to meet people, take photos and check out the countryside. After lunch we keep heading up the mountains, from here the road get rough (2hr) as we cross over the pass and down into the Xin Man valley, Here the Flower Hmong hill-tribe live and can be seen wearing their unique colourful clothes as they carry on with their everyday task. Big views and weekend markets. Overnight in Xin Man

**Day 8:** Xin Man - Sapa, 220km, (hotel)

In the morning we head out and drive on sealed and packed dirt roads up through the mountains through villages and forest.



Lunch en route, after lunch we travel through terraced rice fields and to Sapa.  
Overnight in hotel.

**Day 9:** Sapa - Mu Cang Chai, 140km (home-stay)

In the morning some time to relax and discover Sapa with the local market.  
In the afternoon we head over the Tram Ton pass and over the highest mountains in Vietnam. After a picnic lunch we continue through tea plantations and terraced rice fields to the mountain town of Mu Cang Chai. Over night in home-stay.

**Day 10:** Mu Cang Chai - Ngoc Chien - Nghia Lo 230km, (hotel)

In the morning we head back up in the mountains on dirt tracks for a day of tough riding. Stop for hill-tribe villages and stunning views stop for picnic for lunch. We continue on small roads to the village of Ngoc Chien and stunning views on our way to Nghia Lo where we. Overnight in Nghia Lo.

**Day 11:** Nghia Lo- Moc Chau, 150km, (home-stay)

We leave our home-stay and head over the high mountains on small dirt tracks, crossing the black river on a small boat, and make our way taking back-roads and exploring the hills and terraced fields. Overnight in Moc Chau home-stay.

**Day 12:** Moc Chau - Mai Chau, 90km (home-stay)

After Breakfast we head back through the hills on dirt roads along the black river to the village of Mai Chau, there are many options on the route today so if you are ready for more off-road or stay on the pavement. Overnight in local home stay with some cultural entertainment.

**Day 13:** Mai Chau - Hanoi, 170km (hotel)

After Breakfast we head back to the black river and Hanoi, arrive in Hanoi around 3 pm and drive back to Cuong's garage to drop off the bikes. We will transfer you to your hotel and meet you around 19:00 for a farewell dinner.

**Day 14:** Hanoi - Noi Bai International Airport

Take time to do some last minute shopping before we transfer you to the airport to catch your flight home. End of an amazing adventure!



## WHAT TO BRING?

### Documents:

- **PASSPORT** (valid for 6 months with at least 2 consecutive blank pages).
- **DRIVER'S LICENSE**
- **INTERNATIONAL DRIVERS LICENSE.**
- **MEDICAL AND TRAVEL INSURANCE.** Bring contact number and policy number. Make sure that helicopter MedEvac is included.
- **CREDIT CARD:** there are ATM's in Hanoi. Payment with card only in Hanoi.
- **CASH (US\$)** Bring cash US\$ or take from a ATM. You can change for Vietnamese Dong.
- **VISA:** Please check Visa requirements for your country of origin prior to travel, as for most countries a visa is needed. A visa application form before departure is needed (some countries are exempted) when staying longer than 15 days. You can do this online nowadays. Link: <https://evisa.xuatnhapcanh.gov.vn/trang-chu-ttdt>

### Gear/clothes:

- **Protective riding gear** (suit, helmet, gloves, etc). The temperature can fluctuate between 30° Celsius (Hanoi) and 5° C up in the mountains when it's raining. We recommend to bring off-road gear (no Gore-Tex suits) and an light rain jacket/ pants.
- **Boots.** Bring hard (enduro)boots with ankle protection. It will safe you leg/ ankle!
- **Sunglasses and sunscreen**
- **Light rain gear /rain jacket.** Temperatures can drop when riding on high altitude or when raining.
- **Casual wear** for evening dinners and non-riding days.
- **Warm fleece and hat** for our cooler days/evenings
- **Hydration back-pack. Highly recommended!** Necessary and very handy to prevent dehydration.
- **Camera.** These magnificent views you want to capture!
- **Head-light.** Some home-stays have no electricity during the night.
- **Travel sheets/thin sleeping bag/travel pillow.** Can be useful when staying in the home-stays.
- **Power-bank.** As a back-up for charging you electronic equipment/phone.
- **Your spirit for adventure!**



## OTHER REQUIREMENTS:

### MEDICAL / VACCINATIONS

Please contact your local health authority for which vaccinations are needed/mandatory. This varies per country.

**Malaria.** We will not be in the south of Vietnam, but if you're planning to extend your stay and travel elsewhere, please contact your local health authority.

**Yellow Fever.** Although there is no risk of yellow fever in Vietnam, a valid yellow fever certificate is required if your journey starts or entails passing through the Yellow Fever belt of Africa or South America.

**Medicines.** Don't forget your personal medicines. Some painkillers and medicines against travellers-diarrhoea are recommended to bring.

**COVID-19:** Vietnam opened up since March 2022. See the official website for the latest requirements: <https://vietnam.travel>

### ROAD TRAVEL WITHIN VIETNAM

Vietnam has an extensive road infrastructure including national roads and secondary roads. Most roads are in good condition, but there are a few exceptions, with some great gravel roads/tracks for our off-road experience – yeahhh!

**Traffic.** In Vietnam the traffic is on the right-hand side and chaotic, especially in bigger cities/towns like Hanoi. But when driving slow, accidents are less likely to happen. On the main roads buses and trucks are on top of the hierarchy and take over whenever they feel like it. This can be in curves or wherever. Keep always cautious and “expect the unexpected”!

**Speed limits.** Keep an eye out for the designated speed limit as these may vary depending on road conditions and law enforcement does take place next to the road.

**Driver's license:** You must have a valid driver's license issued in your own country.

**International Drivers license.** It is mandatory you carry an official translation of your license / an international driving license. You should always have your driver's license with you when you are driving, as you will be asked to produce it if you are pulled over for any reason.

**Fuel:** Fuel is included in the tour price and we will refuel with the whole group.





## **OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION**

### **INSURANCE**

Make sure that you have a travel/medical insurance that also covers medical evacuation by air. Some of the places we will ride, are remote.

### **FULL COVERAGE INSURANCE OPTION**

The bikes have 3rd party insurance only.

A comprehensive bike damage insurance is possible for 300 \$USD

This insurance policy covers lost, theft or any damage to the motorbike caused by an accident or fall. The policy excludes any, personal medical insurance, liability to other vehicles or injury caused to another party. Contact us for full coverage and details [In Sweden offers ERV an extensive travel insurance that covers up to SEK 25 000 for self-risk on rental vehicles]

### **CURRENCY**

Vietnam has the Vietnamese Dong (VND). The value is 100.000 Dong = 3,8 € / 4,1 US\$ (February 2024)

### **ATM.**

There are cash machines in bigger cities and towns available where you can withdrawn local money.

### **CASH.**

Bring US\$ in cash. So you can always change in case needed. Also to pay off the police in case needed ;)

### **WATER.**

Water in Vietnam is not safe to drink. When traveling to remote rural areas you should take your own (bottled) drinking water along (in a hydration back-pack).



## ELECTRICITY

The Vietnamese electricity supply is 110/220 volts AC 50 HZ. In Vietnam the power sockets used are of type A, C and D. Check out the following pictures (when from continental Europe). More info you can find here: <http://www.power-plugs-sockets.com>



## INTERNET/WIFI

You can buy a local sim-card with internet access. Internet and Wi-Fi are accessible in urban areas but not everywhere in rural areas.

## TIPS AND TIPPING

As a rough guide: give like 10% to a waiter in a restaurant.

## SECURITY

Vietnam is a safe country. But use common sense and take basic safety precautions. Keep valuables locked away and don't wear expensive watches or jewellery, flash expensive cameras, etc. If in doubt, ask a guide or at your accommodation for safety guidelines.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### ACCOMMODATIONS

You will stay in single room in a luxury hotel in the Old Quarter in Hanoi the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and the last night.

During the tour you'll stay in guest-houses, hotels and home-stays (single room where available). The home-stays are (basic) sleeping dormitories at local people's home and truly enhances the whole experience.

**AIRPORT PICK-UP / DROP OFF.** You will be picked up by a driver (with a Explore360 sign) when arriving at Hanoi International airport and brought back when departing. Please send your flight number and timings to us. You'll get an e-mail with a spread-sheet to fill in.

### TRAVEL SUITCASE / SOFT-BAG.

When traveling with all your gear you can bring a big suitcase. This one you can leave in hotel or at Cuong's place. For during the tour, please bring a smaller soft-bag for in the support car/van.

There are smaller waterproof soft-bags available to strap with bungee cords (also available) on the bikes for rain clothes etc. in case needed.

The support van will not follow the same routes as the group. So it's recommended to bring a small (waterproof) tail-bag for bringing rain gear etc.

**PLEASE DO GET IN CONTACT WITH US IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER QUESTIONS!**

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