

DNHG Trip to Northern Vietnam
Dates – December 16- 23, 2016 (8 days, 7 nights)

Trip Leader – Binish Roobas

Price* (13-15 pax): AED 2600 per person twin sharing

Vietnam is located on the east of the Indochina Peninsula. It covers a total area of approximately 331,210 km² (127,881 sq mi), making it almost the size of Germany. The country is mostly hilly and densely forested, with level land covering no more than 20%. Mountains account for 40% of the country's land area, and tropical forests cover around 42%.

The northern part of the country consists mostly of highlands and the Red River Delta. Phan Xi Păng, located in Lào Cai Province, is the highest mountain in Vietnam, standing 3,143 m (10,312 ft) high.

The rich diversity of Vietnam's wildlife includes at least 11,400 species of vascular plants, 1030 species of moss, 310 species of mammals, 296 reptile species, 162 amphibian species, 700 species of freshwater fish and 2000 species of marine fish. There are about 889 species of birds and 310 species of land mollusks. However, a study by the WWF has reported that nearly 10% of the wildlife in the country is threatened with extinction. Vietnam is placed 16th highest among 152 countries studied in terms of the proportion of its wildlife species found to be in danger.

Day 1 (Dec 16, Friday): Arrival at Hanoi: Arrive in Hanoi. Meet our guide & driver, then transfer to our hotel. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 2 (Dec 17, Saturday): Hanoi City Tour and Shopping: The day is dedicated to an in depth discovery of Hanoi beginning with a visit to **Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum** (*shorts and tank tops are not allowed*). Next, visit the **Temple of Literature**, a structure dedicated to Confucius. Constructed in 1070, the compound soon became the first Vietnamese university. Then enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

The afternoon's touring will provide the opportunity to see Hanoi's famed **Old Quarter** from the seats of **cyclos**, and the **Temple of Jade** at the centre of atmospheric Hoan Kiem lake. We will have about 2 hours on your own **for shopping in Hoan Kiem Area**. Our last activity will be a performance of a traditional show at Hanoi's **Water Puppet** theatre. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 3 (Dec 18, Sunday): Hanoi – Van Long – Cuc Phuong National Park- Depart Hanoi for Ninh Binh province, enjoying the drive through the luxurious vegetation of the Red River Delta. On the way, spend one hour visiting the **Dinh and Le temples** of the Ancient Capital Hoa Lu, dedicated to King Dinh and King Le. Lunch at local restaurant in Tam Coc.

Continue to the beautiful wetland of **Van Long**, rich in diverse flora and fauna. Upon arrival, we will board a bamboo rowboat for a 2 hours rowing tour. Then transfer to Cuc Phuong National Park. Dinner and overnight in Cuc Phuong National Park.

Day 4 (Dec 19, Monday): Cuc Phuong National Park: After breakfast, we first visit the Endangered Primate Rescue Center, then start a long trek through the forest to learn about the diverse flora and fauna of the park. We will make stops at Cho Chi, the oldest

tree in the forest, a number of picturesque streams and waterfalls, and Nguoi Xua, the ancient cave of man.

In the afternoon, continue exploring Vietnam's oldest national park and an area of lowland forest and lakes easily accessed by a paved road. It is rich in birdlife and we have our last chances here for both Pittas, Red-collared Woodpecker and White-winged Magpie as well as a supporting cast which includes Malayan Night Heron, Pied Falconet, Eared Pitta, Silver-breasted Broadbill, White-tailed Flycatcher, Fujian Niltava and the annamensis form of Limestone Wren-Babbler.

Day 5 (Dec 20, Tuesday): Cuc Phuong–Halong Bay Cruise: Early breakfast and depart for world famous Halong Bay, 'the descending dragon', a journey of approximately 4 hours. *Listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO, Ha Long Bay is a stunning limestone archipelago stretching over some 1500 square kilometers and comprising nearly 2000 islets.*

Arrive at Tuan Chau harbor (Halong Bay) at noon and embark on our boat for an overnight cruise among wonderful limestone islands. Afternoon visit to Sung Sot Cave, the most beautiful & largest cave in Halong Bay. Also kayaking activity at Luon Cave. On board, relax and/or enjoy a sunset party and experience cooking class (learning how to make Vietnamese spring rolls or fruit carving). Dinner on board. Overnight on boat.

Day 6 (Dec 21, Wednesday): Halong Bay Cruise – Cat Ba Island: Have breakfast and enjoy beautiful sunrise on the sundeck of the boat while cruising to Gia Luan harbour. Pass through Cat Ba national park by bus, featuring beautiful tropical flowers, green trees and limestone mountains. Arrive at Beo harbor, take small boat to visit one of the oldest floating villages in Vietnam, named Cai Beo (on Lan Ha Bay).

Arrive at **Monkey Island Resort**, check in and enjoy your lunch beside the lovely beach. Free time for swimming, kayaking, playing football, volleyball on the beach or play chess, billiards, ping pong, or table football in the entertainment area.

In the afternoon, go up the mountain for panoramic pictures of Monkey Island and Lan Ha bay, then arrive another beach to see some monkeys and discover their lives. Free time to relax in eco-garden, conquer Cat Dua tower with a great view to Lan Ha bay or hike up to explore the small jungle on the right side of the island. Dinner (normally BBQ) in the restaurant beside the beach.

Day 7 (Dec 22, Thursday): Morning on Cat Ba Island: Have breakfast and enjoy the sunrise at Monkey Island beach. A small boat takes us from Monkey Island Resort to Beo harbor. The tour guide will rent motorbikes to go to Cat Ba national park. A bus takes us back to the entrance gate of **Cat Ba National Park** and hike for 1 hour up to Ngu Lam peak. The panorama view from the top is worth the challenging way up.

Drive to Hospital Cave (Hang Quan Y) which was built during the American war. The tour guide will lead you to explore the cave. Ride motorbike back to Beo harbor and take a small boat to back to Monkey Island Resort. Lunch in the restaurant on Monkey Island beach.

The rest of the afternoon is free to swim in the pure water of Monkey Island Resort or lying on the beach. Dinner in the restaurant beside the beach in melodious songs and softly sound of ocean waves. Overnight at Monkey Island Resort.

Day 8 (Dec 23, Friday): Cat Ba Island to Hanoi's Airport: Have breakfast and check out. Bus to Gia Luan harbor and boat trip back to Halong. Lunch on board the boat en route to Tuan Chau harbor by another way, passing through many other beautiful rock formations.

Return to Tuan Chau harbor and take a bus back to Hanoi, with a short break on the way. Drop off at Hanoi's airport for flight departing for your home country.

***Price includes all except: flights, visas, bottled beverages, personal expenses, insurance, lunch on free day, and tips.**

Estimated R/T airfare from Dubai to Hanoi (connecting): starting from 2100 AED by Cathay Pacific.

For more information and sign-up, contact Binish Roobas at johanruphus@hotmail.com. A deposit of AED 1500 will be required for sign-up.