

# VENTURE INTO VIETNAM

09 – 21 November 2023



Join us and travel through Vietnam's spectacular northern provinces that hug the border with China. In this region majestic limestone karst mountains loom out of the mist, centuries old rice terraced hillsides and fascinating ethnic minorities, wearing colourful traditional clothing, continue to eke out a living in much the same way they have for generations.

Traffic is relatively sparse, the air is cleaner, and the views are breathtaking. If you want to get off the beaten path, nothing better than motorbiking in Northern Vietnam.

Come with us and experience Vietnam; its friendly people, delicious food, scenic and winding backroads, glorious landscapes, history and culture galore

## Route Options

Exciting backroads or proper off-road trail routes (mild to wild) The choice is yours and you can mix-and-match the route options to suit.

## Highlights include...

### Hanoi

Vietnam's capital: a city of lakes, French influenced architecture, and the fascinating Old Quarter. At more than 1000 years old Hanoi has an abundance of hospitable people, mouthwatering street food and fascinating attractions.

### Dong Van District

A volcanic plateau featuring an imposing limestone landscape of mountainous peaks and ravines

### Ha Giang Province

Striking scenery, virgin forests and rock formation plateaus split by breathtaking canyons.

### Mai Chau

A serene village in a lush valley surrounded by jungle covered mountains. White Thai are the majority ethnic group and are loosely related to the Thai and Laos people.

Accommodation is a great lodge with swimming pool and poolside bar!

### Cao Bang

The mountainous province tucked away in the Northeast of Vietnam. Much of Cao Bang province is protected as UNESCO Global Geopark. The breathtaking Ban Gioc waterfall is located in this region and is on the border between Vietnam and China.

## Our Vietnam Story

In 1997 with four children in tow, our three (aged 3, 4, and 8 years old) and a borrowed 12 year old, we arrived at Saigon Airport jet-lagged to an absent airport pickup. It was quite the eye-opener. This, our first introduction to Vietnam, awakened an ongoing interest of this fascinating country and we knew we would be back.

Roll forward to 2004 and our first Venture Into Vietnam motorbiking adventure with 14 keen Kiwi riders heading off on smoky 2-stroke Minsk motorbikes. Since then, we have continually tweaked the trip and now our journey takes us on an amazing loop north from Hanoi on newer model motorcycles! 19 years later with more than 20 Vietnam adventures completed we are always excited to return to North Vietnam.



## ITINERARY

### 09 November Day 1. (Thursday) Arrive in Hanoi

Travel from the airport into the historic Old Quarter of Hanoi City and check into the centrally located hotel. If you're feeling hungry there's plenty of places nearby to get a bite to eat. Take the opportunity to walk around the bustling Old Quarter of Hanoi. There's so much to see and experience!

Airport pick-up can be arranged for you if required.

*Overnight in the historic Old Quarter of Hanoi staying in a hotel*

### 10 November Day 2. (Friday) 24 Hours in Hanoi

A whole day in Hanoi which begins with a four-hour city tour by classic Ural motorbike with sidecar or ex US Army Jeep. There's lots to see and do – people watching, museums, cafe's, groovy bars, shopping or just relaxing at the hotel swimming pool. In the evening we'll gather for an authentic 'street food' dining experience and discuss our adventures ahead.

*Overnight in the historic Old Quarter of Hanoi staying in a hotel (Breakfast, Dinner)*

### 11 November Day 3. (Saturday) Hanoi to That Khe 200KM

Our first day on the motorbikes. Breakfast and 'Riders Briefing' are followed by a short drive to the warehouse where our motorbikes are stored. There's time to familiarise yourself with your bike before we twist our throttles and leave Hanoi behind. We are riding North-East initially on the highway and then the backroads of Northern Vietnam. There is so much to look at – terraced rice paddies and local farmers going about their daily work. Our destination is That Khe a small rural town in Trang Dinh district.

*Overnight in That Khe in a simple guesthouse (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



**12 November Day 4 (Sunday) That Khe to Cao Bang 130KM**

We have a spectacular day ahead of us exploring the remote frontier border area and backroads around Cao Bang district. We begin with the stunning Ban Gioc waterfall that straddles the border with China. Relatively undiscovered, this “off-the-beaten-track” region is unique for its well-preserved traditions and local culture. Cao Bang town, the provincial capital, is our destination.

*Overnight in Cao Bang in a hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**13 November Day 5 (Monday) Cao Bang to Dong Van 220KM**

Today we will ride the undulating terrain, of between 700mtrs & 1,300mtrs as we continue our journey North to Dong Van. Scenery includes extraordinary mountainous and rocky landscapes and terraced paddy fields. You will notice a change in scenery as we descend to the rocky volcanic plateau and pass through the H'Mong town of Meo Vac. To complete the day we'll ride the spectacular Ma Pi Leng Pass which hugs the mountainous border region with China. This is in the official 'Frontier Area' of Northern Vietnam. We have a comfy and spacious hotel room waiting for you in Dong Van town.

*Overnight in Dong Van staying in a hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**14 November Day 6. (Tuesday) Dong Van to Ha Giang 200KM**

The district around Dong Van is surrounded by impressive peaks and includes some of the most spectacular roads anywhere in South East Asia. The journey ahead is pure motor biking heaven, winding roads with little traffic, jaw-dropping scenery, and plenty of interesting people along the way who have retained their unique clothing, language and customs. Today's ride finishes on the outskirts of Ha Giang town the capital of Ha Giang Province.

*Overnight in Ha Giang at a small family run resort. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**15 November Day 7. (Wednesday) Ha Giang to Pan Hou 130KM**

Great riding today as we pass through Ha Giang town and make our way towards Hoang Su Phi District. The road follows the Chay River valley and eventually begins its climb through hills with great views of the terraced rice paddies and bush covered hillsides. Travelling through rural Hoang Su Phi which contains the colourful ethnic tribes of H'mong, Tay, Dao and Nung. We climb into the forest covered hills to Pan Hou village and our delightful resort accommodation.

*Overnight in Pan Hou Village at our hidden valley resort (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**16 November Day 8. (Thursday) Pan Hou to Sapa 230KM**

A big day of riding today with a lot to see along the way. At the border city of Lao Cai, we'll take a break and view China – so close just across the Red River. It's a 20km uphill ride to the alpine-like town of Sapa. This former French hill-station outpost was developed in 1922 during French rule. Sapa today is the tourism centre of the north-west and a lot of development is taking place. Good food, spectacular views, interactions with ethnic minorities and some shopping make Sapa a good place for an overnight stay.

*Overnight in Sapa staying in a hotel (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



### **17 November Day 9. (Friday) Sapa (Free Day)**

Sapa is dwarfed by the surrounding Fansipan Mountain range, “the roof of Vietnam and Indochina”. There's even a new cable car to take you to the summit of Mt. Fansipan! Colourfully-attired, and super friendly, Black Hmong and Red Dzao people dominate the area and offer fantastic photo opportunities. The afternoon is your free-time to explore Sapa town.

*Overnight in Sapa staying in the same hotel (Breakfast)*

### **18 November Day 10. (Saturday) Sapa to Tu Le 190KM**

Leaving Sapa we cross Tran Thon Pass at 2053m, Indochina's highest road pass. Travelling through terraced rice fields, forested hills and spectacular tea plantations over Cao Pha pass to Mu Cang Chai town. The spectacular rice terraces of Mu Cang Chai have been recognised as one of the unique landscapes of Vietnam. (see picture on main page) Continuing south to Yen Bai province, over a mountain pass and to the valley of Tu Le.

*Overnight at Le Champ Tu Le Resort (Breakfast, Lunch)*

### **19 November Day 11. (Sunday) Tu Le to Mai Chau 300KM**

Riding through Moc Chau which is the fruit, vegetable and dairy farming region of Hoa Binh province in north west Vietnam. We will cross the Black River by local ferry boat service. Travelling through Hmong and Dao minority villages with mountains, terraced rice fields, and the occasional small dairy farm, we make our way past sparsely populated villages to Mai Chau. It's usually hot and steamy in the White Tay village of Mai Chau. We are staying at a fabulous lodge with an inviting swimming pool. Time for a cold beer or cocktail, and a sunset swim.

*Overnight in Mai Chau Lodge accommodation. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*



**20 November Day 12. (Monday) Mai Chau to Hanoi 160KM**

Departing from tranquil Mai Chau riding on small back country roads which skirt around the massive Hoa Binh reservoir with stunning limestone outcrops. Continuing our way on backroads to Hanoi where we began our adventure. We expect to be at our hotel around 3.00PM. We'll definitely be celebrating our safe return with a final night dinner and reminiscing about the wonderful experiences we have enjoyed.

*Overnight in the Old Quarter of Hanoi in a hotel. (Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner)*

**21 November Day 13. (Tuesday) Hanoi**

Dependent on your departure time, there is possibly time for a final purchase or some pampering like a manicure or massage before your flight.

If you require we can arrange a driver to take you to the airport for your flight.

*(Breakfast)*

**Are you planning on extra time in Vietnam before or after the tour?**

Let us know if there's anything we can assist you with.



## WHAT'S INCLUDED:

- All accommodation for the trip staying in a mix of hotels, resorts and guesthouses. Every overnight stay location is air conditioned for your comfort.
- Breakfast every morning
- 10 x fabulous lunches
- Motorcycle hire. Honda CRF250L or Honda XR150 and Classic Ural650 twin
- 10 x delicious dinners
- Comfy A/C support vehicle to carry luggage and non-riders
- All petrol & oil for your motorcycle
- Half day Hanoi City tour in US Army Jeep and Ural Side-car
- A fantastic Vietnam experience.

Not included; International and domestic flights, Vietnam Entry Visa, Travel Insurance, tips and personal expenses.

**PRICES\*** Does not include international airfares.

- NZ 6790 Rider CRF250L or Ural 650.
- NZ 6090 Pillion passenger
- NZ 6190 Rider XR150.
- NZ 5600 Passenger in Tour vehicle
- Additional NZ 1099 for Single Supplement/Own room\*\*

**DEPOSIT NZ1000 PER PERSON**

*\*Prices are subject to change. Prices are on a twin share basis.*

*\*\*Please note that if you do not wish to share or we are unable to find a suitable roommate, you will be required to pay the additional single supplement cost.*

email: [adventure@bythebackroads.com](mailto:adventure@bythebackroads.com)

Mike +64 21 2849047 (WhatsApp)<sup>†</sup>

Angela +64 21 2552806 (WhatsApp)

**[www.bythebackroads.com](http://www.bythebackroads.com)**

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<sup>†</sup> While we are away from New Zealand we will not be on roaming with our NZ phone numbers. If you want to get in touch either email or phone or message us via WhatsApp. These are the best options or contact via our By The Backroads Facebook or Instagram pages.