

Hilltribes of the North

a 13 day Vietnam Bike Tour



Day by Day Itinerary

Day 1 - You guide team will meet at Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport, but other than orientation and dinner the day is to your leisure. You will have the chance to stroll around Hoan Kiem Lake and visit the Ngoc Son Pagoda or one of the many coffee shops in the area. If coffee isn't your thing, stop at one of the "bia hoi's" located at most corners in the old quarter. In the evening we head out to a very unique restaurant – Highway 4 - serving traditional and eclectic Vietnamese food.

Day 2 - If you're feeling energetic, you can take part in early morning exercises around Hoan Kiem Lake. Otherwise, we will take you on a morning city tour to Ho Chi Minh's mausoleum. Hotel check out is at noon and we will have lunch at a local pho (chicken or beef soup) and noodle restaurant. You have the afternoon to discover some more of Hanoi and we meet in the early evening for dinner and transfer to the railway station for an overnight train to Lao Cai. Overnight on Sapaly Express Train.

Day 3 - Our train arrives in Lao Cai in the early morning. Bikes and baggage will be loaded up while we have breakfast and then we will drive 77km south to Yen Bai. By leaving the well-trodden paths of Lao Cai we will take you well off the beaten path with less tourists and more local culture! With our local expert biking guide and our jeep support team, you can explore any dirt road that peaks your curiosity and discover minority villages and the lowland countryside all the way to Tuyen Quang. Make sure to keep your eyes peeled for tea plantations and orange groves. Part of the riding will involve a short boat trip across the Thac Ba Reservoir in Pu Luong Nature Reserve. We spend the night at hotel in Tuyen Quang. (43 mi / 70 kms)

Day 4 - There is a full day of back road cycling ahead of us while we cycle towards Ba Be National Park. (Due to the distance covered today, some sections will be by jeep). Ba Be was established as a National Park in 1992 and is the leading conservation site in the country. It contains the largest natural freshwater lake in Vietnam and is home to the François langur. Surrounding this dense tropical paradise are karst limestone mountains – it is truly a magnificent place. We bed down tonight at a guesthouse inside the park. (62 mi / 100 kms)

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Day 5 - Your day begins with an idyllic boat trip on the charming Ba Be Lake. When we get back onto the bikes, we'll venture on a fantastic and challenging full day ride to Bac Me. Most sections are unsupported (jeep will have to meet the group at Bac Me), but not to worry your bike guides will be along for the riding. The road is a mixture of dirt and tarmac. As we ride alongside the Nang River into higher ground, the scenery changes and becomes wild and unspoiled. A stop for lunch in a local shop will give us more energy for the afternoon journey. We conclude our day at the rustic town of Bac Me. (43 mi / 70 kms)

Day 6 - Heading west, we ride about 25km on good paved roads, then we'll take a dirt trail that traverses through the Du Gia nature reserve - home to the endangered Tonkin Snub Nosed Monkey. There are no tourist facilities here due to its sensitive environmental status. As we bike the next 60-100km, we may encounter very poor road conditions. If the jeep cannot follow we will use motorbike support as emergency backup. Yen Minh has a bustling Sunday market where ethnic minority groups such as the Giay, Pu peo, Co Lao, Lo Lo, Red Dao, White Hmong and Tay people gather to buy and sell their wares. (56 mi / 90 kms)

Day 7 - Along these northern semi-paved roads, we will encounter little traffic. This is a good thing for we are headed into some of the most spectacular scenery that Vietnam has to offer. Dense cedar forests give way to rugged moonscapes. Often there are minority children walking along the roads - making for some memorable photo ops. Between Dong Van and Meo Vac is the highlight of the ride: the Ma Phi Leng Pass. Elevated at 1500m with the Nho Que River meandering far below, this sublime pass will take your breath away. In Meo Vac a small market is held everyday in the town square and is frequented mainly by the white Hmong, Tay and Lo Lo people. It's a quaint town and a perfect place to reflect upon our magnificent ride. (40 mi / 65 kms)

Day 8 - From Meo Vac we head south towards Chin Pin. As road conditions are generally very poor, we will loop back towards Yen Minh then continue on to Quan Ba. Be prepared for another stunning ride - but it is a challenging one! The group may have to transfer if time runs out. Overnight in Quan Ba. (50 mi / 80 kms)

Day 9 - There are good roads to travel upon as we head through the Quan Ba pass to Ha Giang (45km). After an early lunch/late breakfast we'll journey to a small junction that will lead the group east, back into the mountains on a spectacular off-road loop. Overnight in the Panhou Ec lodge. (37 mi / 60 kms)

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Day 10 - As we travel out of the mountains, we'll arrive in Bac Quang - a sizable market town located 60km south of Ha Giang. At this junction to the western roads heading to Bao Yen in Lao Cai Province we'll stop to rest and relax. Overnight Bac Quang. (42 mi / 67 kms)

Day 11 - A final ride through the valley upon a previously impassable road leads us out to the Chay River in Pho Rang. There is a little more riding to be done, but otherwise we will transfer by bus the last 60 – 80km to Lao Cai. From here the group will take the overnight train back to Hanoi. (43 mi / 70 kms)

Day 12 - Arrive in Hanoi in early morning, transfer to hotel for early check in and breakfast. The remainder of the day is free for you to relax or explore. In the evening, we regroup and go out together for our farewell dinner at one of Hanoi's top restaurants.

Day 13 – The morning is free until time for your flights. Your guide team will bid you a fond farewell

Dates & Prices:

Please check our website for the currently available dates and the applicable pricing.

<https://pedalers.travel/vietnam-cycling-tours-hilltribes-of-north-mountain-biking.htm>

At Your Request:

Private departures can be arranged upon request. November thru May is best with warm temperatures and little rain. June through September is the rainy season and due to muddy conditions on the dirt roads and trails we don't offer trips. Get your wheels rolling and request your At Your Request date today. Plan a trip for your bike club or corporate incentive, contact us for more details.

Lodging:

A mix of nice boutique hotels, simple country guesthouses and two nights in sleeper compartments on the train (all double occupancy)

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What's Included:

- 12 nights Accommodation in the area's better hotels (double occupancy)
- All meals from Dinner on Day 1 until Breakfast on Day 13
- Water, sodas or beer included at dinner
- Service of bilingual Team Pedalers Guide(s)
- Vehicle and/or Motorcycle support
- Tourist Permits for Ha Giang Region
- Sightseeing and cultural activities
- Airport pick up & drop off

Meeting & Flights:

The tour meets on Day 1 at Hanoi Airport. Guides will meet your incoming flight until 4 pm, please plan your flights to arrive accordingly. The trip ends at Hanoi Airport on Day 13.

Fly into Hanoi (HAN) before 4 pm on Day 1

Fly out of Hanoi (HAN) anytime on Day 13

NOTE: A number of flight schedules from the USA & Canada arrive late at night. We can book an extra night for you at our Hanoi hotel if you need to arrive the night before.

For assistance with flights contact our friends at Exito Travel: help.pedalers.travel/flights.htm

Route Conditions:

Our route is a mixed of paved roads, dirt roads and trails. Traffic is fairly light. The route is suitable for mountain bikes and touring bikes with wider tires. Terrain is hilly with some alpine climbs to passes.

Visas & Travel Documents:

Passports are required for all guests. Your passport should have at least 6 months validity past your intended travel dates. Visas are required for all visitors and should be obtained in advance from the nearest Vietnamese Embassy.

For assistance with obtaining your visas contact our friends at VisaHQ: help.pedalers.travel/visas.htm