

SPICEROADS

CYCLING



MOUNTAIN BIKING VIETNAM'S NORTHWEST MOUNTAINS

Tour Code
VNM-VNW

10 DAYS
9 NIGHTS

	Destinations	Vietnam
	Tour Meets Tour Ends	Hanoi Hanoi
	Fly in to Fly out of	Noi Bai International Airport (HAN) Noi Bai International Airport (HAN)
	Group Size Minimum Age	2-16 riders 18 (on scheduled departures)

ACTIVITY PROFILE



7 Cycling days	510 km Total cycling distance
73 km Avg distance / day	m Avg climbing / day

PRICING



Price	US\$ 1,995
Bike Hire (Mountain Bike)	US\$ 135
Bike Hire (E-Bike)	US\$ 300
Single Supplement	US\$ 330

WHAT'S INCLUDED

- ✓ SpiceRoads jersey
- ✓ Water bottle
- ✓ Support vehicle
- ✓ Guide(s)
- ✓ Meals (as indicated)
- ✓ Accommodation
- ✓ Snacks and drinks

WHAT'S EXCLUDED

- ✗ International flights
- ✗ Domestic flights
- ✗ Airport pick up
- ✗ Airport drop off
- ✗ Visa fees
- ✗ Alcohol
- ✗ Tips

DEPARTURES



03 March - 12 March 2019
04 August - 13 August 2019
08 September - 17 September 2019
05 January - 14 January 2020
01 March - 10 March 2020
02 August - 11 August 2020
06 September - 15 September 2020

TRIP PROFILE

Our tour is the ultimate mountain bike adventure. After an overnight train ride from Hanoi, we ride 510 km through some of the most spectacular mountain scenery anywhere in the world. The roads are a mixture of good asphalt, broken or potholed roads, and some off-road cycling tracks. Although the riding is tough, it is very enjoyable, and anyone who enjoys hill riding will love this tour. The scenery really is fantastic, and the people are extraordinarily colourful and friendly. This trip will be supported by jeep and motorbike. Due to the nature of some of the trails, the jeep cannot follow, then we will have motorbike support. During these motorbike sections, we will have rendezvous points with the support vehicle.

Suitability: This trip is tough due to the geography. It is a very mountainous region, and we have to cross many valleys and mountains to get to Dien Bien Phu. The tour builds up to some tough all-day riding with long distances. This trip should only be attempted by those in good physical condition.

Biking Conditions: This tour is mainly on broken and pot-holed roads with significant portions on dirt tracks. While the off-road riding is not that technical, some experience will help. A support truck or motorcycle is always available to help when required.



Day 1 Hanoi - Lao Cai

We meet in Hanoi, having a bit of a chance to explore Vietnam's capital before we catch the Tulico Express, the overnight train up north, to the start of our adventure. Bikes and luggage can be dropped off at our local office, so you can visit Ho Chi Minh's

Mausoleum, go to the Temple of Literature, or have a relaxing massage to help recover from jet lag. We meet up in early evening for dinner and then transfer to the train station, along with bikes and bags for the 260-km overnight train journey to Lao Cai. The train is a very civilised affair with compartments sleeping four and a carriage where you can buy food and refreshments.



Overnight on train to Lao Cai



Dinner

Day 2 Lao Cai - Sapa

We cycle 4 km on a tarmac road, then turn left and enjoy a 3-km off-road ride along a hillside. This undulating ride along a dirt track has a few short challenging hills but with beautiful mountain scenery. We cycle downhill to Ma Tra Village, home to the Black Hmong. Here we have lunch before we continue cycling on a rough track looping to Ta Phin and some dramatic mountain scenery. We take a break in Ta Phin, one of the most beautiful villages in Sapa, and our guide will take you around and introduce you to the culture and customs of the Red Dzao people. From Ta Phin, there are several alternative tracks that loop and drop down to the main Lao Cai road. Depending on weather conditions, these can be muddy and slippery but are great fun to ride. Once we get to the main road, we transfer back to Sapa, or you can cycle the extra 15 km, if you wish. Due to the nature of the trail, the ride cannot be supported the whole way by jeep, but there will be spots along the trail where we can rendezvous with the support vehicle. Late afternoon can be spent exploring Sapa before we meet up for dinner.



Chau Long Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 22km

Day 3 Sapa – Tran Ton Pass – Tam Duong – Lai Chau

We ride out of Sapa and complete the 15-km road climb up to Tram Ton Pass – the highest road pass in Vietnam at 2,000 m. We then have a superb 25-km descent into a beautiful valley. The countryside is truly wonderful as we pass tea plantations, and all inhabitants are from minority tribes. The weather always seems to get clearer this side of the mountains, and if we look back, we should get views of Fansipan (3,143 m), the highest mountain in Indochina. At the small town of Tam Duong, we have lunch and then turn left off the main road to cycle 28 km on a lovely country lane through the remote villages of Ban Hon and Ban Giang. We have now left any sign of other western tourists and are in a land of rice paddies, small coffee plantations, and sharp limestone cliffs. We finish in the new city of Lai Chau.



Muong Thanh Lai Chau Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 73km

Day 4 Lai Chau – Muong Lay

We start the day with an easy pedal from the sleepy town of Lai Chau, but things pick up after 10 km, where there is a climb that soon turns into a long, sweeping downhill. The first half of the road is amid mountains and rice terraces; the second is along the Nam Na River, with towering mountains on both sides of the road. The afternoon ride toward Muong Lay is mainly flat with a few slight dips and rises to keep things interesting. The town is at the confluence of the Nam Na River, the Nam Lay River, and the Da River.



Lan Anh 1 Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 107km

Day 5 Muong Lay - Dien Bien Phu

Another hilly day, but we start nice and easy following a river for 15 km, before starting our first climb of the day of over 19 km when we reach a pass at 860 m. At the top, we'll take a break at a well-located tea shop for refreshments. The average gradient of the pass is relatively easy, averaging around 6-8%. Dropping down to a plateau around 400 m, we will stop regularly at some of the last hill tribe villages and have lunch in a local restaurant, where our guide can introduce you to the local customs. There is another short final climb up to a 650-m pass before we prepare a broad smile to greet the kids as we cycle through paddy fields on the final flat stretch into the historic town of Dien Bien Phu.



Muong Thanh Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 103km

Day 6 Dien Bien Phu Rest Day

After all those hills, your legs deserve a rest, and what better place to do it than in the history-rich city of Dien Bien Phu. We visit the war museum which has interesting displays about the climactic battle of the First Indochina War between French Union forces and Vietnamese Viet Minh communist revolutionary forces. From March until May 1954, the Viet Minh pounded the French positions, killing up to 3,000 men, though it's estimated that the Viet Minh lost more than twice that number. The massive French defeat effectively ended the war. There's also a local market to explore. Dinner is on your own tonight.



Muong Thanh Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch

Day 7 Dien Bien Phu – Son La

We have an early start to transfer approximately 2.5 hours to Tuan Giao to avoid the dust from road construction. In Tuan Giao, we get back on the bikes and soon start climbing. The climb over Pha Din Pass, a famous Indochina War site, won't soon be forgotten, as it's an unrelenting 10-18% grade for 14 km. The switchbacks lead up a very fertile valley, lined with terraced rice paddies on the pretty ride. The traditional dress of the locals varies from village to village depending on their tribe. After lunch at a local restaurant, the road rolls gently downhill with one last 5-km climb at the end of the day into Son La.



Hanoi Hotel



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 84km

Day 8 Son La – Mai Chau

We start the day with a transfer to avoid the main highway, but you'll still get the distance in as today's ride totals 96 km! We ride on a looping country road that passes through a patchwork quilt of corn, sugar cane, and barley fields. We ride 51 km before we break for lunch at a restaurant in Kim Chung town. We then transfer for two hours to avoid a rough and steep section. Then it's time to get back on the bikes and enjoy the last 45 km, which are down, down, and down – except for a few small climbs – to Mai Chau Valley where our wonderful lodge for the evening awaits you.



Mai Chau Valley View



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

Day 9 Mai Chau – Hanoi

After breakfast, and perhaps a quick walk up to a temple, we pick up our bikes and cycle 25 km on single track through the valley. Our trail takes us to ethnic villages, over wooden bridges and through rice paddies. We finish riding at Cun Pheo and transfer to Lac village for lunch. We then board our private boat for a three-hour cruise on the Da River, the largest reservoir in Northern Vietnam, and head to Hoa Binh. Relax, take in the country life as it passes by, and luxuriate in the cool breeze as we cruise. At Hoa Binh, we hop on a bus and transfer two hours to Hanoi, arriving late in the afternoon. We regroup later in the evening for our farewell dinner.



Church Boutique Hang Gai



Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner



Ride 25km

Day 10 Hanoi

Our trip ends in Hanoi, where you might want to take the morning to pick up your bike and enjoy a cycle ride around the Old Quarter. Hotel check out is at noon.



Breakfast

NUTS & BOLTS

Bikes

Because some people can't imagine going on a trip without their own beloved bicycle, we do not provide them as part of this tour. However, you can hire bikes locally for the price listed in the tour pricing section. The bikes are well-known makes of mountain bikes with lightweight alloy frames, 24- to 27-speed gearing, v-brakes, and Shimano components and front suspension. If you bring your own bike, please make sure it is a mountain bike, preferably with front suspension, in good mechanical order.

You can also hire an electric bike (or an E-Bike) for the price listed in the tour pricing section. We have 2 sizes available: S = 155 cm - 170 cm and M = 171 cm - 180 cm. The E-Bikes are GIANT brand with SHIMANO Alivio 1,9 speed, disc brakes, and adjustable suspension fork.

Bike Repairs

Basic spares and tools are carried by the guide and on the support vehicle, though we cannot guarantee having spares for every conceivable problem. Carrying a basic tool kit, a spare tube and a pump while riding is recommended.

Safety

Wearing a helmet is required on all our biking adventures and is non negotiable. If you do not wear a helmet you will not be allowed to cycle. Your tour leader is trained in first aid and emergency rescue, but to a large degree you must be responsible for your own safety while riding. It is therefore compulsory that you take out travel insurance that will cover you for a mountain biking tour.

Guides

You will be led by a local English-speaking guide and if the group is 9 people or more we will add another guide to the tour. All our guides are well informed in the history,

culture and religions of the area where you are biking and are skilled at passing that knowledge on to you. Your guide is also medically trained and an experienced cyclist, able to handle most minor repairs en route.

THE NITTY GRITTY

Passports and Visas

Please make sure your passport is valid for a minimum of 6 months beyond the duration of stay in Vietnam. Most nationalities require a visa for Vietnam, however 22 nationalities including citizens of UK, France, Germany, Spain and Italy are exempted from visa when entering Vietnam not exceed 15 days, regardless of type of passport and immigration purpose. However they must acquire a tourist visa if staying longer. For a list of countries exempt go to this [page](#).

For [46 nationalities](#) – including Australians, Canadians and Americans – an [e-visa](#) can be obtained. This must be applied for and received before departure to Vietnam. To check for the E-visa and tourist fee for single entry and multiple entries please check the [Visa fee](#). You must scan a copy of your photo and passport when applying and get your approval letter of your visa on arrival at international airport of Vietnam. To learn more click [Visa process](#). The processing time is 1-3 working days (not include Saturday, Sunday and Vietnamese holiday).

Alternatively you can obtain a visa to Vietnam from the embassy worldwide. Here is the list of [locations](#). You must specify your arrival date when applying for a visa and it is from this date that the 30 days will be calculated. When picking up your visa check to be sure the dates match your travel plans and that it is stamped directly into your passport as it will not be accepted if it is stapled in.

Health

Recommended vaccinations are typhoid, polio, tetanus and hepatitis A. A certificate for Yellow Fever is required when arriving from an infected area within six days. Vietnam is a malarial area and you will need to take anti-malarial tablets. Please speak to your doctor for the most up to date information.

Weather

Weather in Vietnam is divided into 4 main regions - the far north, north, central and south.

The far north can get very cold in December and January while the dry season runs from October to late March and the wet season between April to September.

In Hanoi & the north, it is hot, wet and humid from May to October while November to April is cooler and dry.

Central Vietnam experiences hot, dry weather between January & August with temperatures ranging in the mid 30°C. High levels of rainfall are during September - November.

Southern Vietnam is dry and hot from November to April, and warm and wet between May & October, with the highest rainfall in June, July & August.

Food

Meals are included as per the itinerary where B = breakfast, L = lunch, D = dinner. Most meals are Vietnamese food and features noodles, rice curries and soups. Vietnamese cuisine is world famous and we make sure you sample as much variety as possible. Any special dietary requirements can also be catered for as well. Please let us know at the time of booking.

Drink

Keeping you completely hydrated is a job we take very seriously. Cold water, some energy-restoring local fruit, and soft drinks are included in the tour price while riding.

Soft drinks and other beverages during meals are not included. Beer is freely available everywhere in Vietnam but is NOT included in the price.

Solo Travelers

SpiceRoads does not require you to pay a surcharge for traveling alone. We will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveler of the same gender and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is listed above.

Extra Expenses

We recommend that you tuck away a few extra dollars, perhaps US\$10, for incidentals. It is customary to tip local tour guides and drivers, however, the amount you give should be dependent on the level of service you receive. As a general guide, we suggest US\$ 3-4 per person per day is appropriate.

Money

The official national currency is the Vietnam dong (d), but the US dollar is widely accepted in tourist centers. However, in smaller towns and villages the dong is preferred. ATMs are available in all major tourist destinations and big cities. Vietcombank has the best network with a single withdrawal limit of 2,000,000d (about US\$125). Most major currencies can be exchanged at leading banks in Vietnam, but the US dollar is preferred away from the tourist centers. Changing US\$100 will make you an instant millionaire! You cannot legally take the dong out of Vietnam but you can reconvert reasonable amounts of it into US dollars on departure.

GENERAL BOOKING INFO

Booking

If this is the tour for you here's what you need to do to confirm your place: Read our [Booking Conditions](#)

From the tour page click the 'Book Now' link. All departures for this tour will appear, just select the date you'd like to travel. There is a minimum number of participants (usually 2) required to enable the trip to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to Depart'. Once a trip is guaranteed to depart you are free to book your flights and make other travel arrangements. If you are unsure about the trip status, please [email us](#) or call our office. For the next steps you'll need to know the names of the people traveling and have either a Visa or a MasterCard. If you wish you can also provide extra details such as passport numbers, height, or you can add that later by logging into [Manage My Trip](#) (we'll set up an account for you automatically if you don't already have one). However, if you wish to get a children's discount, please do fill out the date of birth of the riders. If you are having any problems, [please send us an email](#), or give us a call (+66 2 381 7490) and one of our travel specialists will assist you with your booking.

Deposit

For Long Tours (7 days or more) to guarantee your place we require a 30% or 500 USD deposit, whichever is the greater. For Short Tours (6 days or less) we require full payment to guarantee your place. We also require that you take out [travel insurance](#) when you book your holiday. Besides covering you during your holiday it will also enable you to claim for any money that you have paid to us, including your deposit, should you have to cancel your trip.

Balance

Full payment must be paid 45 days before the departure date with fees for any bicycle rental(s), single supplement(s) and extra hotel nights. Our confirmation will include personal details you provided us (including your flight information), visa application advice, a packing suggestion list and a detailed tour itinerary. It will also include a checklist to ensure you get everything ready for your holiday.

Cancellation Policy

On the rare occasions when we, SpiceRoads, must cancel a trip, all payments received to date will be 100% refunded, which constitutes full settlement. There will be absolutely no deductions. If you, the client, must cancel your reservation, your cancellation fee will be determined according to when you cancel. For full details, please read our [cancellation policy](#).

Loyalty Riders Club

For those who have been on several long tours with us we reward customer loyalty by offering repeat customers a special discount off the tour price (excludes single supplement and bike rental). If this is your fourth scheduled tour or more you will receive a 5% discount. If this is your eighth scheduled tour or more we will extend a 10% discount. The discount will be reflected in your online booking, but please contact us if any questions. Loyalty discounts can not be used in conjunction with any other offer. Note: Only tours of 7 days or more will be applicable for loyalty discount.

International Flights

International flights, to and from the start and finish points are not included in the tour price. Once your tour is Guaranteed to Depart you can book your flight. Please contact us for advice before arranging flights for the best arrival and departure times. We would only cancel a trip for an extreme circumstance, but in that case, where we cancel your trip, we cannot be liable for losses incurred relating to any flight booking you have made. Please claim any losses from your [travel insurance](#) that you acquired when you booked your holiday.

Newsletter

Our adventure travel [e-newsletter](#) is full of travel news, trip information, interesting stories and contests. To avoid missing out on special offers and updates from SpiceRoads, be sure to subscribe.

The information in this document is given in good faith, and covers the average range of conditions likely to be found on this trip. Please note that the itinerary is subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances, however, we will always do our best to adhere to this original itinerary

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