

HO CHI MINH TRAIL MOTORCYCLE TOURING

(8 days/ 7 nights)

Day 1: Hanoi - Mai Chau, 165 km ~ 5h

Heading out of Hanoi on road number 6 to Mai Chau, and idyllic valley populated by mainly White Thai ethnic people. Visiting Mai Chau, you have a chance to enjoy folk songs and traditional colourful culture of White Thai in Mai Chau. The scenery of the arrival to Mai Chau is characterized with beautiful limestone mountains and colourful hill tribes who can be seen and visited on the way. We also have an opportunity en route to learn about the culture of the rice-cultivating inhabitants in the Red River valley and Da River down stream. After lunch, we have the whole afternoon free to climb up to the top of Thung Nhuoi pass. From the top of the pass there is a beautiful view of Mai Chau valley, often engulfed by clouds but still a sight to be enjoyed. After visiting this wonderful site, we drop down to explore more of the area of White Thai people.

In the evening, we can enjoy a local dinner and overnight in a beautiful village at the edge of a river. After dinner, you can spend the evening sitting together around a fire and join in a Thai traditional music show. In their traditional attire, typical of their culture, Thai women invite visitors to participate in the Xoe dance. To the rhythmical and ebullient music, the hosts and guests will dance for hours hand-in-hand. When they get tired, they stop for a while to drink special sticky rice liquor called "ruou can". Visitors who participate in the Xoe dance once, especially by the light of a fire at night are likely to remember it forever.

- L,D
- Night in homestay with Thai family
- Highlight : traditional Thai performance

Day 2: Mai Chau – Vinh, 280 km ~ 7h

Follow the route No 15 passing Pu Luong Nature Reserve, we meet Ho Chi Minh Highway at Cam Thuy then heading south to Huong Khe.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel
- Highlight : riding through bamboo forest & along Ma river

Day 3: Vinh - Phong Nha, 220 km ~ 5h

Continue to visit Dong Loc intersection, during the anti-US war, Dong Loc was the main junction of the supply lines from the North to Ho Chi Minh Trail. US aircraft concentrated a great numbers of bomb and ammunitions in repeated efforts to destroy the junction and the surrounding areas. This section of road was undergone of 2,057 bombardments. Ten young female volunteers, aged from 17 to 20 was assigned to maintain the road and kept it open to traffic. Despite repeated heavy bombardments of the road by US air force, they stayed at their post, using only shovels and hoes to level bomb craters. Tragically, they all were killed during an air attack of the road on July 24, 1968. There is a monument right at the placed they were killed.

We head southwest to follow this famous historical trail along the Laotian border to Phong Nha National Park, the latest Natural World Heritage Site of Vietnam.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel
- Highlight : boat trip to Phong Nha cave – the most magnificent cave in Vietnam & listed as the World Natural Wonder.

Day 4: Phong Nha - Khe Sanh, 240 km ~ 6h

After visiting Phong Nha caves by boat we keep riding along the Laotian border on the western lines of the trail to visit Khe Sanh, one of the most fierce battlefields in the Vietnam War.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel
- Highlight : visit the battle fields during American War in Khe Sanh

Day 5: Khe Sanh - DMZ - Cua Tung – Hue, 250 km ~ 6h

DMZ - The Demilitarized Zone between North and South Vietnam was established in April 1954 as a result of the Geneva Conference ending the war between the Viet Minh and the French. The DMZ in Vietnam is on the 17th parallel. In reality, the DMZ extended about a mile on either side of the Ben Hai River and west to east from the Laotian border to the South China Sea. This was one of the fiercest battles for the local people during the American War in Vietnam. Hundreds of locals were killed while trying to swim to the other banks to join their families.

Follow the route No 9 to visit Darkrong, Lang Vey, Camp Carol, Truong Son Nation Cemetery where more than 10,000 Vietnamese soldiers died, most unknown when US troops occupied the area during the US war.

Continue to visit Hien Luong Bridge on Ben Hai River. In the afternoon, we head south for Hue city – the World Heritage Site.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel
- Highlight : visit Vinh Moc tunnel, learn how Vietnamese stayed survived after the war.

Day 6: Hue

Hue was known as the political and cultural centre of the Feudal State of Vietnam during the Nguyen Dynasty. Boat ride along the Perfume River from where you can appreciate the exuberance of this ancient imperial city. Along the river, you will visit Thien Mu Pagoda, Minh Mang, Tu Duc Tombs...

No riding today, just relax.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel

Day 7: Hue - Da Nang – Hoi An, 140 km ~ 3h

Ride up the Me Oi pass to A Luoi in order to rejoin the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We will visit many villages of Ta Oi and Co Tu ethnic minority, near Laotian border on the side of a large mountain covered in thick jungle.

Ride until the China Beach, where US marines first landed in Indochina and then continue riding along the coast down South to Hoi An.

- B,L,D
- Night in hotel
- Highlight : ride on "one of the most beautiful coast road" in the world as recommended by Top Gear from BBC.

Day 8: Hoi An

Full day exploring the World Culture Heritage site of Hoi An, the old town, a unique combination of architectural monuments of various forms: residential house,

assembly hall, communal house, pagoda, shrine, temple, water well, bridge, wharf, market...has been preserved intact. Hoi An is a good example of a symbolic oriental city in the Middle Age, so wonderful with its aged and traditionally maintained habits and customs. The town is now an excellent model of a living museum of architecture and urban lifestyle.

- B,L
- Tour ends