

## [One day excursion to Mai Chau-terrace rice-fields](#) (135 kms south-west from Hanoi)

### **Itinerary:**

07:45-8:00 Pickup at meeting point. Depart for Mai Chau,

10:00-10:30 Short break at Ky Son (snake-wine bottles, local cigars...),

11:30-12:30 Scenic photo stop of Mai Chau valley (from the top of Cun Mountain at Thung Khe). Visit the local market with tasty fruits,

12:15-13:00 Arrive in Mai Chau. Traditional lunch in local village,

13:00-15:30: Bicycle ride with local tour guide, see farmers working in fields, locals weaving scarves... (Biking through the small roads between the rice fields and sometimes cows and water-buffalos block our way ☺),

15:00-18:30 Leave Mai Chau. Arrive to Hanoi.

**Price: ~ 700k (~ 32US\$), 75% discount for children < 8yrs**

**What's Included:** Round-trip transport, all entrance tickets, biking, a bottle of water, lunch, English-speaking tour guide.

**What's Not Included:** extra drinks and foods, insurance, personal expenses, tips & gratuities (Tip for tour-guide and bus-driver (not obligation but should be done)). We will pay for the whole group and share the cost.

*Be sure to bring sunglasses, sun cream, camera, convenient shoes and trousers walking in the difficult terrain, bug spray and anti-wind and rain coat, hat.*

### **Mai Chau**

Located about 135km south-west from Hanoi, about 60km from Hoa Binh town in a picturesque valley with a patchwork quilt of rice paddies and farms. Mai Chau offers some of the most spectacular scenery in Vietnam, from the top of Cun Mountain, with a green valley and stilt houses.

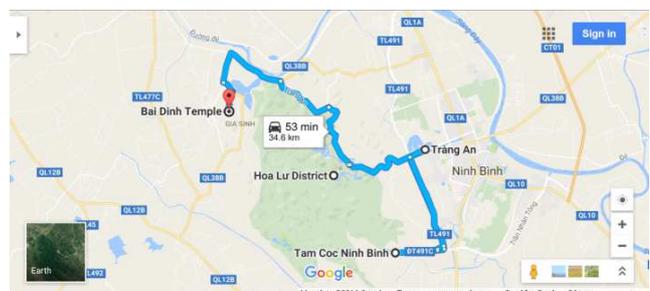
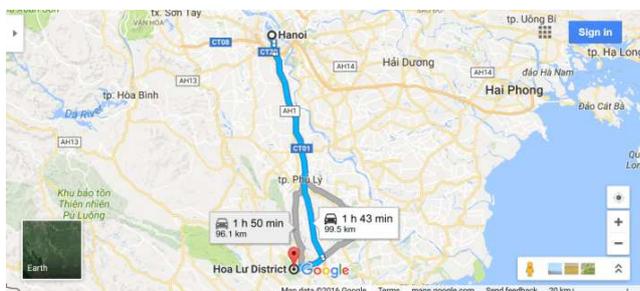


Mai Chau has a population of about 47,500 inhabitants that belong to different ethnic minority groups such as the White Thai, H'mong, Zao, Muong, Tay, Hoa and Viet. The Mai Chau hill tribes are famous for their handicrafts, in particular for their skills in embroidering clothes.

On Sunday, the White Thai ethnic group bringing a lot of people into the market in the town where traditional Thai dishes are made and revel in traditional dances.

In the spring, Mai Chau displays a riot of color with blooming flowers and peach blossoms and in October, golden fields of rice about to be harvested.

## [One day excursion to Hoa Lu-Tam Coc or Bai Dinh-Trang An](#) (~ 100kms south from Hanoi)



### **Itinerary:**

07:45-8:00 Pick-up at your accommodation in Hanoi's Old Quarter. Head out on the drive to Ninh Binh province,

**a) If we choose Hoa Lu-Tam Coc:**

10:00-11:30: Arrive at Hoa Lu- the ancient Royal capital of Vietnam. Visit the temples of King Dinh and King Le,  
11:30-13:00 Arrive at Tam Coc wharf. Buffet lunch featuring Vietnamese cuisine,  
13:00-15:00 (Bamboo) Sampan boat trip through “Three caves” (Tam Coc),  
15:00-15:15 Return to Tam Coc wharf for a short break,  
15:15-16:30 Bike around countryside villages to visit Bich Dong pagoda (15<sup>th</sup> century),  
16:30-19:00 Depart for Hanoi. Arrive back in Hanoi.

**Price: ~ 600k (~28-30US\$), 75% discount for children < 8yrs**

**What's Included:** Round-trip transport, all entrance tickets, a bottle of water, Buffet lunch, English-speaking tour guide, Biking from Tam Coc to Bich Dong.

**What's Not Included:** extra drinks and foods, insurance, personal expenses, tips & gratuities (Tip for each boat-driver (obligation, since they did not get much money from the “cooperative-authority), Tip for tour-guide and bus-driver (not obligation but should be done); we will pay for the whole group and share the cost.

*Be sure to bring sunglasses, sun cream, camera, convenient shoes and trousers. Please note that you will be sitting in a bamboo sampan boat for around 90 minutes.*

**b) If we choose Bai Dinh-Trang An:**

10:00-12:30: Arrive to Bai Dinh pagoda. Visit the Pagoda (extra payment for the electric car to the pagoda).

12:30-14:00: Lunch in the local restaurant with local dishes (goat, pork)

14:00-16:30 Boat trip along a small river to explore nine caves in Trang An,

16:30-19:00 Depart for Hanoi. Arrive back in Hanoi.

**c) We can choose Hoa Lu-Trang An (with the same price):**

**d) We can ask for a combined trip Hoa Lu-Trang an-Bai dinh (with an additional payment)**

### **Hoa Lu**

located in Ninh Binh province 10 additional 10 km south of Hanoi, the area of rice-fields broken by picturesque limestone mountains.

For 41 years, from 968 to 1009 Hoa Lu was the capital of Đại Cồ Việt, an independent Vietnam founded in 968 by the local warlord Đinh Bộ Lĩnh (the First Dinh Emperor-Đinh Tiên Hoàng) against China's Southern Han Dynasty. In 1010 Lý Thái Tổ-the founder of the Lý Dynasty (1009-1225) transferred the capital to Thăng Long (now Hanoi).



Hoa Lu (an area of 3.0km<sup>2</sup>) was located in a flat valley between small but steep limestone mountains that created virtually impenetrable barriers. In all, the capital was protected by ten sections of wall. Hoa Lu 's defenses were never actually tested by an enemy army. Only few vestiges of the 10th century remain such as temples built in honor of the emperors Đinh Tiên Hoàng and Lê Đại Hành.

### **Tam Cốc-Bích Động**

Tam Coc (nearby Hoa Lu) is often referred to as “Ha Long among the rice paddies”. Visitors are conveyed by rowboat along the peaceful Tam Coc stream past green fields and the feet of mountains into the mouths of caves, where they encounter stalactites and stalagmites that shimmer like gemstones just inches from the water. The Tam Coc includes three natural caves: Hang Cả, Hang Hai and Hang Ba (first, second and third cave). The largest is 125m long with its ceiling about 2m high above the water. 2hrs excursion by small boats along the Ngô Đồng River: beginning at the village of Van Lam and proceeding through a scenic landscape dominated by rice fields and floating through the 3 caves.



Bích Động is a pagoda on nearby Ngu Nhạc Mountain dating to 1428, comprising three structures: Hạ, Trung, and Thượng Pagodas.

## Trang An grottos

Trang An Landscape Complex-An-the eco tourist attraction located in the East of Ninh Binh, with area of 2000 ha. It is dominated by the large limestone karst peaks which create steep vertical cliffs covered in plants. The area features more than 30 valleys and lakes and 50 cross-water caves.

In Trang An you take a boat trip along Sào Khê river to visit many caves of different sizes in a beautiful scenery of mountain and rivers, Sang Cave (Bright), Toi Cave (Dark), Ba Giot Cave (Three droplets), Nau Ruou Cave (Wine-cooking)... There are a few stops at old temples along the way.



## Bái Đính Pagoda (Chùa Bái Đính)

is the largest Buddhism center of South east Asia on Bai Dinh Mountain with more than 500 La Han statues and the biggest Buddha statue made in bronze with 10 meters height, 100 tons in weight.

Bai Dinh Pagoda includes Tam The (Past, Present and Future) Temple, Sanctuary and Bodhisatva Kwan Yin statue, Dharma Temple, Bell-tower, Three-door temple gate, and dormitory area for Buddhist monks, etc. In front of Pagoda valley, a hundred of excavators, bulldozers and power-shovels are digging land and build up a dike to make a huge semicircular lake.

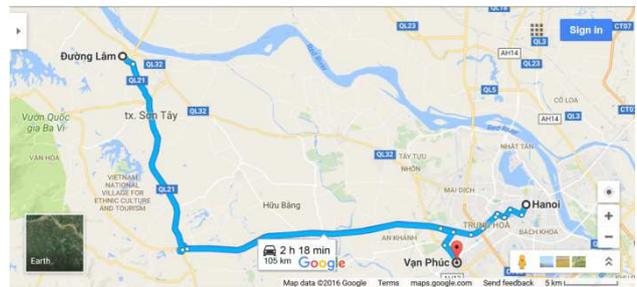


The original Bái Đính pagoda is located in the foothills some 800m from the new temple. Ascending a series of over 300 stone steps, the path passes under an ornamental gate to reach the entry. The temple itself is located in a series of small caves on the mountainside.

## One day excursion to Duong Lam ancient village and Van Phuc silk village (60kms north west and 15km south west from Hanoi)

### Itinerary:

- 8:00 Picked up and Depart for Duong Lam ancient village,
- 10:30-12:30 Arrive at Duong Lam. Visit Mong Phu temple, Mia pagoda, the temples of King Ngo Quyen and King Phung Hung,
- 12:30-13:30 Have lunch in the ancient house dated from 400 years old,
- 13:30-15:00 Get in the bus to head back to Van Phuc village,
- 15:00-17:30 Visit Van Phuc Silk village-the birthplace of the traditionally manual silk-making in Vietnam. Experience the process of making silk threads from cocoons. Visit local market.
- 17:30 The bus takes the visitors to the pick-up spot. Tour ends



**Price: ~ 600k (28-30US\$), 75% discount for children < 8yrs**

**What's Included:** Round-trip transport, all entrance tickets, biking, a bottle of water, lunch, English-speaking tour guide.

**What's Not Included:** extra drinks and foods, insurance, personal expenses, tips & gratuities (Tip for tour-guide and driver (not obligation but should be done); we will pay for the whole group and share the cost.

*Be sure to bring sunglasses, camera, convenient shoes and trousers (especially for biking).*

## Duong Lam ancient village (làng cổ Đường Lâm)

a purely agricultural village of the Northern Red River delta (50kms west of Hanoi) where still preserve many hundred-year-old houses: the biggest ancient house was build 200 years ago and the most ancient house back to 400 years ago.

Mông Phụ temple (1694) in Mong Phu hamlet - the only hamlet whose original village entrance gate remains intact.

Ngo Quyen temple and Phung Hung temple are dedicated to two national heroes (who were native of Đường Lâm). Ngo Quyen in 938 defeated the Chinese at the famous Battle of Bạch Đằng River and ended 1,000 years of Chinese domination dating back to 111BC under the Han Dynasty. Phung Hung in 791 (and his brother, Phùng Hải) led a rebellion against the ruling Chinese Tang Dynasty and then he briefly reigned over Vietnam during the 8th century.



Mía Pagoda is built in 15th century and admire 287 statues of all sizes, e.g. the statue of Buddha in the Himalayas and the statues of the Eight Vajra Deities.

### **Van Phuc silk village**

situated on the bank of Nhuệ River, about 15km southwest of Hanoi. Van Phuc is the most ancient silk village with its traditional sericulture, weaving, and silk products. The silk is made by very simple looms, which is the genuinely traditional Vietnamese way of making silk. Silk was considered as extremely precious handwork which was only used to tailor Royal members' and aristocrats' dress.



Since 1990, it has been known widely in many countries all over the world. One will be impressed by typical manner of an ancient village in the north of Vietnam with banyan tree, well, communal house, and the sound of power-looms everywhere.

Many families open their own shops on the main road of the village creating a “town of silk” with various products made of silk.