Northern Vietnam Discovery: Ninh Binh, Ha Long Bay & Ha Giang – 6 Days

6D / 5N	Moderate	Private	USD 370 / pax
Duration	Difficulty	Tour Type	Starting From

Explore the diverse landscapes and rich culture of Northern Vietnam on this six-day adventure. Discover the ancient capital of Hoa Lu and scenic Trang An or Tam Coc in Ninh Binh, cruise the iconic limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay, and traverse the dramatic mountain passes of Ha Giang.

DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

Hanoi → Ninh Binh → Ha Long → Ha Giang

TOUR OVERVIEW

Overview of Your Northern Vietnam Adventure

This comprehensive six-day, five-night tour invites you to experience the breathtaking natural beauty and historical depth of Northern Vietnam. Beginning in Hanoi, you'll travel to the serene landscapes of Ninh Binh, often called 'Halong Bay on land,' before embarking on a memorable overnight cruise through the emerald waters of actual Ha Long Bay. The journey culminates with an exploration of Ha Giang's rugged mountains and ethnic minority villages, offering a profound insight into Vietnam's diverse geography and heritage.

Highlights of the Expedition

From ancient temples to majestic bays and towering peaks, this itinerary is packed with unique experiences. You'll have the opportunity to cycle through tranquil villages, paddle through hidden caves, and witness spectacular panoramic views. The tour offers a blend of cultural immersion, active exploration, and relaxation, ensuring a memorable trip through some of Vietnam's most iconic regions.

Route Summary

The adventure begins with a transfer from Hanoi to Ninh Binh, where you'll explore historical sites and natural wonders. Following an overnight stay, you'll head to Ha Long Bay for a captivating cruise experience. After returning to Hanoi, the journey continues northward to Ha Giang, where two days are dedicated to exploring its dramatic loop. The tour concludes with a return transfer to Hanoi.

Who This Tour Suits

This tour is ideal for travelers seeking a multi-faceted experience of Northern Vietnam, combining cultural discovery with stunning natural scenery and a touch of adventure. It's suitable for those comfortable with varied modes of transport and moderate physical activity, such as cycling and climbing steps. Families, couples, and solo explorers looking for an immersive journey will find this itinerary particularly appealing.

Practical Information for Travelers

Accommodation includes comfortable homestays in Ninh Binh and Ha Giang, alongside a premium 4-star cruise experience in Ha Long Bay. Meals are provided as indicated, featuring local specialties. Transportation involves air-conditioned shuttle buses, private transfers, and a cruise boat, ensuring comfortable travel between destinations. An English-speaking guide accompanies the journey, enhancing your understanding of the sites visited.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

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* Explore Hoa Lu, Vietnam's ancient capital, and its historic temples.
* Choose between a boat trip through Trang An's UNESCO-listed grottoes or Tam Coc's 'Halong Bay on land'.
* Ascend Mua Cave's 500 steps for panoramic views over Ninh Binh's karst landscape.
* Enjoy an overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay, featuring kayaking and Ti Top Island exploration.
* Witness a stunning sunrise Tai Chi session on the sundeck of your Ha Long Bay cruise.
* Discover the magnificent Sung Sot Cave, one of Ha Long Bay's largest grottoes.
* Embark on the dramatic Ha Giang Loop, visiting Heaven's Gate Quan Ba and Ma Pi Leng Pass.
* Visit traditional villages like Thon Tha, Ha Thanh, Lung Cam, and Lo Lo Chai in Ha Giang.
* Experience the local culture and hospitality with overnight stays in comfortable homestays.

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 — Ninh Binh Ancient Capital and Scenic Karst Exploration

Meals: B, L | Stay: Homestay in Ninh Binh | Transport: Shuttle bus, bicycle, boat

Your journey begins with a morning pickup from your Hanoi Old Quarter hotel between 7:30 and 8:00 AM. After a brief comfort stop, you'll arrive in Hoa Lu, Vietnam's ancient capital from 968 to 1010. Here, you'll explore the historic temples dedicated to King Dinh and King Le, gaining insights into the Dinh, Le, and Ly Dynasties' rule over Vietnamese history.

Around 11:15 AM, you have the option to embark on a 30-minute cycling excursion to observe local village life, or you may choose to relax at a restaurant, enjoying views of the surrounding lake, waterfall, and valleys. A buffet lunch featuring regional specialties will be served at 12:00 PM, with vegetarian options available.

In the early afternoon, select one of two iconic experiences: a 1.5-hour boat trip through Tam Coc, known for its picturesque paddy fields, limestone karsts, and cave system (Hang Ca, Hang Hai, Hang Ba), or a 1.5-hour boat ride through Trang An, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famous for its beautiful tunnel caves and a filming location for 'Kong: Skull Island'. The day concludes with a visit to Mua Cave, requiring a climb of 500 steps to Ngoa Long Mountain's peak for breathtaking panoramic views of the city and Tam Coc below. Afterward, transfer to your homestay in Ninh Binh Province for the night.

Activities:
Hotel pickup in Hanoi Old Quarter
Visit Hoa Lu ancient capital and temples
Optional 30-minute cycling tour
Buffet lunch with local specialties
Choose between a 1.5-hour boat trip in Tam Coc or Trang An
Climb 500 steps to Mua Cave for panoramic views
Transfer to homestay in Ninh Binh

Day 2 — Journey to Ha Long Bay and Overnight Cruise Adventure

Meals: B, L, D | Stay: Overnight on 4-star cruise in Halong Bay | Transport: Shuttle bus, cruise boat, kayak/bamboo boat

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Start your day with a morning pickup from your Ninh Binh homestay between 6:30 and 7:00 AM. An air-conditioned shuttle bus will transfer you to Ha Long Bay, a journey of approximately four hours, including a brief rest stop midway. Upon arrival at Tuan Chau Harbor around 11:45 AM, you will be transferred to your cruise vessel.

After check-in and a welcome drink, a safety briefing will introduce you to your itinerary. A delicious buffet lunch will be served at 1:00 PM as the boat begins its scenic cruise towards the southeastern part of Ha Long Bay, passing notable formations like Fighting-Cock and Finger Islet. In the mid-afternoon, you'll be transported to Luon Cave, where you can choose to explore its unique features by kayak or bamboo boat.

From 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM, hike to the summit of Ti Top Island for spectacular panoramic views of the bay. Following the hike, you can enjoy a refreshing swim in the bay's emerald waters or relax with a coconut in the shade. The evening brings a sunset party with a 'Happy Hour' on drinks at the bar or sundeck, followed by a fantastic, expertly prepared dinner under the stars at 7:15 PM. The remainder of the evening is free for relaxation aboard the cruise.

Activities:
- Transfer from Ninh Binh to Ha Long Bay
- Arrive at Tuan Chau Harbor and board cruise
- Enjoy welcome drinks and safety briefing
- Buffet lunch while cruising Ha Long Bay
- Explore Luon Cave by kayak or bamboo boat
- Hike to Ti Top Island summit for panoramic views
- Swim in Ha Long Bay or relax on the beach
- Attend a sunset party with 'Happy Hour'
- Enjoy a fantastic dinner onboard
- Free time for relaxation

Day 3 — Sunrise Tai Chi, Sung Sot Cave & Return to Hanoi

Meals: B, L | Stay: N/A | Transport: Cruise boat, shuttle bus

Begin your day at 6:00 AM with a refreshing Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck, set against the backdrop of a beautiful Halong Bay sunrise. A light breakfast will be served in the restaurant between 7:00 AM and 7:30 AM. Your next stop is the magnificent Sung Sot Cave, one of Ha Long Bay's largest and most impressive grottoes. You'll be amazed by the breathtaking panoramic views it offers across the bay.

Return to the cruise boat between 8:30 AM and 9:30 AM to settle your bill and check out. The boat will then head back towards Tuan Chau Island. A brunch will be served in the restaurant from 9:45 AM to 10:45 AM as the vessel makes its way to the harbor. Disembark at Tuan Chau Marina between 10:45 AM and 11:00 AM, where you'll begin your transfer back to Hanoi.

The return journey culminates with your arrival in Hanoi Old Quarter between 3:00 PM and 3:30 PM, where you will be dropped off at your hotel, concluding the Ha Long Bay portion of your tour.

Activities:
- Participate in a Tai Chi lesson on the sundeck
- Enjoy a light breakfast
- Explore Sung Sot Cave
- Check out from the cruise
- Enjoy brunch onboard
- Disembark at Tuan Chau Marina

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Transfer back to Hanoi Old Quarter

Day 4 Hanoi to Ha Giang City Exploration

Meals: L, D | Stay: Homestay in Ha Giang | Transport: Limousine bus, private bus

Your day begins early with a 6:30 AM pickup from your Hanoi Old Quarter hotel by a Limousine bus. The journey north to Ha Giang City includes a break stop in Tuyen Quang City around 10:30 AM. You are expected to arrive in Ha Giang City by 1:00 PM, where you will enjoy lunch at a local restaurant.

After lunch, the bus will transfer you to your hotel for check-in and a period of rest. In the afternoon, at 2:30 PM, your tour guide will pick you up to commence an exploration of Ha Giang City. This includes visiting the 0 Km square, offering a significant landmark, and taking in the views from Nui Cam Mountain.

The city tour also encompasses a visit to the Thanh Thuy - China border area and the traditional villages of Thon Tha and Ha Thanh, providing a glimpse into local life and the region's geography. The day concludes with dinner at 7:00 PM, followed by free time to relax at your hotel or homestay in Ha Giang.

Activities:
Limousine bus pickup from Hanoi hotel
Break stop in Tuyen Quang City
Arrive in Ha Giang City and have lunch
Check into hotel and rest
Explore Ha Giang City with a tour guide
Visit 0 Km square
See Nui Cam Mountain view
Visit Thanh Thuy - China border
Explore Thon Tha and Ha Thanh villages
Enjoy dinner and free time

Day 5 Ha Giang Loop: Mountain Passes and Ethnic Villages

Meals: B, L, D | Stay: Homestay in Ha Giang | Transport: Car/jeep/motorbike

Start your day with breakfast and check out from your hotel at 7:00 AM. At 7:30 AM, a car, jeep, or motorbike (depending on your tour package) and your guide will pick you up to begin the scenic Ha Giang Loop. The morning's sightseeing includes Heaven's Gate Quan Ba, offering stunning vistas, the winding Can Ty Pass, and the impressive Tham Ma pass. You'll also visit the picturesque Sung La Valley and the traditional Lung Cam Village, known for its unique culture and architecture.

Around 12:30 PM, you'll arrive in Yen Minh for lunch. After replenishing your energy, the journey continues along the historic Happiness Road. The afternoon itinerary features a visit to the Hmong King's Palace, a significant historical site, and the Lung Cu flag tower, marking Vietnam's northernmost point. You'll also explore Lo Lo Chai Village, offering insights into the local ethnic communities.

By 4:30 PM, you will arrive and check into your hotel or homestay in Dong Van Town. The evening includes dinner in Dong Van Old Quarter, followed by a leisurely walk to soak in the atmosphere of this historic town, before settling in for the night in Ha Giang.

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Activities: Breakfast and hotel checkout
Begin Ha Giang Loop tour
Visit Heaven's Gate Quan Ba
Drive through Can Ty Pass and Tham Ma Pass
Explore Sung La Valley and Lung Cam Village
Lunch in Yen Minh
Continue on Happiness Road
Visit Hmong King's Palace
Visit Lung Cu flag tower
Explore Lo Lo Chai Village
Check into accommodation in Dong Van Town
Dinner in Dong Van Old Quarter and evening walk

Day 6 — Ma Pi Leng Pass, Nho Que River & Return to Hanoi

Meals: B, L | Stay: N/A | Transport: Car/jeep/motorbike, bus

Your final day begins with breakfast at the local market in Dong Van Town at 7:00 AM, where you can also enjoy a cup of coffee. Following breakfast, you'll head towards Meo Vac Town, embarking on a drive that will take you through some of the most spectacular scenery of the Ha Giang Loop. This includes traversing the legendary Ma Pi Leng Pass, often hailed as one of Vietnam's most magnificent mountain passes, offering awe-inspiring views of the Nho Que River winding through deep canyons below. You will also pass through Meo Vac Town itself and experience the unique M-shaped curve on the road.
Lunch will be served in Yen Minh town around 1:00 PM. After your meal, the journey continues. By 3:30 PM, you'll arrive at Rocks Ha Giang Restaurant, where you can relax and enjoy a tea break with a welcome drink and fresh fruit. At 4:00 PM, a bus will pick you up from the office for the long return transfer to Hanoi. The bus will make a rest stop in Tuyen Quang around 7:30 PM.
Your epic Northern Vietnam adventure concludes with your arrival back in Hanoi at approximately 10:00 PM, where you will be dropped off, marking the end of your trip.

Activities: Breakfast at Dong Van local market
Drive to Meo Vac Town
Traverse Ma Pi Leng Pass
View Nho Que River
Experience the M-shaped curve
Lunch in Yen Minh town
Relax at Rocks Ha Giang Restaurant with tea break
Depart for Hanoi by bus
Rest stop in Tuyen Quang
Arrive back in Hanoi

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED

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- v Luxury Limousine transfers with air-conditioning
- v Professional English-speaking tour guide throughout the trip
- v All entrance fees to attractions
- v Boat trip in Trang An/Tam Coc
- v Bicycle ride
- v 1-night accommodation at Ninh Binh Homestay (private rooms based on group size)
- v 2-nights accommodation at Ha Giang Homestay (private rooms based on group size)
- v 1-night accommodation at a 4-star cruise in Halong Bay
- v Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- v Cooking class & Sunset party onboard
- v Travel insurance during the tour
- v 1 bottle of water per person per day on the bus

- x Personal expenses
- x Beverages
- x Any additional services not mentioned in the itinerary

PRICE INCLUDES

- v Luxury Limousine transfers with air-conditioning
- v Professional English-speaking tour guide throughout the trip
- v All entrance fees to attractions
- v Boat trip in Trang An/Tam Coc
- v Bicycle ride
- v 1-night accommodation at Ninh Binh Homestay (private rooms based on group size)
- v 2-nights accommodation at Ha Giang Homestay (private rooms based on group size)
- v 1-night accommodation at a 4-star cruise in Halong Bay
- v Meals as indicated in the itinerary
- v Cooking class & Sunset party onboard
- v Travel insurance during the tour
- v 1 bottle of water per person per day on the bus

CANCELLATION POLICY

Tour Code: IMP-46886C9E318B