Northern Vietnam & Laos Cultural Journey – 14 Days

14D / 13N	Easy	Private	USD 3,039 / pax
Duration	Difficulty	Tour Type	Starting From

Explore the rich heritage and diverse landscapes of Northern Vietnam and Laos on this 14-day private tour, venturing from the bustling streets of Hanoi to the serene temples of Luang Prabang and the historic Plain of Jars.

DESTINATIONS & ROUTE

Hanoi → Ha Long → Mai Chau → Dien Bien Phu → Luang Prabang → Vientiane

TOUR OVERVIEW

Overview: Northern Vietnam & Laos Expedition

Embark on a captivating 14-day private journey through the cultural heartlands of Northern Vietnam and Laos. This meticulously crafted itinerary invites you to uncover ancient traditions, witness breathtaking natural beauty, and delve into significant historical sites. From the vibrant capital of Hanoi, you'll venture to the tranquil rice paddies of Mai Chau, cruise the emerald waters of Ha Long Bay, and retrace historical steps in Dien Bien Phu. Your adventure continues across the border into Laos, where you'll experience the spiritual serenity of Luang Prabang, the enigmatic Plain of Jars, and the charming capital of Vientiane, offering a profound insight into the region's diverse past and present.

Tour Highlights

Explore Hanoi’s Old Quarter, ancient temples, and the significant Ho Chi Minh Complex.

Experience an overnight cruise through the stunning limestone karsts of Ha Long Bay.

Trek through Mai Chau’s scenic villages and engage with local Thai ethnic communities.

Visit the historic battlefields and museum of Dien Bien Phu, a pivotal site in Vietnamese history.

Discover the sacred Pak Ou Caves and the spiritual capital of Luang Prabang in Laos.

Witness the daily alms-giving ceremony of monks in Luang Prabang at dawn.

Admire the multi-tiered cascades of Kuang Si Waterfall and its bear rescue center.

Investigate the mysterious megalithic stone jars scattered across the Plain of Jars.

Tour Vientiane’s revered Buddhist temples and iconic Patuxai monument.

Route Summary

This comprehensive tour begins in Hanoi, Vietnam, leading you through an immersive exploration of its capital city before heading to the natural wonders of Ha Long Bay and the cultural landscapes of Mai Chau. The journey then takes a historical turn in Dien Bien Phu, followed by a border crossing into Laos. In Laos, you'll discover the riverside charm of Muang Khua and Nong Khiaw, the UNESCO World Heritage city of Luang Prabang, the ancient mysteries of Xieng Khuang (Plain of Jars), and finally, the capital city of Vientiane.

Who This Tour Suits

This private tour is ideal for travelers seeking a deep cultural immersion and historical understanding of Vietnam and Laos. It caters to those interested in diverse landscapes, from urban centers to rural villages and natural wonders, with opportunities for interaction with local communities and exploration of significant historical sites. The pace balances guided excursions with leisure time, making it suitable for individuals, couples, or small groups desiring a personalized and enriching travel experience.

Practical Information

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The tour includes a mix of transportation methods, including flights, private car transfers, and an overnight cruise. Accommodation ranges from comfortable hotels to a unique homestay experience in Mai Chau and an overnight cruise on Ha Long Bay. Meals are provided as specified in the itinerary, offering a taste of local cuisine. Travelers should be prepared for varying levels of activity, including walking tours and light trekking, and should consult visa requirements for both Vietnam and Laos prior to departure.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS

DAY-BY-DAY ITINERARY

Day 1 Hanoi Arrival & Old Quarter Exploration

Meals: Dinner | Stay: Hotel in Hanoi

Upon your arrival at Noi Bai International Airport, a driver will be waiting to provide a comfortable transfer to your hotel in Hanoi. After checking in and settling into your room, the remainder of the day is yours to enjoy at leisure. Take this opportunity to relax and recover from your journey.

In the evening, consider a self-guided stroll through Hanoi's historic Old Quarter, where ancient streets buzz with local life. Discover Hoan Kiem Lake, a tranquil oasis in the city center, and visit the serene Ngoc Son Temple situated on a small island. Conclude your day with a delightful dinner at a local restaurant, sampling authentic Vietnamese cuisine before returning to your hotel for the night.

Activities: Arrive at Noi Bai International Airport; Transfer to hotel; Settle into accommodation; Explore Hanoi Old Quarter independently; Visit Hoan Kiem Lake and Ngoc Son Temple; Enjoy local dinner.

Day 2 Hanoi City's Historical & Cultural Landmarks

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Hanoi

Begin your day with breakfast at the hotel before meeting your guide at 8:00 AM for a comprehensive exploration of Hanoi. Your first stop is the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first national university, established in 1070 to honor Confucius. Continue to the One Pillar Pagoda, an iconic Buddhist temple with a unique architectural design resembling a lotus blossom.

Next, visit the Ho Chi Minh Complex, which includes the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and his traditional stilt house, offering insights into the life of Vietnam's revered leader. Please note the mausoleum's specific closing days. Afterwards, explore the ancient Buddhist Tran Quoc Pagoda, beautifully situated by West Lake. Enjoy a traditional Vietnamese lunch before proceeding to the Museum of Ethnology in the afternoon, where you'll discover the diverse cultures and daily lives of Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups through artifacts, photographs, and films. The guided tour concludes around 4:30 PM, with an option to experience a cyclo tour or a traditional water puppet show.

Activities: Visit the Temple of Literature; Explore One Pillar Pagoda; Discover Ho Chi Minh Complex; See Tran Quoc Pagoda and West Lake; Enjoy Vietnamese lunch; Tour the Museum of Ethnology; Opt for a cyclo tour or water puppet show.

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Day 3 Ha Long Bay Overnight Cruise & Activities

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Stay: Halong Bay overnight cruise

After breakfast at your hotel, a driver will transfer you from Hanoi to Ha Long Bay, a journey of approximately 2-3 hours. Upon arrival at the pier between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM, you will complete check-in procedures and board your chosen overnight cruise vessel. As you set sail into the magnificent bay, enjoy a delectable lunch featuring fresh seafood, surrounded by the iconic limestone karsts rising dramatically from the emerald waters.

The afternoon offers a variety of engaging activities, which may include kayaking through hidden lagoons, swimming in the bay's calm waters, or exploring impressive caves, depending on your cruise itinerary. As evening approaches, return to the vessel to participate in a sunset party and a Vietnamese cooking class, or simply unwind on the sundeck to admire the breathtaking sunset views. A delicious dinner will be served on board, followed by evening entertainment options such as a movie, squid fishing, or karaoke, ensuring a memorable night on the bay.

Activities: Transfer from Hanoi to Halong Bay; Board overnight cruise; Enjoy seafood lunch; Kayak, swim, or visit caves; Participate in sunset party and cooking class; Enjoy dinner and evening entertainment.

Day 4 Ha Long Bay Sunrise & Return to Hanoi

Meals: Breakfast, Brunch | Stay: Hotel in Hanoi

Awaken early to the serene beauty of Ha Long Bay and consider joining a Tai Chi class on the sundeck, or simply relax and witness the spectacular sunrise over the karsts. Enjoy a cup of coffee or tea before breakfast. Depending on your cruise itinerary, you may have the opportunity to explore more of the surrounding islands by rowboat or kayak, offering a closer perspective of this natural wonder.

Later, a delightful brunch will be served as the cruise slowly makes its way back to the harbor. Between 11:00 AM and 12:00 PM, you will disembark from the cruise. A waiting driver will then transfer you back to Hanoi. Upon arrival at your hotel in the afternoon or evening, you will have the rest of the day free to relax or independently explore more of Hanoi's charming Old Quarter.

Activities: Participate in Tai Chi or watch sunrise; Enjoy breakfast; Explore islands by rowboat or kayak; Have brunch on board; Disembark cruise; Transfer back to Hanoi; Relax or explore Hanoi Old Quarter.

Day 5 Mai Chau Valley Trekking & Village Immersion

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner | Stay: Homestay in Mai Chau

After breakfast at your hotel, pack your belongings as you prepare for a scenic transfer to Mai Chau, a picturesque valley nestled in Northern Vietnam. The journey offers stunning views of majestic mountains and verdant valleys, providing a refreshing change of scenery. A stop at Thung Khe Pass allows for a panoramic vista of the Mai Chau region, perfect for capturing memorable photographs.

Upon arrival, you will enjoy a traditional lunch with a local White Thai Tribe family, providing an opportunity to interact with villagers and learn about their way of life. The afternoon is dedicated to a guided trekking tour, exploring tranquil villages and

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meeting ethnic Thai people. This experience offers a deeper insight into local customs and traditions amidst the breathtaking natural beauty of Mai Chau. In the evening, return to your homestay and assist your hosts in preparing a traditional dinner. Conclude the day with an engaging live dance and music performance by local residents, followed by a tasty meal and an overnight stay in the homestay.

Activities: Transfer to Mai Chau; Stop at Thung Khe Pass for panoramic views; Enjoy lunch with a White Thai Tribe family; Trek through tranquil villages; Interact with ethnic Thai people; Help prepare dinner; Enjoy live dance and music performance.

Day 6 Tea Gardens, Pha Din Pass & Dien Bien Phu Arrival

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Dien Bien Phu

Following breakfast at your homestay, embark on a short drive to Moc Chau, a region renowned for its expansive and lush Vietnamese tea gardens. Take some time here to capture fantastic photos amidst the verdant landscapes. Your journey then continues towards Dien Bien Phu, a destination steeped in history.

Along the route, you will traverse the magnificent Pha Din Pass, which marks the natural boundary between Dien Bien and Son La provinces. This pass is celebrated as one of the most remarkable in the Northwest, known for its rugged, winding roads that unveil both majestic and poetic scenery. Upon your arrival in Dien Bien Phu, a city famous for its wild natural beauty and its pivotal role in Vietnam's illustrious victory, you will transfer to your hotel. The rest of the afternoon is dedicated to much-needed rest after the long and scenic drive.

Activities: Drive to Moc Chau; Visit Vietnamese tea gardens; Continue transfer to Dien Bien Phu; Traverse Pha Din Pass; Arrive at hotel in Dien Bien Phu; Rest at leisure.

Day 7 Dien Bien Phu Historical Exploration

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Dien Bien Phu

After breakfast at your hotel, prepare for a full day of historical exploration in Dien Bien Phu, a site commemorating Vietnam's decisive victory in 1954 that ended French colonial rule. Your day begins with a visit to a local market, where you can observe the daily life and farm products of the Thai tribes, gaining insight into their culture.

Next, your guide will lead you to the military base of The Command of Dien Bien Phu Campaign, nestled within the forest of Muong Phang, a significant strategic location. In the afternoon, visit the Dien Bien Phu Museum, an architecturally unique building designed to resemble a Vietnamese soldier's hat. Inside, explore over a thousand artifacts, pictures, and documents detailing the resistance war against French colonialists. Conclude your historical tour at A1 Hill, site of fierce battles and the bunker of French General De Castries. Return to your hotel for relaxation, with free time to enjoy your final evening in Dien Bien Phu.

Activities: Visit a local Thai tribes market; Explore The Command of Dien Bien Phu Campaign military base; Tour Dien Bien Phu Museum; Visit A1 Hill and General De Castries' bunker; Enjoy free time in Dien Bien Phu.

Day 8 Crossing into Laos: Muang Khua & Nong Khiaw

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Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Nong Khiaw

Enjoy breakfast at your hotel before preparing for check-out. Today marks your transition into Laos as you transfer to the Tay Trang Border Gate. After completing the necessary immigration and customs procedures, you will proceed to Muang Khua, a charming border town in Phongsali Province, strategically located at the confluence of the Nam Ou and Nam Phak Rivers. Following an early lunch in Muang Khua, continue your journey to Nong Khiaw, widely regarded as one of northern Laos' most picturesque rural towns. Upon arrival at your hotel, check in and enjoy the remainder of the day at your leisure. In the evening, take the opportunity to explore the peaceful town independently, perhaps strolling around the surrounding area and sampling delicious local cuisine before settling in for the night.

Activities: Check out from hotel; Transfer to Tay Trang Border Gate; Complete immigration and customs; Transfer to Muang Khua; Have early lunch in Muang Khua; Travel to Nong Khiaw; Check into hotel; Explore Nong Khiaw independently; Sample local cuisine.

Day 9 Pak Ou Caves & Luang Prabang Arrival

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Luang Prabang

After breakfast, begin your scenic drive to Luang Prabang, a UNESCO World Heritage City renowned for its spectacular mountain backdrop and charming colonial architecture in Northern Laos. En route, make a significant stop to visit the mysterious Pak Ou Caves. These sacred caves house thousands of Buddha statues, with research indicating approximately 4,000 statues, divided between the upper cave, Tam Pum, and the main cave, Tam Ting.
Continue your journey down to the city of Luang Prabang, a former royal capital that retains a unique allure rarely found elsewhere in Asia, characterized by its gleaming temple roofs and fading colonial buildings. Upon arrival at your hotel, complete the check-in process and take some time to rest. The entire evening is free for your personal exploration. You might choose to wander through the Old Quarter, browse the vibrant night market for handmade crafts, or savor the diverse offerings of local street food.

Activities: Drive to Luang Prabang; Visit Pak Ou Caves; Continue to Luang Prabang city; Check into hotel; Explore Old Quarter; Shop at night market; Try local food.

Day 10 Luang Prabang City Tour & Kuang Si Waterfall

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Luang Prabang

Wake up early this morning to partake in Laos' most sacred tradition: the alms-giving ritual. Observe numerous monks departing from various temples to collect their daily meals from devout residents quietly seated along the streets. Return to your hotel for breakfast before setting out to explore Luang Prabang's most beautiful attractions.
Your tour includes a visit to the Royal Palace Museum, also known as the National Museum, which was once the residence of the Lao royal family and now houses a fascinating collection of artifacts. Next, marvel at the magnificent Wat Xieng Thong (Temple of Golden City), an exemplary display of classical Laotian architecture with its distinctive low-sweeping roofs. Gain further insight into Laos' diverse ethnic groups at the Traditional Art & Ethnology Center. After lunch, transfer to the stunning Kuang Si Waterfall, where you can cool off with a refreshing swim in its turquoise pools or leisurely walk along the surrounding

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forest trails. Optionally, visit the Asiatic Bear Rescue Centre or the Butterfly Park nearby. Conclude your day by ascending the 329 steps to the summit of Phousi Hill for a breathtaking sunset view over the city and the Mekong River.

Activities: Participate in alms-giving ritual; Visit Royal Palace Museum; Explore Wat Xieng Thong; Learn at Traditional Art & Ethnology Center; Transfer to Kuang Si Waterfall; Swim or walk forest trails; Visit Bear Rescue Centre or Butterfly Park (optional); Ascend Phousi Hill for sunset view.

Day 11 Scenic Drive to Phonsavan

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: Hotel in Phonsavan

After enjoying breakfast, your driver will pick you up for a transfer to Phonsavan, a journey that typically takes around seven hours. This scenic drive offers abundant opportunities to capture photographs of the stunning landscapes, including lush forests, towering mountains, and traditional hill tribe villages along the way.
Upon arrival at your hotel in Phonsavan, you will have the rest of the afternoon to relax at your leisure. Take this time to unwind and soak in the peaceful atmosphere of this charming town, preparing for the explorations of the following day. Enjoy a tranquil evening and an overnight stay at your hotel.

Activities: Transfer from Luang Prabang to Phonsavan; Enjoy scenic views of landscapes and villages; Arrive at hotel in Phonsavan; Relax at leisure.

Day 12 Plain of Jars & Local Village Exploration

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Phonsavan

Following breakfast, begin your day with a visit to Phonsavan's Central Market, where you can browse for local souvenirs. Afterwards, head to the MAG (Mines Advisory Group) exhibition, which provides a sobering display of unexploded ordnance and documentaries about the wartime history in Laos.
The highlight of the day is exploring three significant sites of the Plain of Jars, a megalithic archaeological landscape featuring thousands of ancient stone jars clustered across the Xieng Khouang plain. These enigmatic structures offer a fascinating glimpse into a bygone era. In the afternoon, embark on a tour of the ancient capital, Muang Khoun, and nearby Hmong & Thai Dam villages, providing a chance to observe the daily lives of their inhabitants. Return to your hotel in Phonsavan for the evening.

Activities: Visit Phonsavan's Central Market; Explore MAG exhibition; Discover three sites of the Plain of Jars; Tour ancient capital Muang Khoun; Visit Hmong & Thai Dam villages.

Day 13 Flight to Vientiane & City Tour

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch | Stay: Hotel in Vientiane

After breakfast, prepare your luggage and check out from your hotel. You will then be transferred to the airport for a domestic flight to Vientiane, the capital city of Laos. Upon arrival at Wattay International Airport, your driver and tour guide will meet you and transfer you to your hotel for check-in. Enjoy a pleasant rest before your afternoon city tour.

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In the afternoon, meet your guide to begin exploring Vientiane's essential landmarks. Your sightseeing tour includes Wat Si Saket, Vientiane's oldest Buddhist temple, renowned for its thousands of miniature Buddha statues. Continue to Haw Pha Kaew, a former royal temple famous for housing the Emerald Buddha, now serving as a museum. Next, visit Pha That Luang, the grand stupa and sacred reliquary that stands as a national symbol of Laos. Conclude your tour at Patuxai, the Victory Gate of Laos, a war monument located in the city center. The evening is free to enjoy Vientiane's nightlife and relax at your leisure.

Activities: Check out from hotel; Take domestic flight to Vientiane; Transfer to hotel and check in; Visit Wat Si Saket; Explore Haw Pha Kaew; See Pha That Luang stupa; Stop at Patuxai monument; Enjoy Vientiane nightlife.

Day 14 Vientiane Departure

Meals: Breakfast | Stay: NA

Enjoy your final breakfast at the hotel in Vientiane. The morning is yours to spend at leisure, perhaps doing some last-minute souvenir shopping or simply relaxing before your departure. A driver will then provide a transfer to Wattay International Airport for your flight back to your hometown, marking the conclusion of your services.

Activities: Enjoy breakfast; Free time in Vientiane; Transfer to Wattay International Airport; Depart from Vientiane.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED	NOT INCLUDED

PRICE INCLUDES

AVAILABLE DEPARTURES

Departure Date	Return Date	Price / Person	Availability	Languages
01 Nov 2025	20 Dec 2026	**USD 3,039**	Available	–
01 Nov 2025	20 Dec 2026	**USD 3,229**	Available	–
21 Dec 2026	20 Dec 2027	**USD 3,131**	Available	–
21 Dec 2026	20 Dec 2027	**USD 3,326**	Available	–

CANCELLATION POLICY

Tour Code: IMP-CFA08F65E215