

# Vietnam Active Escape - Trekking, Caving & Water Thrills 12 days

## Trip overview

Stretching across Northern and Central Vietnam, this 12-day private journey invites travelers to experience a unique combination of trekking, motorbiking, caving, and water-based activities. From Hanoi's lively backstreets to the scenic rice terraces of Pu Luong, the karst landscapes of Ninh Binh, and the massive cave systems of Phong Nha, the tour offers a close-up view of Vietnam's natural diversity. Along the way, travelers will engage with local cultures and enjoy a range of exciting outdoor adventures.

- **Durations:** 12 days
- **Trip outline:** Hanoi - Pu Luong Nature Reserve - Ninh Binh - Halong Bay - Dong Hoi - Hai Van Pass
- **Price from:** US \$1499/person
- **Tour inquiry:** <https://besttratetours.com/vietnam-tours/vietnam-active-escape-trekking-caving-water-thrills-12-days.html>

## Trip outline

day	Activities	Accommodations	Meals
Day 1	Hanoi Arrival & City Exploration on Motorbike	Hotel in Hanoi	Dinner
Day 2	Hanoi to Pu Luong Nature Reserve	Hotel in Pu Luong	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 3	Pu Luong - Ninh Binh	Hotel in Ninh Binh	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 4	Ninh Binh Exploration	Hotel in Ninh Binh	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 5	Ninh Binh - Ha Long Bay Adventure by cruise	Halong Bay Cruise	Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Day 6	Halong Bay - Hanoi - Night train to Dong Hoi	Night train to Dong Hoi	Breakfast, Brunch
Day 7	Dong Hoi Arrival - Discover Phong Nha Caves	Hotel in Dong Hoi	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 8 - 9	Hang En Cave Adventure (Overnight Expedition)	Campsite in Hang En cave, Hotel in Dong Hoi	Breakfast, Lunch
Day 10	Travel to Da Nang by Private Car	Hotel in Da Nang	Breakfast
Day 11	Hai Van Pass Motorbike Adventure	Hotel in Da Nang	Breakfast
Day 12	Depart	NA	Breakfast

# Itinerary

## Day 1: Hanoi Arrival & City Exploration on Motorbike

Upon your arrival at Noi Bai International Airport, a friendly local guide and private driver will greet you with a warm welcome. You'll be transferred to your hotel in the heart of Hanoi, where you can relax and settle in after your journey.

In the late afternoon, embark on a private motorbike adventure that takes you beyond the tourist trails. Hop on the back of a scooter, driven by an experienced local, and weave through Hanoi's maze of hidden alleys and narrow backstreets.

Feel the buzz of Hanoi as you pass colonial architecture and the famous Train Street, where homes stand just inches from the railway. Watch as the street transforms when a train approaches - locals pull in their chairs.

End the evening, return to your hotel for a restful night.

**Meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Hanoi

## Day 2: Hanoi to Pu Luong Nature Reserve

After breakfast at your hotel, your private driver will pick you up for a scenic **4-hour journey** southwest of Hanoi to the serene landscapes of Pu Luong Nature Reserve. As you leave behind the bustle of the city, the road winds through rural countryside, limestone mountains, and lush greenery - offering glimpses of authentic village life along the way.

Arrive in Pu Luong by midday and check in to your accommodation surrounded by terraced hills and dense forests. After a short rest, set off on a guided trek through the reserve's breathtaking terrain. Walk along narrow paths that meander through golden rice terraces, and discover hidden waterfalls nestled deep within the jungle.

As you explore, you'll pass through remote ethnic Thai villages. The trek offers countless photo opportunities and moments of quiet immersion in nature before you return to your accommodation to unwind and enjoy a peaceful evening in the mountains.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Pu Luong

## Day 3: Pu Luong - Ninh Binh

Start your morning with the gentle sounds of nature and a hearty breakfast at hotel. Your guide will take you to a **local market**, where the ethnic Thai community gathers to trade fresh produce, handmade textiles, spices, and daily essentials. Wander through the lively stalls, interact with friendly vendors, and soak in the vibrant colors and authentic rural atmosphere.

Next, embark on a short trek to **Hieu Waterfall**, one of Pu Luong's most enchanting natural gems. Take a moment to relax and enjoy the serene beauty of the surrounding jungle landscape.

After the visit, return to the hotel to freshen up and check out. Your private driver will then take you on a scenic road transfer to Ninh Binh - often called "Halong Bay on land" for its dramatic limestone karsts and peaceful rivers.

Arrive in late afternoon and check in to your accommodation, where the evening is yours to relax and prepare for the next day's adventures.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Ninh Binh

## Day 4: Ninh Binh Exploration

After breakfast, set off for a day of natural wonders in Ninh Binh, where majestic limestone peaks rise from emerald rice fields and peaceful rivers snake through hidden caves. Choose between two unforgettable boat journeys - Tam Coc or Trang An.

- If you opt for **Tam Coc**, board a traditional wooden sampan rowed by a local, often using their feet in a time-honored technique. Glide along a calm river framed by towering cliffs and golden rice paddies, passing through three mysterious caves carved by centuries of flowing water.
- Alternatively, **Trang An** offers a more extensive cave system with tranquil waterways that wind through lush valleys, sacred temples, and stone grottoes. Either option promises a serene escape into one of Vietnam's most cinematic landscapes.

In the afternoon, travel to **Hang Mua** (Mua Cave), where the adventure intensifies. Climb a steep stone staircase of nearly 500 steps to reach the mountain's summit. At the top, you'll be rewarded with a breathtaking panoramic view over Tam Coc's winding river, patchwork rice fields, and jagged karst formations - one of the most iconic vistas in the country.

Return to your accommodation in the evening, with time to relax and reflect on a day filled with natural beauty and unforgettable views.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Ninh Binh

## Day 5: Ninh Binh - Ha Long Bay Adventure by cruise

### Morning

After breakfast, your private driver will pick you up from your hotel in Ninh Binh for a scenic transfer to Ha Long Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its emerald waters and towering limestone islands.

Upon arrival at the port, you'll be warmly welcomed aboard your elegant overnight cruise ship. Enjoy a refreshing welcome drink as the crew provides a short briefing and safety instructions to ensure a smooth and enjoyable journey.

As the cruise sets sail into the magical seascape, a gourmet lunch is served in the onboard restaurant. Have lunch while gliding past dramatic karst formations - immersing yourself in the majestic charm of this legendary bay.

### Afternoon

After lunch, unwind with some free time to enjoy *optional* massage or spa treatments aboard the ship. These relaxing services are perfect for soothing your body as the cruise sails deeper into the bay's peaceful waters.

**(Note:** Be sure to book early with your cruise manager, as availability is limited)

Next, lace up your walking shoes for a short climb of over 50 stone steps to reach the entrance of the spectacular **Sung Sot (Surprise) Cave**. Step into one of Ha Long Bay's largest and most awe-inspiring caverns, where you'll marvel at towering stalactites and stalagmites illuminated in soft hues - each formation sparking the imagination.

As the sun begins to set, return to the deck to witness a **culinary demonstration** - a popular activity on most 1-night cruises. Learn how to craft Vietnamese spring rolls or try your hand at fruit and vegetable carving, a fun and artistic way to discover local culinary traditions.

Savor a delicious dinner served onboard in the romantic glow of the bay. Afterward, the night is yours to enjoy a variety of evening activities - from night squid fishing off the side of the boat, to playing board games or cards, or simply relaxing at the bar with a drink in hand.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

**Accommodation:** Halong Bay Cruise

## Day 6: Halong Bay - Hanoi - Night train to Dong Hoi

### Morning

Wake up early to catch the soft light of sunrise over Halong Bay, a magical experience best enjoyed from the cruise deck as the mist lifts gently off the jade-green water. Soak in the stillness of the bay as the limestone islets come to life in the golden morning glow.

Have light breakfast of pastries, tea, and freshly brewed coffee. Afterward, join a rejuvenating Tai Chi session on deck - a graceful way to awaken both mind and body while surrounded by the peaceful seascape.

Your morning excursion brings you to **Titop Island**, a small crescent-shaped haven known for its pristine beach and panoramic viewpoints. Relax by the shore or climb the stone steps to a high observation platform, where a spectacular 360-degree view of Ha Long Bay awaits. It's the perfect opportunity for breathtaking photos and quiet reflection.

Back on board, a generous brunch is served as the cruise slowly makes its way back toward the mainland. Enjoy one last look at the towering karsts from the sundeck.

**NOTE:** Please note that different cruises offer different itineraries.

### Afternoon

The cruise ends at Tuan Chau Port, where you'll disembark and have a chance to relax while waiting for your transfer. Your driver will then escort you back to Hanoi.

In the evening, you'll head to the train station to board the overnight sleeper train to Dong Hoi, ready to journey south toward the next chapter of your adventure.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Brunch

**Accommodation:** Night train to Dong Hoi

## Day 7: Dong Hoi Arrival - Discover Phong Nha Caves

Arrive in Dong Hoi in the early morning after your overnight train journey. A private driver will be waiting at the station to greet you and take you on a comfortable transfer to **Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site famed for its magnificent cave systems and dramatic karst landscapes.

After checking in and freshening up, set off in the afternoon to begin your subterranean adventure with a visit to **Paradise Cave** - one of the most spectacular dry caves in the world. Venture deep into its cool interior, following a wooden walkway that leads you through vast chambers adorned with towering stalactites and intricate stalagmites. Though the full cave stretches over **31 kilometers**, the accessible section reveals some of the most awe-inspiring rock formations and cathedral-like spaces, illuminated to highlight their natural beauty.

Next, gear up for an active excursion into the adventurous **Dark Cave**. You'll swim across a turquoise river to the cave entrance, then trek through passageways into its shadowy depths.

As your day of cave exploration comes to an end, return to your hotel for a well-deserved evening of rest.

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Dong Hoi

## Day 8 - 9: Hang En Cave Adventure (Overnight Expedition)

### Day 1: Phong Nha - Ban Doong Village - Hang En Cave Expedition

Between **7:30 - 8:00**, you'll be picked up from your hotel and transferred to the office for a safety briefing, gear check, and packing.

Begin your trek into the jungle, descending a steep trail to a branch of the **Rao Thuong Stream**. After 1.5 hours of hiking and stream crossings, arrive at **Ban Doong Village** - home to the ethnic Bru Van Kieu people. Enjoy lunch and cultural insights with the villagers.

Continue trekking another 3 hours through dense jungle and rivers to reach the massive entrance of **Hang En Cave**. Gear up with a helmet and headlamp, climb into the cave, and take in the breathtaking view of the underground campsite.

Settle into your tent, swim in the turquoise cave lake, and enjoy a hot dinner inside one of the world's largest caves.

## Day 2: Hang En Cave - Phong Nha

After breakfast, continue exploring deeper into Hang En Cave, climbing the rocky trail to admire stunning stalagmites, stalactites, and panoramic views of the cave's vast chamber.

Trek through underground streams to the massive cave exit, then return to the camp for lunch and a rest. Begin the challenging hike out - crossing streams and climbing a 450m-high hill.

At the top, your bus with refreshing drinks awaits. Return to Phong Nha by around **18:00**, concluding your incredible cave adventure.

**NOTE:** This tour operates seasonally from December 15th to September 15th each year, with a frequency of 3 - 4 times per week. The adventure level is moderate (Level 3).

**Meals:** Breakfast, Lunch

**Accommodation:** Campsite in Hang En cave, Hotel in Dong Hoi

## Day 10: Travel to Da Nang by Private Car

Enjoy a comfortable private car transfer from Phong Nha to Da Nang, taking in the scenic countryside along the way. Relax and prepare for your next destination upon arrival in Da Nang.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Da Nang

## Day 11: Hai Van Pass Motorbike Adventure

Experience one of Vietnam's most breathtaking coastal routes as you embark on a thrilling motorbike adventure along the **Hai Van Pass**. Ride through winding mountain roads that offer spectacular views of the East Sea, dramatic cliffs, and lush green hillsides.

Take plenty of stops to capture photos, enjoy the serenity of the surroundings, and savor the exhilaration of the open road. This unforgettable motorbike journey is a highlight of your trip, combining adventure with stunning landscapes.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Hotel in Da Nang

## Day 12: Depart

On your final day, prepare for your departure from Da Nang. Depending on your flight schedule, you may have some time to enjoy a leisurely breakfast or a last stroll around the city. A private transfer will take you to Da Nang International Airport, where you will check in for your flight home or to your next destination.

**Meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** NA

# Booking Policy

## Inclusion

- Accommodation in TWN/ DBL sharing accommodation at hotel, except overnight on train and homestay (if any)
- All transport (including airport pick up & see off), as per itinerary
- Train ticket (day-train, soft seat) (if any)
- Meals as indicated in the program
- All in-tour stationed local English speaking guide.
- Entrance fees for Vietnam attractions, as per itinerary

## Exclusion

- Hotel EARLY check in & LATE check out
- Peak season surcharge & compulsory dinner in the accommodation.
- Transport to or from Vietnam
- International or departure taxes
- Vietnam Visa (above 6 months passport Valid & 3 clear-page require)
- Travel Insurance while in Vietnam
- Tips, laundry and gratuities
- Meals not marked on itinerary, and bottled water in Vietnam
- Tips for guide /driver (recommended US \$3-5 /pax /day)
- Tipping is completely up to you and should be based on your perception of the service quality

## Cancellation Policy

- Cancellation received before 60 days: FREE of charge
- Cancellation received from 30 days to 59 days prior arrival date: 10% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 15 days to 29 days prior arrival date: 30% of total rate
- Cancellation received from 7 days to 14 days prior arrival date: 50% of total rate
- Cancellation received less than 7 days prior arrival date or No show: 100% of total rate

## Children Policy

- The rate for children applicable for one child sharing a twin or double cabin with two adults.
- For infants (<04 years old): FOC except for domestic flight tickets.
- 04 - under 11 years old without bed: 50% adult rate.
- 04 - under 11 years old with extra bed: 75% adult rate.
- 04 - under 11 years old in twin share: 90% adult rate.

- From 11 years old: count as an adult.

## WHY BOOK WITH US?

### Best Rate Guaranteed

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### BEST RATE TOURS., JSC

No 56, Hàng Đậu Street - Dong Xuan, Hoan Kiem District - Hanoi - Vietnam

Tel: +84 2439949194  
+84 911646478

Email: [sales@bestratetours.com](mailto:sales@bestratetours.com) Website: <https://bestratetours.com/>