

## Main Spots to Visit in Vietnam

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### **Cat Tien**

Located 150 km north of Ho Chi Min City, this natural national park is one of the largest in Vietnam, covering no less than 70,000 hectares. This region is home to a dense rainforest, where hundreds of animal species dwell. From woodpeckers to crocodiles, numerous wildlife and tropical flora are present in this vast natural biosphere. It is a perfect destination for relaxation and discovery, ideal for the adventurers.

### **Central Highlands**

Located along the borders of Cambodia and Laos, the Central Highlands are among the most remote and overlooked areas in Vietnam. The region is filled with authenticity and has more than 30 distinct ethnic groups, some of which have preserved their ancient traditions. With picturesque landscapes, stretching from Kontum via Pleiku to Buon Me Thuot, this lesser-known region is a fantastic destination worth exploring.

### **Dalat**

Located at an altitude of 1,600 m above sea level and 300 km from Ho Chi Minh City, Dalat boasts a favorable climate and spectacular natural landscapes. Developed as a resort by the French in the early 1900s, the city still retains many reminders of its colonial heritage. Dalat enjoys fresh air and cool weather all year round. It is famous for its green pine forests, colorful flowers, and fruits. The rolling hills and fertile valleys are dotted with lakes and thousands of villas are nestled amidst the pine trees.

### **Danang**

Founded in 1888 and formerly called "Tourane" by the French, Danang is Vietnam's third international gateway. Once the busiest seaport, it is now the main city in central Vietnam, located midway between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Nowadays, apart from a few architectural remains of the French colonial period and its famous Cham Museum, the city is mainly an active business city and port.

### **Halong Bay**

Located 170 km east of Hanoi in the Gulf of Tonkin, Halong Bay is recognized as one of the world's most stunning natural treasures. Its spectacular seascape of limestone pillars, has been listed as a World Heritage site by UNESCO. With over 3,000 islets covering an area of 150 km<sup>2</sup>, emerald waters, and numerous limestone caves, Halong Bay is truly a mystical site.

### **Hanoi**

The political and administrative capital of Vietnam, Hanoi is located in the heart of the Tonkin or Bac Bo. Known for its colonial buildings, parks, tree-lined boulevards, and lakes, the city exudes charm and romance. It has preserved its centuries-old architecture and rich cultural heritage.

### **Ho Chi Minh City**

Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, is the economic capital of Vietnam. As the country's most populous city, it is a bustling, dynamic, and industrious center. The streets, where much of the city's life takes place, are a myriad of shops, stalls, stands-on-wheels, and vendors selling wares spread out on the sidewalks. The city churns, ferments, bubbles, and fumes. Yet, within the teeming metropolis are the timeless traditions and beauty of its ancient culture.

## **Hoa Binh / Mai Chau**

Located 70 km southwest of Hanoi, the Hoa Binh region is rich in beautiful landscapes and lies in the heart of the former Tonkin. It is home to the Muong and Dao ethnic minorities and the first large reservoir in Vietnam. Further west, 60 km from Hoa Binh, Mai Chau, a small village occupied by the White Thai minority. Easily accessible from Hanoi, the region offers an overview of the different ethnic minorities who are inhabitants of Vietnam.

## **Hoi An**

Historically known as 'Faifo,' Hoi An was a major maritime hub in Asia and the largest commercial port in Vietnam during the 17th and 18th centuries, located 30 km south of Danang. Today, Hoi An is a charming coastal town rich in cultural heritage and unique in character, is considered one of Vietnam's most picturesque destinations. A mixture of Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, and French influences, it retains the feeling of the past centuries. Its magnificent collection of almost 850 ancient French colonial buildings, the iconic Japanese Covered Bridge, pagodas, and preserved streetscapes are waiting to be explored.

## **Hue**

The former imperial capital of Vietnam from 1802 to 1945, Hue is often referred to as the country's most beautiful city and has long been a major cultural, religious, and educational center. Surrounded by moats, the intriguing Purple Forbidden City, which served as the residence of the Nguyen Emperors, was constructed by Emperor Gia Long in 1804. Although largely destroyed during the American War, the remains of the citadel, which have been partially restored, still contain many interesting sights.

## **Mekong Delta**

Known as the rice basket of Vietnam, the Mekong Delta is the perfect spot for ecotourism, bird watching, and discovering the country's scenic beauty. With thousands of canals nourishing a variety of fruits, trees, and tropical plants, the Mekong Delta offers a true glimpse into rural life. Notable places of interest in the Mekong Delta include My Tho, Vinh Long, Can Tho, and Chau Doc.

## **Nha Trang**

A tranquil coastal town with palm-lined sandy beaches and clear waters, Nha Trang offers prime activities such as exploring its green islands, snorkeling, diving, or simply relaxing on the beach is an experience in itself.

## **Ninh Binh**

Located 95 km South of Hanoi, Ninh Binh is a famous tourist destination. It is home to the Bai Dinh Pagoda, one of the largest Pagodas in Southeast Asia, which was renovated in 2003. A stay in Ninh Binh will most certainly take you to Tam Coc for a wonderful journey along the river, discovering the natural caves and karstic peaks of what is often referred to as "Halong Bay on Earth."

## **Phan Thiet**

A fishing town located 200 km northeast of Ho Chi Minh City, Phan Thiet is a perfect stop for beach holidays. Set against a backdrop of white sand beaches and coconut trees, the resort is also endowed with amazing spots such as sand dunes, natural lakes, and the astonishing "red canyons."

## **Phu Quoc Island**

Located in the Gulf of Thailand, just an hour by plane from Ho Chi Minh City, the mountainous and forested Phu Quoc Island boasts some of the most beautiful white sand beaches in Vietnam. Far from the bustles of civilization, this unspoiled island with its crystal-clear blue-green waters and vibrant coral reefs, is a highly recommended destination for peace and nature lovers.

## **Sapa**

Located at an altitude of 1,600 m above sea level near the Chinese border in the north-western Highlands, the former French hill station of Sapa is home to more than 30 ethnic minorities and Mount Fansipan, the highest mountain of Vietnam at 3,143 m. With its spectacular mountain scenery and rice field terraces, this area is a perfect spot to explore authentic hill tribe villages and trekking opportunities.