Vietnam

PHOTOGRAPHIC TOUR

Vietnam is a country full of photographic opportunities. The landscape is diverse and includes a very long and beautiful coastline, magnificent rock formations, and mountains. Having not developed like China and Thailand it still has plenty of opportunity to observe and photograph traditional lifestyles. Vietnam is raw and still relatively unspoilt, with a photograph and story to be told at every bend of the road that you travel. Because of this, now is a great time to visit Vietnam.

Having travelled to Vietnam on numerous occasions over the last 10 years, I have specifically designed this tour with photographers in mind. Come and discover the hidden charm of Vietnam and the endless photographic opportunities. Just like me, I am sure you will find it to be an experience never to be forgotten and one which leaves you hungry for more.

Highlights

- Bustling cities of Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City
- Sweeping sand dunes, colourful fishing villages and inviting beaches of Mui Ne.
- Mountain retreat of Da Lat and off the beaten path of the Central Highlands
- Beach resort town of Nha Trang.
- Ancient sites of Hue’s Nguyen Dynasty and Hoi An’s kingdom of Cham
- Colourful ethnic minority markets and scenic northern highland hill tribe villages
- Breathtaking scenery and huge rock formations of Ninh Binh
- Jagged isles, hidden lagoons, and sea caves of Ha Long Bay

Details

- Duration: 23 days total, 22 in Vietnam.
- Departure date: 28th March 2015
- Because of the special nature of this tour, the number of participants will be limited to approximately 12.
- Price:
  - AUSTRALIA - AU$5899 per person twin share with return international airfare from Sydney/Melbourne as of January 2013.
  - INTERNATIONAL - US$4899 per person twin share without international airfare as of January 2013.
- We will make every effort to match up single travellers who wish to travel at twin share rates. For anyone requiring a single room, there will be an additional charge of AU$630 for travellers departing Australia, or US$630 for international travellers.

Included

Return international airfare from Sydney/Melbourne for passengers departing Australia only, three domestic flights within Vietnam, an experienced Australian photographic tour leader, local Vietnamese tour guides, arrival/departure transfers, in country ground transport by private air-conditioned vehicle with driver, private boat cruises as indicated in itinerary, overnight train, meals as specified in itinerary (B/L/D), drinking water, clean twin share accommodation (3 star or best available in isolated areas) plus taxes and admission fees.

Not included

International airfare for International travellers not departing from Australia, departure taxes if required, visas, personal travel insurance, meals not indicated in program, additional beverages such as soft drinks and alcohol, activities during free time, items of personal nature, tips and gratuities, excess baggage fee.
Tour Itinerary

Day 1: SYDNEY – HO CHI MINH CITY (L,D)
On arrival in Vietnam, we check into our hotel in District 1 of Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Sai Gon. After freshening up, we will go to a local restaurant for dinner.

Day 2: HO CHI MINH CITY - MUI NE (B,L,D)
We will arise early to visit 23/9 Park where people will be going about their morning exercise. After breakfast we will travel to Cholon to visit Binh Tay market and Thien Hau Pagoda, a 150 year old Chinese Temple. We then travel north to Mui Ne. In the evening we will photograph Mui Ne boat harbour at sunset, which with its bevy of fishing boats, is particularly scenic.

Day 3: MUI NE (B,D)
We will arise early to photograph the local fisherman returning to the beach with their catch. You are then free to explore and photograph at your leisure or just relax on the beach. In the afternoon, we will visit Phu Hai Orphanage before enjoying the late afternoon light at Phan Thiet Boat Harbour.

Day 4: MUI NE – DA LAT (B,L,D)
We will arise early and travel to the white sand dunes for the sunrise. After breakfast, we will head north to Phan Rang/Thap Cham to visit Po Klong Garai, a group of Cham towers from the 13th century. We will have lunch before continuing our journey to Da Lat, stopping briefly at the top of Ngoan Muc Pass. Stops will be provided along the way to photograph the interesting villages that we pass.

Day 5: DA LAT (B,L,D)
Today we visit Da Lat Railway Station, regarded as the most beautiful in Indochina, where we will enjoy a short train ride to Chua Linh Phuoc Pagoda. After spending some time exploring the Pagoda and surrounding village we will make our way to Truc Lam Zen Monastery. In the afternoon we visit Lat village prior to transferring by jeep to the summit of Lang Biang mountain. On our return journey we will visit XQ embroidery village. After dinner we will walk around Da Lat to do some night photography.

Day 6: DA LAT – LAK LAKE (B,L,D)
We will arise early to photograph Central Market before commencing our journey to Lak Lake, stopping on the way to visit a silk worm factory at Nam Ban Town. After lunch we will continue to Jun, a M’nong ethnic minority village next to Lak Lake where we will photograph the sunset over Lak Lake.

Day 7: LAK LAKE – BUON MA THUOT (B,L,D)
We will arise early to photograph the local fisherman with their unique method of fishing. After breakfast we will enjoy a leisurely elephant ride to a minority village before commencing our journey to Buon Ma Thuot, stopping to photograph a church that was destroyed during the war. Once we reach Buon Ma Thuot, we make our way to Dray Sap/Dray Nur Waterfalls where we will having a relaxing afternoon exploring the area at our leisure. We return to Buon Ma Thuot for the night.

Day 8: BUON MA THUOT – NHA TRANG (B,L,D)
Today we make our way back to the coast. During our journey we will pass many villages, offering numerous photographic opportunities. On reaching the coast, the mountainous villages are replaced by coastal fishing villages. On arrival in Nha Trang, you are free to explore or relax at your leisure.

Day 9: NHA TRANG (B,L,D)
We will arise early to photograph fishing boats returning from sea at sunrise on Xom Bong Bridge over the Cai River. After breakfast we enjoy a relaxing day on the water as we cruise around the islands off the coast. There will be plenty of time for swimming and snorkelling on some of the coral reefs that surround these islands as well as generally lazing around on the deck of the boat. Local seafood will be served for lunch. Late afternoon we will visit a traditional Vietnamese country house before enjoy a leisurely cruise along the Cai River finishing up at Xom Bong Bridge, where we will visit Po Ngar Cham Towers at sunset.

Day 10: NHA TRANG – HOI AN (B,L,D)
We will arise early to make our way to the airport for our flight to Da Nang. Once we have checked out of Da Nang airport, we will commence our journey to Hoi An, stopping briefly at Marble Mountain and the Non Nuoc stone fine art village. On arrival at Hoi An, we will check into our hotel. After lunch we enjoy a walking tour of Hoi An, visiting ancient homes, pagodas and the Japanese Bridge. After dinner you are free to explore and photograph Hoi An at night, with its beautiful lanterns.
**Day 11: HOI AN (B,D)**
We will arise early and enjoy a boat trip up Thu Bon River and around Hoi An markets near Duong Hoang Van Thu Dock. After breakfast, you are free to explore the town at your leisure or for those who are interested; a cooking class will be offered to give you a much deserved break from photography. Late afternoon we will enjoy photographing local school girls wearing their traditional white school uniforms (Ao Dai) before photographing the sunset over Hoi An.

**Day 12: HOI AN – HUE (B,L,D)**
We will walk to Cam Nam Bridge and photograph the sunrise with boats travelling up and down the Thu Bon River. There will also be an opportunity to photograph a local fisherman attending his fishing net. After breakfast, we travel to My Son, a world heritage series of ruins remaining from the Champa Kingdom which flourished from the 400AD to 1200AD. We will then commence our journey to Hue, where we will check into our hotel.

**Day 13: HUE (B,L,D)**
Today we will take a Dragon Boat trip to Thien Mu Pagoda followed by a visit to Minh Mang’s Tomb. We then return to Hue for lunch before visiting Tu Duc's Tomb and a handicraft village where incense sticks and Vietnamese hats are made. Late afternoon we will travel to Vong Canh Hill to photograph the Perfume River during sunset.

**Day 14: HUE – HA NOI (B,L,D)**
This morning we will depart very early to visit Thuan An to photograph a wet markets and fishing village. After breakfast we visit the Imperial Citadel where Nguyen Dynasty ruled between 1802 and 1945, with numerous attractions such as the Flag Tower, Noon Gate, Nine Dynastic Urns, Nine Holy Cannons, Thai Hoa Palace, and Forbidden Purple City. After lunch we make our way to the airport for our flight to Ha Noi. In the evening we will be entertained by the world famous Thang Long Water Puppet Show.

**Day 15: HA NOI – LAO CAI (B,D)**
We will arise early to go to Hoan Kiem Lake where we will photograph early risers meditating, doing tai chi, exercising and playing badminton. You are then free to relax or explore Hanoi at your leisure. Late afternoon visit a local Bia Hoi restaurant to try the locally brewed draft beer before enjoying a relaxing cyclo ride around the old quarter of Ha Noi. After dinner we board our overnight train to Lao Cai.

**Day 16: LAO CAI – MUONG HUM MARKETS – SA PA (B,L,D)**
After breakfast we will commence our journey to the remote Muong Hum markets. Here we will see Red Dao, Ha Nhi and other colourful ethnic minorities buying and selling local produce. Afterwards we make our way to Sa Pa where the afternoon is free to explore at your leisure. In the evening we travel to Tram Ton Pass (Heaven’s Gate) for the sunset.

**Day 17: SA PA (B,L,D)**
Today we will trek down the mountain to Ta Van village. Along the way we will photograph the magnificent terraced rice fields and local minority people going about their day-to-day activities. After an enjoyable lunch in the village you are free to explore the village and walk around and photograph the local minority people and terraced landscape at your leisure. Tonight our accommodation will be a home stay in Ta Van village.

*Note: For travellers who are unable to do this trek, an alternative program will be available including transport to Ta Van village or additional night accommodation in Sa Pa.*

**Day 18: SA PA – HA NOI (B,D)**
This morning we will arise early to photograph the sunrise over terraced rice fields and minority people commencing their daily activities. After breakfast, we commence our day by walking through the villages and terraced rice fields, making our way back to the main road and transport. We will return to Sa Pa where we will have some free time to explore the town. Late afternoon we commence our return journey to Lao Cai for dinner. After dinner we will board the overnight train to Ha Noi.

**Day 19: HA NOI – NINH BINH (B,L,D)**
On arrival in Hanoi, we will freshen up and have breakfast at a local restaurant. After breakfast, we will travel to West Lake where we will visit Tran Quoc Pagoda and Quan Thanh Temple. We then enjoy a 2 hour walking tour in the old quarter, photographing the shops, street life and people going about their day-to-day activities. After lunch we commence our journey south to Van Long before enjoying a boat trip through Kenh Ga Floating Village.
Day 20: NIHN BINH – HA LONG BAY (B,L,D)
This morning we will enjoy a 2 hour boat cruise through Van Long Nature Reserve boasting breathtaking scenery. The boats will float through mountains with intriguing names such as Meo Cao (scratching cat), Co Tien (lady fairy), Mo Coi (orphand) and Hon Sach (book); each of these names are rooted in old Vietnamese legends and folk tales. We will then commence our journey to Ha Long City, stopping at Thai Binh for lunch. Stops will be provided along the way to photograph rural life.

Day 21: HA LONG BAY (B,L,D)
We will arise early to photograph the sunrise and visit the local fish market. After breakfast we board our private boat for a relaxing day cruising around Ha Long Bay. We will visit Hang Dau Go (Grotto of the Wooden Stakes) and photograph the bay and floating villages. In the afternoon, we will climb up to the peak of Ti Top Island for a panoramic view of Ha Long bay before enjoying a seafood lunch on the boat. We will then be transferred to Cat Ba Town by bus where we will have time to photograph the sunset over the harbour.

Day 22: HA LONG BAY - HA NOI (B,L,D)
This morning we will enjoy and photograph Cat Ba Harbour in the splendid morning light. After breakfast, we transferred back to our boat for our journey back to Ha Long City, once again enjoy the magnificent scenery of Ha Long Bay. We then start our journey back to Hanoi. At night will be entertained by a traditional Ca Tru show.

Day 23: HA NOI - HO CHI MINH CITY - SYDNEY (B,L)
After breakfast, we explore the local streets with a model, taking advantage of the morning light. We then make our way to the Temple of Literature, Vietnam's first University dating back to 1070 AD. Our model will once again accompany us whilst we explore the gardens and architecture. We then proceed to a local restaurant for lunch. After lunch we make our way to the airport for our return flights to Ho Chi Minh City and Sydney.

Conditions

- Surcharge may apply if minimum tour size is not met.
- Pricing and itinerary subject to change without prior notice.
- Any unused services are non-refundable.
- Deposit required to secure booking and cancellation penalty will apply.
- All participants are required to take out comprehensive travel insurance as a condition of the tour. The travel insurance should cover you for medical costs associated with hospitalisation, emergency travel and repatriation back to Australia. Proof of adequate insurance is required as a condition of the tour. If you arrive without a policy, you will be required to purchase one prior to departing Sydney.
- It is also advisable to make relevant arrangements for your insurance to cover your luggage and camera equipment.

If you are interested in joining me on this fantastic photographic tour or require additional information, please contact:

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