

Textile Traditions of Vietnam's North

12 March-25 March, 2016.

Lead by Fiona Wright and Praveen Nayak

Visiting the North of Vietnam we will have an opportunity to savour a culture rich in textile traditions. That is just the beginning... the first word that springs to mind when thinking of this region is peaceful ...and the second is friendly; the food is an art in itself, the scenery so inspiring...and the textiles!

Once we leave Hanoi with its wonderful Silk Street [perfect to get something sensational tailored for yourself] cottage industries of embroidery, weaving and indigo dyeing abound.

People are friendly and happy for us to pop in and see what is going on, others are kindly going to teach us. We will have the opportunity to sit around with some of the local ladies, chat and stitch.

A chance for us to try various approaches to cross stitch, follow the process of turning hemp into cloth, a workshop applying wax batik and seeing the results of dunking the cloth into indigo until it becomes a rich blue/black; lots to do.

A time to experience a different pace of life, a place where handiwork helps support a family and is an integral part of the culture- this is Vietnam's North.

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organizations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category.

Don't worry there are also lots of other markets we can visit too and help the local economy through the small traders- shopping!

Creative Arts Safaris tours are – art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.

- all inclusive utilising good quality mid-range up to flash accommodation and excellent dining experiences – we look for atmospheric places to stay [off the beaten tourists trails where possible] always good, clean bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.

- groups of 8-14 participants

These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends; Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, our tutor handles the artistic side and a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the

Day 1-Saturday 12 March, 2016

Hanoi

Arrival at Hanoi Airport. You will be picked up from the airport. We will be staying in the very picturesque Old Quarter of Hanoi.

Day 2-Sunday 13 March

Hanoi

Today we will visit the father of modern Vietnam at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, start our research into local delicacies for lunch and then have an interesting afternoon at the Museum of Ethnology. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Cost – Au \$3790-twin share

[all inclusive except your shopping]

Single Supplement Au \$690

Deposit \$1600 to book today

Full payment due 12.12.2015

Email fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com

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Day 3-Monday 14 March, 2016

Mai Chau

Following a road meandering through the mountains we will arrive at White Thai and Moug Minority area of Mai Chau.

We'll be staying near Mai Chau in a village of the wooden stilt homes of White Thai people tonight, staying in a new Lodge. Mai Chau produces fine, colourful contemporary embroideries and is renowned for its White Thai brocade weaving, dinner will all arrive fresh from the families' gardens, farm yards and fish ponds...afternoon to relax at wander through the rice paddies.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 4-Tuesday 15 March, 2016

Mai Chau/Tam Coc

We will join some of the local women for an embroidery class this morning, get started on the White Thai motifs that adorn a lot of contemporary home wares from Vietnam.

This evening we will be in Tam Coc; a place compared to Halong Bay- with same amazing rock formations rising out of the rice paddies of the delta. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 5-Wednesday 16 March, 2016

Tam Coc

We will visit a large local market this morning, so interesting to check out where the locals shop and what they buy.

Then to visit the family home and farm of our friend Khanh to learn to make traditional Vietnamese Spring Rolls. Khanh boasts they are the best in Vietnam and I think he may be right! So it will be off to Khanh's to have a cooking class and make our lunch.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 6-Thursday 17 March, 2016

Tam Coc/ Hanoi and sleeper train

Tam Coc is famed for its fine embroidery traditions, this morning we will be tutored by some of the local girls at Mrs Lieu's establishment, see if we can match her fine stitching on beautiful bed linen.

Later we will head up to Hanoi, when we arrive in the afternoon we will visit the Temple of Literature and have dinner at Koto. Koto was set up as a training facility to help youth off the street and into a career, look at www.koto.com.au for more info about this inspiring effort and look forward to a great meal. (9.00pm the Sleeper train departs...

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 7-Friday 18 March, 2016

Sapa

We will have very comfortable sleeper accommodation on the train arriving early in the morning to drive up through the mists to our mountain top destination of the small village of Sapa. After booking into our hotel, time to refresh and breakfast we will take a wander through town. NOTE really big suitcases are hard to squeeze into your train cabin but our hotel in Hanoi is happy to look after them for us.

Previous visitors have really appreciated the advice to tell yourself to just look during your first foray into town, there is so much amazing work around you can start to go into overload!

We will set tomorrow aside for shopping.

Later today we will be meeting up with friends who are of the Black H'mong people and take time to sit in a village, participate in a batik workshop, leaving our cloth to be indigo-ed and delivered to us on the morrow.

inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

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Day 8-Saturday 19 March, 2016**Sapa**

Today is market day in Sapa and what a busy day it is! Many tourists and many, many of the local Ethnic Minority People descend on town to buy and sell their wares. Disappointed last year that many of the village ladies are being squeezed out but we will find their corners and check out their wares, the women with their extraordinary, beautifully stitched clothing, the opportunity to gently bargain for your own pieces- just wander around and enjoy. We will grab some supplies and try our hand at H'mong style cross stitch in the afternoon. Evening free.

[inc- breakfast, lunch]

Day 9-Sunday 20 March, 2016**Sapa/ Bac Ha/ sleeper train/Hanoi**

An early start to get to Bac Ha and their very colourful market. The market fills up with many Flower H'mong people in their beautifully and colourfully embroidered costumes. It is a good place to buy water buffalo and other household animals, check out the textiles and handicrafts and soak up the atmosphere. Great atmosphere. In the afternoon we will take a walk to one of the neighbouring villages through the very beautiful countryside before heading back to catch the night train to Hanoi.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 10-Monday 21 March, 2016**Hanoi**

An early arrival into Hanoi, with our comfortable hotel waiting for us- after a rest and breakfast...

Mid morning we will visit the Women's Museum...it has many stories to tell, firstly women's efforts in the American War and contemporary issues of the day...always interesting place to see what is new. Off to the outskirts of Hanoi to visit the Sacred Objects village.... And an embroidery village. Free time in the afternoon. *[inc- breakfast, lunch]*

Day 11-Tuesday 22 March, 2016**Hanoi**

This morning off to the edge of Hanoi and a village famed through the centuries for the local temple which was started in 865 AD. It is a place many leaders have come to over the centuries to meditate; looking for answers in times of need. Around the temple the village has long been famed for its silk weaving traditions, walking around the streets we will listen and find which looms are working to visit, often the dye man has the pot boiling matching silks for weddings.... Much to see.

Weather at this time of year is mild to warm, the good news is we travel in an air-conditioned mini-bus. In the mountains it will be cooler. A range of layers is a good idea. An umbrella can be useful for the sun or occasional light shower.

Clothing- light weight cotton clothing is good- to respect local customs best for skirts or trousers to be mid-calf length at least, tops not too revealing. Pack a pair of socks and cardigan for the cool of the mountains. A sun hat is a good idea.

Shoes- sensible walking shoes. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at!

Money ATM's are everywhere so you can use a travel card or visa debit or credit advance easily. If you plan to use a card overseas **DO** warn your bank to expect overseas activity- some will freeze the card wondering what is happening.

Camera don't forget your leads and perhaps an extra memory card.

Power 240 volts, European adaptor plugs are the most useful.

Tipping? We cover tips for the group- eg bags out of the hotel, dinner etc. It is customary to give a little something when your bags are carried into your room etc.

Do think of our guides and drivers- a tip there is a comment on their services.

Step lightly on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible

Say NO to Plastic! please bring a carry bag for your shopping.

Water Puppets Performance in the evening.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 12-Wednesday 23 March, 2016 Hanoi/ Halong Bay

Ha Long is our destination where we will board a boat for an afternoon cruising before we drop anchor in a quiet cove to dream the night away.

This is a relaxing time of our trip, it will give us time for show and tell and to discuss our own textile interests and perhaps jot down a few ideas for some creative work when we get back home.

The view is spectacular, perhaps you can finish off some of the pieces we started stitching with the Ladies in the Mountains,

Really though we usually find ourselves lolling on the deck having sunset drinks and just being there.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 13-Thursday 24 March, 2016 Halong Bay/Hanoi

In the bay we will drop by and visit limestone caves if you fancy a bit of kayaking, before we start heading back to Hanoi and a Farewell dinner to celebrate our time in this friendly and inspiring country.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

Day 14-Friday 25 March, 2016**Hanoi/ Home**

Departures today, we will drop you to Hanoi Airport to meet your flights.

[inc- breakfast]

Creative Arts Safaris tours include:

- pickups from the airport for arrivals on Day 1
- departures last day of tour
- accommodation from the evening of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner

Our accommodation is generally mid-range. We use more traditional feeling hotels where we can. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is ambiance and friendliness we are looking for. This is the range where we may meet locals as well – top end is far removed from this and just full of foreigners!

- all transportation, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour
- all breakfasts and most other meals

Food is a reflection of the culture and we are pleased to say we will sample a range of good dining experiences.

- sightseeing entrance fees [which covers the use of a still camera]

- all tuition fees

- all tips for meals we organize. *See tipping in the notes section for tipping for personal requests or other tipping instances.*

You need to cover:

- some meals
- bottled drinking water and drinks with meals.
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guestimate' for you is shopping! *[this is not a shopping expedition but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]*

- **airfares**

- **travel insurance**

- **visa**

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organisations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category [more info in the notes to follow] Don't worry there are also lots of other markets we can visit too!

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