

Ninh Binh Cycling Tour



Highlights

Explore the beautiful Ninh Binh region in Vietnam on this two-day cycling tour. You'll ride through jungle landscapes and the Cuc Phuong National Park and enjoy dinner and an overnight stay in a simple family bungalow. Not only will you have the chance to glimpse a different way of life, you'll also benefit from the exercise and fresh air of the countryside, too.

Vietnam. It's a place where in one pocket, you'll find rice fields and kids riding buffalos, while in another, you'll be dazzled by flashing neon signs and drowned out by the incessant hum of motorbikes. It's a country of extremes, but the Ninh Binh area is definitely more along the lines of the former. In particular, Cuc Phuong really impresses. It's Vietnam's oldest National Park and is steeped in natural beauty. Hills are covered in thick jungle, which in turn is home to exotic birds and plants, and the endangered Delacur-langur monkey.

One of your first ports of call is the ancient capital of Hoa Lu. Here you'll see its 10th-century citadel that served to defend the kingdom from the Chinese. Then there's Tam Coc – which translates as 'Three Caves' – where you'll see towering limestone rocks that bring many people to compare it to nearby Halong Bay. But one of the real treats on this tour is the chance to spend the night in a host family's bungalow home. It may be basic, but it's a rarity to be able to have the chance to really experience another culture and way of life.

Is it for me?

If you're the sort of person who likes getting off the beaten track rather than simply staying in the tourist hotspots, this tour will be right up your street. You'll get out into the countryside on bikes and stay with a local family – so you'll get a real insight into life here. Outdoorsy types and anyone keen to learn and experience a different way of life will really benefit from this tour. It's probably best if you're open to sharing space with people and enjoy trying new foods as that way you'll be able to relax and get the most of out of the experience.

Accommodation

You'll be staying in a simple, traditional family bungalow. Inside, it's basic, so don't expect any extra luxuries. That said, the welcome is warm and you'll be eating breakfast and dinner here – expect local, traditional meals made by the family.

Itinerary

Day 1: Hanoi – Cuc Phuong National Park

Pick-up at your hotel at 8am and then transfer by minibus to Ninh Binh (this takes about two hours). After this, you'll start cycling on countryside roads and onto Hoa Lu – an ancient citadel. You'll continue riding through the limestone peaks to Tam Coc, passing paddy fields and rural villages. Once in Tam Coc, you'll have lunch in a local restaurant with views over the pier. After lunch you'll be transferred by minibus for a short distance, and will then continue cycling for about two hours to Cuc Phuong National Park. Here, the bikes are loaded back on the minibus and you'll be transferred to the park centre for the night. You'll have dinner and stay overnight in a simple bungalow.

Day 2: Cuc Phuong – Van Long – Hanoi

In the morning you'll cycle up hill and further into the jungle. It's a harder ride than yesterday but it's well worth

Prices from

163 GBP (2 days) per person

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the effort as you'll be surrounded by nature and exotic birdsong. There may be time for a short walk to learn about the plants and animals that can be found here. Later on you'll visit the monkey rescue centre, and after this will board the minibus for a trip to Van Long where you'll have lunch. You'll also spend an hour and a half onboard bamboo boats visiting swampland in this Nature Reserve. You'll see limestone peaks, caves and you may even spot the Delacour langur – an endangered monkey. Then it's back on the minibus for the trip back to Hanoi.

Details

Getting there

To reach Hanoi, you'll probably need to change in Bangkok or Hong Kong as there are few direct flights here. Flights with Vietnam Airlines and Pacific Airlines are likely to be your best bet.

Price includes

Lunch and dinner on day one, breakfast and lunch on day two, accommodation, transfers, entrance fees, hat, services of a tour guide.

Price details

Price quoted is per person based on two people in a group. Prices vary depending on group sizes:

Individual traveller - \$373

Three people - \$166 per person

Four people - \$144 per person

Five people - \$151 per person

Single supplement - \$13

Please contact us for more prices if you have a larger group (maximum group size is 10 people).

Comfort level

Down to earth (hostels, camping, huts)

Experience required

A reasonable level of fitness and interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Passport, change & hat, toiletries, sun-block, insect repellent, sun-glasses & hat with large brim for boat rowing or umbrella.