



## RURAL VILLAGES OF NORTHERN VIETNAM

Discover off-the-beaten-track Vietnam on a journey through ancient rural villages whilst staying in a quaint guesthouse and ecolodge. Ideal for the active travellers.

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Tailor-Made Journeys, Suggested Itineraries



Vietnam, Asia



4 days from AU\$1,110 pp



Private

## Journey Overview

Go beyond-the-guidebook on this luxury adventure to Vietnam's rural heartlands. Explore patchwork rice fields, and tiered landscapes in every shade of green, surrounded by verdant jungle, limestone outcrops and mountain peaks. From Ki Son to Mai Chau: bike, drive and hike between ancient villages, meeting remote hill tribes and learning about their way of life. This is the perfect journey for active explorers.

### Journey Highlights

- Experience true Vietnamese hospitality in Moon Garden Homestay
- Learn the secrets behind Vietnamese recipes passed down through the generations
- Share a drink with the local hill tribes of Mai Chau and explore lifestyles unchanged for centuries
- Spend your days cycling through quaint villages and rice paddies, and notice how each village has its own housing and architectural style, traditional costumes and domestic life
- • Meet local farmers and try your hand at ploughing rice beds and planting seeds
- • Visit the villages of Na Phon and Na Meo and stop to chat with locals to learn about their lifestyle



## Itinerary

### Day 1: Arrive Hanoi - Ky Son

From Hanoi, travel to a small community in the countryside of northern Vietnam, to experience rural life in Ky Son. Visit Moon Garden, a humble estate which was originally built as a summer home for a Hanoi-based architect and his family. Set in a garden of pomelo, mango, longan and frangipanis, the property showcases various building styles. After meeting your hosts, head to the kitchen to help prepare lunch. Learn the art of Vietnamese food preparation and try making Vietnamese spring rolls and a traditional dessert. Relax after your meal with a soothing hand massage.

In the afternoon, enjoy a leisurely bicycle ride around the village. Discover farming communities and rice fields on a gentle six-kilometer (four-mile) ride. Along the way, enjoy a cup of tea with local farmers, or try your hand at ploughing rice beds, harvesting rice or planting seeds at a small farm (depending on the season). Alternatively, opt for a longer 12-kilometre route to explore more ethnic villages including Duong Lam ancient village, communal village houses and a king's tomb.

Return to Moon Garden for dinner followed by a rejuvenating herbal foot bath.

#### ***Ky Son Moon Garden / Meals: BLD***

### Day 2: Ky Son - Mai Chau

Savour the fresh air and quietude of morning in Ky Son. Early risers can take part in gentle *yijin jing* stretching exercises before breakfast. Depart Ky Son later in the morning and set off on a scenic three-hour drive to Mai Chau. Discover a patchwork of rice paddy fields and ethnic communities in the peaceful valley. Here, the hustle and bustle of the city is replaced with meandering country roads that open up to picturesque fields and mountains.

Check in to your hotel around midday and enjoy lunch at a local house in the village. Mai Chau is home to several ethnic communities including the Dzao, Muong and Thai tribes, and this afternoon you can discover some of their diverse traditions and ways of life. Visit the villages of Na Phon and Na Meo and stop to chat with locals to learn a bit about their lifestyle and how little has changed over the years.

#### ***Mai Chau Ecolodge / Meals: BL***

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### **Day 3: Mai Chau**

Hop on a bike to explore more scenic villages in Mai Chau, such as Poom Coong to Chieng Sai. Cycle through rice fields and farmland and notice how each village has its own characteristics in terms of housing and architectural style, traditional costumes and domestic life. Follow the countryside paths through more scenic fields to reach the villages of Cha Long and NaTang. Learn about the local history and traditions at a home in Van village, which houses a private collection of tribal antiques, hunting equipment, musical instruments and jewellery.

Return to your hotel for lunch and enjoy the remainder of the day at leisure. You may wish to simply relax and soak up the atmosphere at your lodge or explore more of the villages and surrounding area at your own pace. Your guide is on hand to help with advice and recommendations. Dinner this evening is under your own arrangement.

### **Mai Chau Ecolodge | Meals: BL**

### **Day 4: Mai Chau - Depart Hanoi**

After a leisurely morning with breakfast at your lodge, check out and depart Mai Chau. Travelling by private vehicle, the journey back to Hanoi takes approximately three hours and takes you through scenic landscapes.

### ***Meals: B***

## Map





## Accommodation

### Ky Son Moon Garden



Nestled in the ancient village of Ky Son, just 60km from Hanoi, Moon Garden provides a home away from home for those who want to be immersed in the true rural culture of Vietnam. Originally a summer home for a Hanoi-based architect and his family, the property has since been expanded with the addition of two new houses, built in the style of surrounding ethnic villages, each adorned with wonderful Vietnamese antiquities and traditional furniture.

The original, restored Vietnamese home offers two en suite guest rooms, while the two newer buildings each have two en suite bedrooms and separate living areas.

The ambience is enhanced by a lovely central courtyard, a small pond and bonsai garden overlooking a lake and surrounding rice paddies. You can also step inside the century-old church, which was rescued from a neighbouring province and rebuilt piece by piece in the grounds.

The homestay offers a range of activities designed to provide a unique glimpse of authentic Vietnam. Start your day with gentle *yijin jing* exercises. Try your hand at making traditional Vietnamese delicacies (spring rolls, of course) in a cooking class, cycle to local villages, visit a school and help out on a farm. After a day exploring, return to your reward

of a hand spa and steam bath with fragrant herbs like lemon grass, pomelo leaves, and holy basil leaves.

**Why we like it**

- Beautifully restored home adorned with Vietnamese antiques and traditional furnishings
- Located in the ancient village of Ky Son, surrounded by paddy fields and farm
- Complimentary herbal massages and fragrant steam baths
- Offers a range of activities offered to immerse guests in true village life

# Abercrombie & Kent

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