

vietnam: lau thi ngai village bridge project



trip highlights

Working alongside the Lau Thi Ngai community to improve the safety of their village

Returning home with an intimate insight into the Vietnamese culture

The historical sites and amazing architecture found in Hue

The beautiful port town of Hoi An

The legendary Cu Chi tunnels



Trip Duration	14 days
Grade	Adventure touring level
Activities	Community Projects, Adventure Touring
Accommodation	14 days, 10 nights hotel, 3 nights overnight train, 3 days Community Project

welcome to World Expeditions

Thank you for inquiring about our Vietnam: Lau Thi Ngai Village Bridge Project trip. Here at World Expeditions we are passionate about giving our clients the best chance to experience some of the remarkable cultures and wilderness regions of this very special part of the world. We are committed to making sure that our range of unique itineraries are well researched, affordable & tailored for the enjoyment of our small groups. These philosophies have been with us since 1975 when we began operating adventure holidays. We also put great effort into making sure that wherever we go we show a true respect for the local cultures and their environment. In Peru we have worked with our trek and tour staff for more than 20 years and have always managed to benefit from a tremendously good relationship that is reciprocal in every sense. We pay our staff well over award wages and provide them and their families with insurance and medical support. For the last two decades we have set up many help projects in the local villages where our staff live.

Why travel with World Expeditions?

Community Project Travel is a unique "giving back" program that we have operated since 2005 as a 'not for profit' division of our company. The program aims to assist impoverished communities that receive little or no funding from its government. Each project is sustainable in that the work is started and completed by the time you leave the community, resulting in a tangible benefit. Additionally we run the projects jointly with the community, encouraging ownership of the project at the local level and transferring skills to the local community, which assists in the long-term continuity of the project. Each project is selected on a consultative basis with the community, ensuring that the project is a real need of the community. Lastly, no particular skill is required to join a project; you just need to pack an open mind and a keenness to commit to physical work in a team environment.

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trip dates

2009 23 Nov - 06 Dec

2010 TBA

trip cost

\$2790 joining Hanoi

For competitive airfares and stopover ideas to join this adventure, contact our expert staff today to receive a detailed quote.

World Expeditions does not require single travellers pay a surcharge for travelling alone. On all of our adventures we will arrange for you to share accommodation with another traveller of the same sex and if we can not match you up we will provide a single room at no extra charge. If you prefer not to share a single supplement is payable to guarantee your own room. The cost of the single supplement is \$POA.

the trip

Lau Thi Ngai village is a village of Hmong Ethnic minority people, located near Bac Ha town in northeast Vietnam. The villagers live mainly on agriculture with the planting and growing of rice and vegetables on the mountainside. The people in this village are very poor and they desperately need help with essential infrastructures such as access to clean water, the construction of a safe bridge and a dormitory for the children attending the school. In 2008 a private group of World Expeditions travellers completed a project in the village of Lau Thi Ngai. The project resulted in the construction of a water system, which now gives the people of the village access to clean water for their homes. To continue the improvements in this village we return this year to construct a concrete bridge that will allow the children to have safe passage to and from school. Currently, three hamlets of the village (Po Cho I, Po Cho II and Po Cho III) reach the head of the village and the schools via a very temporary bridge that is made of wood. As such the current bridge provides dangerous passage for all that use it, with particular concern for the school children. In fact, many of the younger children do not attend school because they are extremely nervous about crossing the bridge. The new bridge will improve the safe transportation for the 68 households of these three hamlets, where there are 90 children who need access to the school. The bridge will also help the villagers in collecting the rice, corn and other crops to help develop their economy.

at a glance

DAY 1	ARRIVE HANOI
DAY 2	IN HANOI. OVERNIGHT TRAIN TO LAU THI NGAI
DAY 3	ARRIVE AT LAU THI NGAI VILLAGE
DAYS 4-6	PROJECT WORK AT LAU THI NGAI VILLAGE
DAY 7	CAN CAU MARKET. DRIVE TO SAPA
DAY 8	ARRIVE HANOI. DAY OF LEISURE
DAY 9	ARRIVE HUE
DAY 10	TRANSFER BY BUS FROM HUE TO HOI AN
DAY 11	FREE AT LEISURE IN HOI AN
DAY 12	DRIVE FROM HOI AN TO DANANG. FLY FROM DANANG TO SAIGON
DAY 13	CU CHI TUNNELS
DAY 14	DEPART SAIGON

what's included

- 10 nights 2-3 star hotel accommodation
- all transfers and transportation with air-conditioned vehicles
- an English speaking guide throughout the trip
- all entrance fees as per the itinerary
- 13 breakfasts, 5 lunches, 6 dinners
- train ticket Hanoi-Laocai-Hanoi by Livitrans or similar tourist train (soft sleeper in AC cabin of 4 berths: one berth per pax)
- domestic flight ticket Hanoi-Hue and Danang - Saigon in economy class
- all materials for the project at the village

No local payments policy: Local cash payments are becoming increasingly popular with many operators. The policy seems to benefit the tour operators, more than the local economies or travellers, as it avoids local taxes and transfers the cost and risk of cash handling to travellers. In accordance with our Responsible Travel practices.



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Day 1:
Arrive Hanoi
→ Meals: D

Today is the arrival day and a transfer will be provided from the airport to the hotel. There are no activities planned for today but this evening we will meet with our group leader and fellow travellers to discuss the itinerary and also to answer any questions you may have. Following the group meeting, which usually takes one hour, we will have dinner at one of Hanoi's many famous restaurants.

Day 2:
In Hanoi. Overnight train to Lau Thi Ngai
→ Meals: B

Hanoi is known as a city of lakes, shaded boulevards and verdant public parks and is also the capital of Vietnam. We will visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum (from outside) and Museum, the One Pillar Pagoda and the historical Temple of Literature. In the afternoon we take a cyclo ride in the city center of Hanoi, passing lively local markets and narrow shaded streets followed by walking around to explore the Old Quarter and visit Hoan Kiem Lake, Ngoc Son temple. In the evening we transfer to the railway station to take the night train to Lau Thi Ngai. Overnight on train.

Day 3:
Arrive at Lau Thi Ngai Village
→ Meals: B, L, D

Arrive in Lau Thi Ngai village in the early morning, where we are transferred to the local restaurant to have a Vietnamese breakfast. Following breakfast we transfer to Bac Ha town, which is a three hour drive (approx. 80km). Upon arrival we check into our hotel. In the afternoon, we head to the village's headquarter, where we meet with the head of village and the locals to discuss our work plan for the next three days. Return to Bac Ha town for overnight at the hotel.

Days 4-6:
Project work at Lau Thi Ngai Village
→ Meals: B, L, D

In the morning we transfer to the head of the village and from here we enjoy a short 25 minute trek to the project site. We spend the entire day working alongside the villagers at the project site to build the bridge. In the afternoon we trek back to the head of the village where we met by the bus to return to Bac Ha town for overnight at the hotel. On the last evening we enjoy a farewell dinner with the local people from the village.

Day 7:
Can Cau Market. Drive to Sapa
→ Meals: B, L

Today we visit Can Cau market. This market is the market of Hmong ethnic minority which is open every Saturday. It is a one drive from Bac Ha town. At the market we enjoy the interaction with the Hmong people and gain a better understanding about their way of life. We return to Bac Ha for lunch at local restaurant. In the afternoon we drive to Sapa to visit the local markets. We take an evening transfer to the railway station to take overnight train back to Hanoi.

Day 8:
Arrive Hanoi. Day of leisure
→ Meals: B

We arrive into Hanoi in the early morning, where we are met and transferred to the hotel for an early check in and breakfast. The rest of the day is free to relax or enjoy one of the optional excursions to Halong Bay or to Hoa Lu Tamcoc or the nearby villages. Overnight in Hanoi.

Day 9:
Arrive Hue
→ Meals: B

In the morning we transfer by bus to Hue. We spend the day taking in the sites of Hue including a boat ride on the Perfume River to visit Thien Mu Pagoda, which was built on a hill overlooking the river. We continue on to view the unique architecture and design of the King Tu Duc tomb, which were designed by past emperors in preparation for their 'life after death'. In the afternoon we visit the Imperial City and Forbidden City and shop around the Dong Ba marketplace. Overnight in Hue.

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Day 10:
Transfer by bus from Hue to Hoi An
→ Meals: B

In the morning we transfer to Hoi An. Upon arrival we check into our hotel and take refreshments. In the afternoon we enjoy a guided walking tour to explore the picturesque town of Hoi An.

Hoi An is an ancient port town and was home to one of southeast Asia's major international harbors from 17th to the 19th century. Some parts of Hoi An still look exactly as they did a century and a half ago. The city preserves hundreds of houses built of precious wood in its very own style. There is the Japanese quarter linked with a Chinese neighborhood by the famous Japanese Covered Bridge, which was constructed in 1593. The Chinese community of Hoi An founded many temples and Assembly Halls, which are well worth a visit. Overnight in Hoi An.

Day 11:
Free at leisure in Hoi An
→ Meals: B

The whole day is free at leisure for your own activities in Hoi An.

Day 12:
Drive from Hoi An to Danang. Fly from
Danang to Saigon
→ Meals: B

In the morning we transfer to Danang airport to take a flight to Saigon. We spend the day taking in some of the sights of this large city including the Reunification Palace (also known as Independence Palace) which is one of the most fascinating sights in Saigon and was once the symbol of the South Vietnamese government. We also visit the Notre Dame Cathedral, Ben Thanh market and China Town. Overnight in Saigon.

Day 13:
Cu Chi Tunnels
→ Meals: B, D

We depart from the hotel at 8 am to visit the Cu Chi tunnels, an underground village, which became legendary during the 1960s for its role in the Vietnam War. Located about 75 km northwest of Saigon, the tunnels were part of an underground network that zigzagged from the southern tip of the HCM trail near the Cambodian border to the Sai Gon River. In the District of Cu Chi alone, there were over 200 km of tunnels. The network, parts of which were several stories deep, included innumerable trap doors, kitchens, and clinics with operating rooms, meeting rooms and sleeping chambers with bamboo beds. The system also incorporated drinking wells, ventilation shafts, false tunnels and booby-trapped passages. The tunnels were built with simple hand tools. The deepest layer of the tunnels lay about 10 meters underground, and up to 16000 guerrillas could live in the tunnel complex at one time. In the afternoon we drive back to Saigon. The afternoon is at your leisure. We enjoy a farewell dinner this evening. Overnight in Saigon.

Day 14:
Depart Saigon
→ Meals: B

Transfer to the airport for departure flight.

Note: This itinerary is subject to change with any change in Community regulations as well as Governmental changes and natural circumstances beyond our control.

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fast facts

Countries Visited:
Vietnam

Visas:
Yes*

Vaccinations:
Yes*

Group size:
Min. 10 Max. 16

Private Groups:
Yes*

Singles:
A single supplement is available for this trip*

Leader:
Expert local leader

Brochure Reference: Community Project Travel

* Ask our staff or your agent for more information

country information

Vietnam stretches over 1600 km along the eastern coast of the Indo-Chinese peninsula from 8' 34" N to 23' 22" N. The land mass is 329,566 square kilometres, making it larger than Italy and slightly smaller than Japan. Vietnam is a country of immense beauty and geographical diversity. The country is roughly divided into three main areas ñ Bac Bo (north), Trung Bo (centre) and Nam Bo (south). The main feature of the north of Vietnam is mountains and forests along with the vast Red River Delta. The north is also home to the Gulf of Tonkin and a maze of islands in the bay. Central Vietnam is made up of agricultural plains wedged between the Truong Son Mountains and the South China Sea making some dramatic mountain passes overlooking ocean vistas. The Mekong Delta dominates the south of the country. Vietnam has been the site of battles and invasions for over 2000 years. Influences of invaders or modern day 'liberators' have left the country with a unique cultural identity and a complex and fascinating history. This history has given Vietnam a diverse population made up of different ethnic groups, particularly from China. The predominant ethnic group is known as ěkinhí and make up about 90% of the population. There are dozens of other ethnic groups including Cham and Khmer particularly in the south of the country.

climate

The best season to visit Vietnam is from October through to March, as it is generally much cooler than the summer months of June to August. Rain is possible at any time so we suggest you pack a waterproof jacket / poncho with a hood for all departures.

responsible travel

The environments we travel through are fragile. It is our responsibility as visitors to minimise the impact of our presence. World Expeditions were the proud recipients of the inaugural Australian National Travel Industry's Environmental Achievement award for our Responsible Travel Guidebook. This detailed guide to responsible & sustainable travel is provided to all World Expeditions clients before they travel. Please ask your consultant if you have not received your copy of our award winning book. Alternatively, you may like to download a copy from our website www.worldexpeditions.com

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trip grading

Our Community Project Travel adventures can be undertaken by anyone with a reasonable level of health and fitness. For the community project part of your trip you will not require a certain level of strength or physical ability, just an enthusiastic and positive attitude. A

project manager will direct and distribute the workloads amongst participants on a daily basis. There is no pressure to exert yourself physically beyond your limits during the project but you should be prepared to give 4 -6 hours of physical labour each day. A certain level of fitness will be required where there is trekking involved.

a typical day

Once in the village you will be introduced to a local foreman who will coordinate the work. In advance of your arrival, all materials for the project will have been purchased and carried in to the village. Your foreman will have had extensive discussions with the community about the objectives of our project and will be able to direct the progress of this work during the allotted time. Normally, he will divide the group into sub groups to work on different components of the project. There will be a good deal of flexibility in the hours that you work each day but it is anticipated that you will be involved in labour work for up to 6 hours a day. The people from the village will of course be very receptive to your visit and the improvements that you are making that will bring benefit to the entire village. You can expect them to visit daily out of curiosity and to help out also.

what you carry

When not participating in the Community Project you should carry with you a daypack containing a water bottle, snacks, camera and wet weather gear.

equipment required

Although all the equipment required for the community project will be provided, we do suggest that you bring tough work gloves and a lightweight set of overalls or old clothes to use during the project workdays.

what's not included

- any meals not mentioned in itinerary
- aerated and alcoholic drinks on trek
- items of a personal nature such as phone calls, laundry, etc.
- tips
- airline & departure taxes
- international flights
- vaccination or visas
- travel insurance