



**Dates** : 14 Sep 2019 - 20 Sep 2019

Borrowing words from Vietnam Coracle “This is a remote and pristine corner of Vietnam, right on the border with Laos. One gets the feeling, when looking out over the misty mountains blanketed in wet tropical foliage, that this is a special, somehow magical, place. Indeed, it is home to a semi-mythical creature: the *sao la*, or as it’s also known, Asian Unicorn. Only known to science since the 1990s, this elegant, deer-like animal, has yet to be seen live in the wild by any Westerner. “ and we can’t agree more. This is a Vietnam far away from the tourist trail. A Vietnam that few outsiders get to experience.

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## Highlights

- Ride the original Ho Chi Min trails along the Vietnam-Lao border that stills run through dense forests. It is considered one of the great achievements of military engineering of the 20th century.
- Ride past remote villages, stop by to take a dip at a waterfall and join a Vietnamese family for lunch.
- Take a guided walk and explore the cuisine, culture and architecture of an well-preserved medieval port town.
- Visit a little known war tunnel enroute, a testimony to the defiance and ingenuity of the Vietnamese resistance.

## Snapshot

| <b>Tour</b>           | <b>Distance (In Kms.)</b> | <b>Days</b> | <b>Type</b> | <b>Difficulty</b> | <b>Start Point</b> | <b>End point</b> | <b>Cost (In Rs)</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| The Vietnam Adventure | 486                       | 7           | Gravel/ MTB | Medium            | Hoi An, Vietnam    | Hoi An, Vietnam  | 62,000              |

Group size - Min 10, Max 12



## Details

### Itinerary

#### Day 0 : Explore Hoi An - Culture and Cuisine

Check into your hotel at Hoi An. Meet your fellow travellers, set your bikes up and take some must needed rest. In the early evening, we set out on a guided walk of Ancient Hoi An - an UNESCO world heritage site. As part of this 2:30 min walk, we are going to discover the town

through its historical landmarks and street food. This is the best way to experience Hoi An, the ancient but well preserved medieval port town .

Once back, we get together for the tour briefing followed by dinner. The tour starts tomorrow at daybreak! Overnight at Hoi An.

### **Day 1 : The Beach Ride, 76 km/482 m**

Today's is an easy ride, partly on the road along the beach , and partly on the sands right on the shore. Fancy stopping over for a swim enroute? On the way, we take a deviation and visit a tunnel from the war .

This 32 km tunnel served as a shelter, logistics and military command base for nearly 1000 soldiers and guerrillas between 1965 and 1975. Now the tunnel serves as a reminder of the war and hard fought victory for the Vietnamese."The whole village kept the tunnel a secret. That's how it survived during the 10-year period of fierce war," a former guerrilla says.

Overnight at a beautiful resort by the beach.

### **Day 2 : The Gold of Cham, 80 km/1440m**

Today we leave the shore and take the country roads to the hills. Enroute we will stop at a small spring for a swim. Later we stop for lunch at a local joint and then follow it up with some very addictive Ca Phe Nau - the local Vietnamese brown coffee. Coffee was introduced to Vietnam by the French in the 19th Century . Over the past few decades, Vietnam has been producing some excellent coffee and currently ranks as the world's second largest exporter.

Our next destination is a very interesting gold mining village where we will be interacting with the locals at work. A dip at a nearby waterfall is must before riding down to a village guest house, our destination for the day.

### **Day 3 : The Vietnam countryside, 58 km/108 m**

Today is a shorter ride . After a relaxed ride through the Vietnamese countryside, we stop for an early home cooked lunch with a local family. Post lunch , we take a boat on the lake and go swimming in a local waterfall. We then continue the ride along a road that follows the river.

### **Day 4 : Thu Bon River Valley, 44 km/1113 m**

We start the day with a short ride before arriving at the center of the Canyon. This is where the road seems to end, but not the adventure. Time to get on to a local ferry with your bikes. The ferry ride lasts for 30 min and leads us to the small village where we continue with our ride. Lunch will be at a village close to the river. The eatery is known for the Vietnamese noodle dish - Mi Quang.

### **Day 5 : Discover Co Tu Minority, 68 km/1800 m**

The road today goes through the mountains and forest. Along the way, we will also come across the Co Tu minority village. They are now counted amongst the smallest of Vietnam's ethnic minority groups with a total population of just 60,000 people. They were seen as keen allies of North Vietnamese forces during the French and American wars and were universally respected for their knowledge of mountain survival techniques and their sheer tenacity in battle. We will stop at the village and discover something unique and a complete different face of Vietnam.

The forests here are also home to *Sao La*. Also known as the Asian Unicorn, this pretty, deer-like animal wasn't even known to science until the 1990s, and it has still never been seen in the wild by a Westerner. Very few are left, but some of these still dwell deep in the forests.

### **Day 6 : The Ho Chi Minh Trail , 80 Km/2300 m**

Today you can choose between the Ho Chi Minh Challenge - One of the most rewarding ride of the tour ( 98 km/3900 metres) or a relatively easier one (79 km/2300 metres). Whatever you choose, you are sure to witness some spectacular scenery today.

The Ho Chi Minh Trail was arguably the greatest engineering achievements of the 21st century, considering it was constructed primarily by hand under a deluge of bombs. The Ho Chi Minh Trail enabled the North Vietnamese to keep communist forces fighting in South Vietnam. It grew from a humble foot trail in 1959 to an enormous 20,000km network of truck roads, foot trails and river ways by the war's conclusion. Four and a half decades later, many of these paths have barely changed.

As the road continues up mountain passes, along glistening rivers, and the jagged valley, it's the beauty of the landscape and the warmth of local people, rather than the tragedy of war, that causes you to stop and reflect. We ride on the track of the Viet Minh, cross the mountains, see the wild life and the jungle. We end the ride at the small town, not far from a famous hill where American and Vietnam fought.

Overnight at a guesthouse at A Luoi. A Luoi is known for its mountainous landscapes and was the location of several US military bases that saw fierce battles, including Hamburger Hill - a sad reminder of an intense, disastrous 11-day battle from May 10 to 20, 1969. The casualty rate was staggering; more than 1,000 died with hundreds wounded. Hamburger Hill created a political and media firestorm and backlash in the US so that weeks later, the hill so dearly won was abandoned.

### **Day 7 : The Imperial City , 69 km/1334 m**

We hit a small road that meanders down a mountain pass through a lovely landscape of fruit and spice trees – cinnamon, lemongrass, pineapple, mango, cashew, jackfruit – to the Perfume River Valley. On the way you will stop to visit the Tomb of the Emperor Ming Mang.

Hue is a city in central Vietnam that was the seat of Nguyen Dynasty emperors and the national capital from 1802 to 1945. The city represents the outstanding demonstration of the power of the vanished Vietnamese feudal empire, including a complex of monuments, tombs and pagodas. We will explore the city and visit the King's palace. Late afternoon , we make a transfer to Hoi An, where our tour concludes.

**Includes -**

- Accommodation for 8 nights on twin sharing basis
- 8 Breakfast, 7 Lunch and 7 Dinner
- English speaking tour guide
- Service of a luggage van carrying luggage, necessary spares and bicycles ( 7 days)
- Minibus assistance for guest (7days)
- Water and snacks during ride

**Doesn't Include -**

- Airfare to Vietnam/Danang
- Visa
- Bicycle Rental

## FAQ

**How do I reach Hoi An - the start point of the ride?**

Hoi An has no airport, and no train station either. The only way to get there is by road. Danang is the nearest airport , which 29 km away from Hoi An by Road. Danang is well connected to Hanoi and Ho Chi Min City and other international airports.

**How difficult is the ride?**

The total distance of this tour is 486 m over 7 riding days, which averages to 70km/day. However a part of our ride is through some of the mountainous region of the country. This means, the first 3 days are relatively easy followed by another 3 days when we encounter some hill climbing. Hence practice and familiarity with climbs is essential for this tour.

**What kind of bike is recommended for the tour?**

This tour is suitable for a mountain or gravel bike. If you don't own one, it is possible to rent one out at Hoi An, Vietnam.

**Do you provide a bicycle?**

No, the ride fees doesn't include a bicycle. The rider has to get his/her own bicycle or rent one out.

**Can I rent out a bicycle for the tour ?**

Yes. Rental will cost Rs 5800 for the duration of the tour and needs to be booked in advance.

**How do I get Vietnam Visa ?**

Vietnam offers visa on arrival for Indians. However , an online application needs to be submitted ( ref : <https://www.vietnam-evisa.org> ).