



# Vietnam

## The Hidden Trails of Pu Luong

11 Days

Join us on this active exploration of northern Vietnam and experience the extraordinary beauty, tradition and adventure that this region conjures up so effortlessly. We will hike through rice terraces developed over thousands of years by the locals, visit traditional ethnic minority villages, learn how to make salt, discover towering limestone scenery and kayak amongst the UNESCO world heritage site of Halong Bay. Throughout it all, the magnificent beauty and vibrant colours of Vietnam come shining through.



[Learn more about our Carbon Labels](#)



# Your Recommended Educational Journey

## Days 1 - 2

### Depart from the UK, Arrive in Hanoi

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On arrival, we are met at the airport and transferred to our hotel to check in. This evening we have a welcome dinner and a briefing from our Vietnamese trip leader.

## Day 3

### Start trek in Pu Luong Nature Reserve, homestay

BLD

This morning we have an early start at around 8am and leave Hanoi for the drive to Mai Chau. On arrival in Poom Coong village (around noon), we have lunch and transfer about an hour to the start of our trek. Our trek takes us through the beautiful Pu Luong nature reserve. This area is less frequented than the usual 'hill tribe' trekking areas of Sapa, and is an exceptional place to spend a few days getting used to rural Vietnam.

The trek is of an intermediate level with some hills but the effort is worth it as we are rewarded with spectacular views of the local villages, rice terraces and lush forests. After three hours we arrive at our village and the Thai stilt house that will be our overnight accommodation. The rest of the afternoon is free to rest and shower before a traditional welcome dinner with our host family.

## Day 4

### Day trek in Pu Luong Nature Reserve, homestay

BLD

Today is a 5 to 6 hour trek through more gems of Pu Luong, including beautiful valleys, rice terraces and peaceful villages where traditional life goes on as it has done for decades. We stop for our picnic lunch then continue our trek through more villages to reach Hieu village - the most beautiful and remote hamlet in Pu Luong Nature Reserve. Here we rest and have some time to stroll around the village to meet the locals and visit the beautiful waterfall nearby. In the afternoon we head back to our homestay for dinner and overnight. During the trek we can also get stuck in with an 'Environment Clean Up' and help to clear litter in the reserve.

## Day 5

### Transfer to Cuc Phuong National Park

BLD

Today we can wake early and explore the village – a magical time of the day as households are beginning to get on with their everyday duties. After breakfast we take an easy walk of about an hour and a half to the town on the edge of the nature reserve where we are met by our vehicle and transferred to Cuc Phuong National Park. We have lunch on the way and arrive in Cuc Phuong mid-afternoon. If the time permits we can visit the Primate Rescue Centre. Check in at our Cuc Phuong guesthouse.

## Day 6

### Limestone peaks, rivers & caves, homestay

BLD

This morning we take an easy walk of around 2 hours to the National Park centre. We then transfer to Trang An and have lunch at a local restaurant before taking an easy going and enjoyable rowing boat trip meandering through the towering limestone peaks. Trang An is the first compound World Heritage site in Vietnam (covering both Culture and Nature). Our small boats take us through the stunning landscapes and right into the limestone caves. Mid afternoon we transfer to Xuan Thuy village and check into our homestay.





<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Cycling and walking in the National Park</b> This morning we can explore around the village by walking and cycling. We have lunch and then take a boat trip into National Park for some bird watching. Later, we return to our homestay for dinner and join in a traditional evening of music with the villagers.	BLD
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Salt making, museum &amp; transfer to Halong</b> This morning we will join in with local people to make salt – still done in a traditional way. We also visit a local museum before having lunch and then transferring to Halong. On arrival in Halong City in the late afternoon, we check into our hotel and have dinner. Tomorrow is the start of our grand finale – a trip through Halong Bay	BLD
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Easy morning, afternoon Halong Bay cruise &amp; kayaking</b> This morning, we check out of our hotel before we have a short transfer to the harbour to check in for our cruise. An excellent lunch on board follows whilst we cruise the bay. This afternoon, we visit a floating market and also have time to kayak, swim and watch the beautiful sunset. We will have dinner and spend the night on board the boat.	BLD
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Caves &amp; cruising on Halong Bay, transfer to Hanoi</b> After breakfast we visit some of the local caves before a morning of gentle cruising. We have lunch on the boat and then head back to the harbour for around noon. From there we are picked up and transferred back to Hanoi for our final night. Once we have checked into our hotel we head out for a final celebration dinner in this vibrant city.	BLD
<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Transfer to airport and return to UK</b> We are transferred to the airport in time for our flight back home.	BL





## Look what's included:

- International flights
- All accommodation, transportation and activities
- All food as described above
- Local, bi-lingual, first-aid qualified STC tour leader
- Parent and student trip launch presentation
- Pre-travel training programme
- 1-day offsite safety INSET day for school staff
- ATOL financial protection
- Emergency Medical & Repatriation Insurance
- Group first aid kit and prescription meds pack
- BS8848 safety management and risk assessments
- Detailed pre-departure information and kit lists
- Comprehensive teacher travel packs
- Permanent operations team in your destination
- 24-hour UK operational support whilst overseas
- Donations to two carbon & conservation charities
- Free Fairtrade t-shirt for every participant and teacher
- Free travel guide book to your destination

## What's not included:

- Transport to airport in UK
- Drinks (advice will be given on purification of water)
- Visas or tourist cards if required
- Any required inoculations or Covid tests
- Personal spending money
- Tips for guides, drivers and porters (ask for guidance)
- Airport departure taxes paid locally
- Personal effects and cancellation insurance



## A word about Responsible Tourism

On our expeditions and educational journeys, we strive to connect teachers and students with the people they meet, nurture the cultures they experience and protect the beautiful environments they are lucky enough to explore.

Many companies talk the talk, few truly walk the walk. While we are far from perfect, we are leading the way in sustainability in the school travel sector. In 2018 we were the first UK travel company to become **Travelife Certified** – a verified sustainability certificate formally recognised by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council.



Trees for Life

This is our passion, and we'd love to tell you more about it in due course. In the meantime, for more information on some of the steps we take as a company to make our operations more sustainable, please visit:

<https://www.thestc.co.uk/travel/what-do-we-do/>



## Physical Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Moderate physical activities are included in Grade 3 trips. Good health and reasonable fitness are important to get the most out of the trip. Trips of this grading are likely to include some walking at moderate altitude (up to 2,500m) and occasional longer/harder days may be involved, with between five and seven hours of walking on certain days. The trip may contain other activities such as cycling or rafting which also require physical effort and a reasonable level of fitness. Some steady preparation and an increase if your underlying fitness levels would help you get the most from this grade trip.

## Cultural Rating for this trip: Grade 3



Students should expect some culture shock. You'll be exposed to signs of poverty. The food will be quite different to home and English, whilst still spoken, will be less prevalent. Respecting the local culture will make it easier to fit in and get the most out of your trip. We're likely to visit remoter locations on this tour where access to western style services may be sporadic. Often on trips of this grading there are parts of the itinerary which are more remote, interspersed with sections which are more 'comfortable'.



## Travel Safety & Other Pre-Travel Training

Preparing students and teachers for their upcoming adventure is an opportunity to teach important life skills and a vital part of our overall approach to safety management. Please ask for your quote for the training schedule specific to this educational journey. Topics covered will include:

### Responsible Tourism workshop

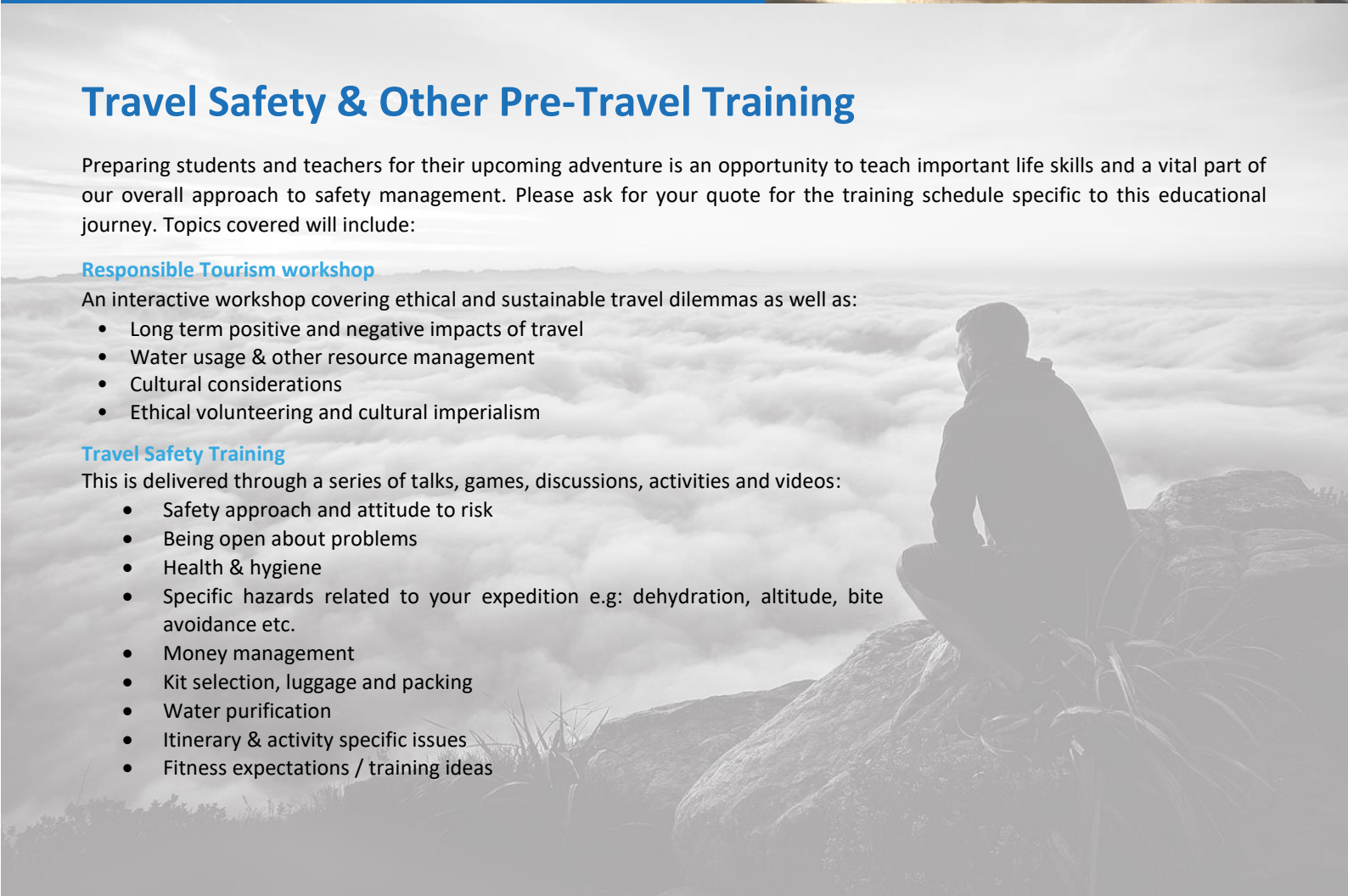
An interactive workshop covering ethical and sustainable travel dilemmas as well as:

- Long term positive and negative impacts of travel
- Water usage & other resource management
- Cultural considerations
- Ethical volunteering and cultural imperialism

### Travel Safety Training

This is delivered through a series of talks, games, discussions, activities and videos:

- Safety approach and attitude to risk
- Being open about problems
- Health & hygiene
- Specific hazards related to your expedition e.g: dehydration, altitude, bite avoidance etc.
- Money management
- Kit selection, luggage and packing
- Water purification
- Itinerary & activity specific issues
- Fitness expectations / training ideas





# A journey of 1,000 miles...

**Starts with a single step...** Contact us now to start your educational journey

## 1 Ask for your personalised quote & further information

If this itinerary doesn't quite scratch your adventure itch then let us tailor-make one for you. Our wealth of experience and expert in-country contacts means we can design an adventure that's just right for you and your students. Contact us for more information and a detailed quote.

## 2 Ask for risk assessments and marketing materials

We can provide initial risk and threat assessments to help you with your trip approval process. Ask for posters and your Pre-Booking Information Pack too.

## 3 Arrange a trip launch evening

This is a chance for students and parents to hear more about the planned adventure with comprehensive information covering the itinerary, safety management, the build-up to the trip and lots more. There is also plenty of opportunity for questions.



The home of the modern, innovative school expedition, where a sustainable, ethical approach guarantees unique experiences and a life enhancing adventure.



Our school trips and educational tours are all about maximising the learning opportunities of travel. It's all here, the humble school tour has just come of age.



Adventures, holidays and cultural journeys for teachers looking to 'Escape the Classroom' and discover more about our amazing world, its people and places.



*"I am being completely serious when I say that I won't ever run a school trip without you guys. I trust you and your team completely - and the in-country staff that you carefully cultivate and train are a cut above the rest."*

**Teacher feedback, King's High Warwick**

## Contact Us:

STC Expeditions, 6b King Street, Exeter, EX1 1BH  
t: 01392 660056 | e: [schools@thestc.co.uk](mailto:schools@thestc.co.uk) | w: [www.thestc.co.uk](http://www.thestc.co.uk)

