

Exploring rural Vietnam on two-wheels

Considering Vietnam's erratic weather, lush terrain and diverse inhabitants, it takes a lot to organize a successful bike tour.

An ideal cycling route avoids crowded highways and intense climbs and sticks to peaceful village roads shaded by trees, green fields and orchards.

A bike tour through the western and northern sections of Vietnam gives tourists a glimpse of life in rural areas including the ethnic people in the Central Highlands. While crossing the Cu Mong or Hai Van passes, tourists are able to stop roadside to contemplate the sunrise or sunset and admire the beautiful view on one side lies giant mountains, while on the other are picturesque beaches.

Tour participants are not required to bike for the entire trip; participants ride a maximum of 50 kilometres a day. Cars, canoes, and boats cover the distance not traveled on bike. To ensure the health and safety of riders, professional medics often accompany the tour.

Of Saigontourist's bike tours, its trip to the western portion of Southern Vietnam is its most popular.

The tour departs from Ho Chi Minh City and stops first in Long An Province. Tourists then travel by car to Tan An District to visit the Cao Dai Holy See. Following the religious site, the tour rides 20 kilometres. along the Bao Dinh Canal to My Tho. On the way to My Tho, tourists stop by orchards to enjoy fresh coconut juice and fruit.

Next, tourists visit the Vinh Trang Pagoda, which was built in the early 19th century and houses a collection of bronze statues carved in the Mekong Delta. The tour then travels to the port to visit Thoi Son Islet in Tien Giang Province by canoe.

On the second day of the journey, the tour heads to Ben Tre Province. The group travels leisurely through village roads to view the landscape, get fresh air roadside and speak with locals. Tourists can visit the village market and green fields to see firsthand the cultivation technique of the farmers and life in the country.

On the third day, tourists visit Cai Mon District to see a number of activities of the local people including fishing, cooking, leisure and sport. Tourists take part in a home-stay at the home of a Cai Mon resident and eat ca loc nuong trui dish (grilled snakehead fish), taste local rice wine and listen to don ca tai tu (amateur southern folk music).

The following day, tourists travel by ferry to visit the center of Vinh Long Province and continue to ride through Long Ho village for 20 kilometres to Ba Can to visit the village of the Khmer people and a market specializing in tofu.

The journey continues to Can Tho Province for tourists to visit the floating markets of Phong Dien and Cai Rang. Tourists then ride for 20 kilometres to Bang Lang Park. The tour concludes with a car ride back to Ho Chi Minh City the following day.

About the Author

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