

Sapa is a must-go destination for those who like to discover the unique beauty of Vietnam ethnic mountainous life. It combines the spectacular landscapes and exotic lifestyle, unexpected friendly people sharing their custom. People who love to trek can climb Fansipan – the peak of Indochina area. What fascinating is that you can interact with hospitable people there. Sapa is an incredibly picturesque place that lies in the mountain area near the China's border in North West of Vietnam. Sapa is famous for its pristine environment, unparalleled scenery and cool climate. Sapa is home to more than 30 Vietnamese hill ethnic minorities and also home to Indochina's highest peak, the 3,143 meters Mount Fansipan. It is rich with natural sites such as Ham Rong Mountain, Silver Waterfall, Rattan Bridge, Bamboo Forest and Ta Phin Cave. You get to see views of steeply terraced rice fields, towering verdant ridgelines, primitive mud-thatched villages, raging rivers and astounding waterfalls."

### **Why Not Go**

City lover may find Sapa is not the place for them as its rich cultural ethnic lifestyle is far different from modern life. If you expect to shopping around in those shopping malls Sapa has nothing to offer. The only way to go shopping is going to the local market where you can find unique handicrafts and jewelry and tribe fabrics with its colorful embroidery.

The unforgettable experience that you will take away from Sapa trip is not something that everyone can buy if they had not gone there themselves. Adventurous people cannot miss this place. And those who love to know the "hidden charm" of Vietnamese tribe people living in their old historical mountainous villages would love to go here. The scenery is a combination of high green mountains cuddled in clouds, scattered rice terraces where local ethnic minorities live. Sapa is famous for its "Love market" where local people go to show off their talent to find their partner. It is organized every Saturday night and provides such an unique experience that is unforgettable for many people.

### **Best Time to Visit**

Sapa can be explored almost all year-round from March to early December. Actually, Vietnamese would like to visit there most during June – July to escape from hot summer in other areas of Vietnam. The average temperature during daytime in Sapa is around 15-18-degree celcius only. The best time of the week to go to Sapa is the weekday, as the weekend always busy with more people coming to the place. However, Love Market only takes place every Saturday night, so if you want to experience the famous Sapa custom, do extend your visit to Saturday night. Good season for trekking is March to May and September to early December. If you go there during January to February, expect it to be drizzly cold with sometimes snow. Sapa is 1500m above sea level so the weather is quite cold at night.

### **Where to Stay**

Sapa got over 80 hostels and hotels of which there are 3-4 stars [hotels in Sapa](#) too. Backpackers would love to stay at affordable hotels like Royal hotel at 54B Cau May street. The entrance of the market at Cau May street is where more affordable accommodation can be found. For those who would like to have a romantic getaway, Victory Hotel is the suitable place to stay with its design as a traditional mountain chalet with accented wooden décor. Best areas to stay is around the Cau May street where you can find most of the local activities in the neighborhood.

## **Where & What to Eat**

Located on the Ham Rong Street, in front of the hotel Cong Doan, behind the old stony church, there are about 30 grilling shops on only more than 100 meters which made of “grilling street” in Sapa. Tourist can find all kinds of grilling dishes like meat, sweet potato, cassava, corn... Maybe it's because of the rather cold weather especially at night that grilling street forms.

## **Nightlife**

Love market is a traditional culture of ethnic Mong, Dao particularly upland Lao and the generally North West remote part of Vietnam. All the villagers in Sapa live far away from each other and can only get together once a week during the Sunday morning market. The night before (Saturday night) boys and girls from all villages come to Love market to meet, show off their talents, express emotions (usually playing games flagging, blowing leaves praise, sing the grace...) according to traditional customs of their peoples. After night ride many boys and girls become intimate and date each other.

## **My to do List**

- Come and see people interacting in Love market
- Visit the Black H'mong or Dao village and explore their way of living, their traditional colorful clothing, and their tribe custom.
- Experience the Sapa market where women from different ethnic minority groups come into town to sell their products.
- View the Silver waterfall, Ta Phin Cave

## **Stay Away From**

- Driving can be troublesome as the roads are dangerous with cliffs.
- Try to arrange the trip with a reputable tour operator to ensure smooth trip.
- Say “no” very firmly when someone offers you something you do not want to buy. If you show the slight interest, they may well follow you all the way up the road.
- Donot forget to bring your passport and [Vietnam visa](#)

## **Getting There**

There are different classes for the train from Lao Cai (Sapa) to Hanoi.

1. Hard seat, 2. soft seat

You can get tickets easily at the train station in Lao Cai.

There's no flight to Sapa. The best option is a 9 hour over night train ride (from 8pm till 5am next morning) from Hanoi to Sapa via Lao Cai. Tickets can be purchased from the Hanoi Railway ticket offices. The train starts from Hanoi and ends at Lao Cai. Sapa is 38km from Lao Cai, you need to take the shuttle buses outside the station to take you up to Sapa, usually at a 'fixed' rate of VND 30,000. It can be a good decision to book a return ticket from Lao Cai back to Hanoi while you are there!