



## SAPA TREKKING WEEKEND TRIP



There are several amazing weekend trips to get involved in during your time with PMGY in Vietnam. Travelling over the weekends is a huge part of the experience as it gives you the opportunity to explore the country with fellow volunteers on the program.

With PMGY volunteers being based in the urban environment of Hanoi, they are usually able to organise trips independently without the need for our team to travel with them. There are many travel agents based in the city who can provide affordable and reputable weekend trip options to our volunteers, and they also allow for you to meet other travellers in Vietnam. As a result, we have found participants to prefer the flexibility to explore all the opportunities available to them once they arrive in Hanoi rather than pre-organising trips only for people to want to change these plans once they arrive. You can therefore book weekend trips locally based on your budget, travel preferences and once you have met other volunteers on the program.

We have outlined a couple of popular weekend trip options to give you an idea of some of the trips you can get involved in during your time with us. We recommend participants do not make any firm commitments until they arrive in Vietnam as participants will usually travel in a group and our team are a great resource to help you make plans!

It is common for volunteers to make weekend trip plans for a 3 day period when travelling further afield. This will mean choosing to miss a day from your volunteer project. Subsequently, you should give as much notice as possible to the local team and staff at the project to ensure they can approve your plans before you make any trip commitments and make alternative arrangements if necessary.

If Sapa had to be summarised in one word, it would be green! Sapa is a small, mountainous region, located close to the Chinese border, over 300km North West from Hanoi. The area is immersed by thousands upon thousands of acres of lush vegetation, with a terrain that varies from rolling hills to rice paddy fields. Sapa is blessed with crisp mountain air, with the region blissfully untouched by the effects of air pollution. This means a trip here quite literally provides you with a breath of fresh air compared to the chaos of Hanoi, making Sapa an ideal location for a weekend away from project.

Sapa is truly unique – not only is the region believed to be Vietnam's best region for trekking, but it is famously known for its diverse traditional culture of many ethnic minorities. This weekend trip provides a structured experience that allows you to immerse yourself equally in both aspects. You will experience first-hand the diverse terrains and beauty the region has to offer, from beautiful gardens to lush pine forests, whilst passing through traditional villages, learning about a whole range of different cultures as you go!

## ITINERARY

### DAY 1 – ARRIVAL INTO SAPA

You've had a long night as you journey from Hanoi to Sapa. After being collected from the station, you will have a chance to freshen-up within your homestay for the night before replenishing your energy levels at breakfast. After re-fuelling, it's time to begin the first trek of your weekend adventure!

Today's trek will involve the exploration of both stunning scenery and local villages. When walking through the various terrains - from long grasses, to forests, to spectacular gardens - you'll see why we describe Sapa as 'green'! You will pass through the Black H'mong ethnic minority village of Ma Tra – a small village hiding away from civilisation. This is the largest group of ethnic minorities in the region. Inhabitants of the village can be recognised by their long black jackets and brightly coloured head scarves. Later in the day, you will also have a chance to meet members of the Red Dao community – another ethnic minority in the region, known traditionally to wear similar dresses to the Black H'mong, but with red headscarves.

You will spend your evening in a local homestay within Ta Phin village. This will allow you to become acquainted to traditional life in Sapa – a one in a lifetime experience!



### DAY 2 – LET THE ADVENTURE CONTINUE

After a classic Vietnamese breakfast, it's time to get your walking shoes on again as we trek to Mong Sen Village. On the way, we will have chances to see spectacular view of the famous stepped rice paddy terraces and cornfields, as well as isolated traditional houses, waterfalls, and families cultivating goods like bamboo and rice. This trip really is an ideal way to opportunity to experience traditional life in the mountains of Vietnam – it is both refreshing and empowering.

After completing the trek, you will be transported back to Sapa town, with the chance to explore the town for some Vietnamese goodies. Your return back to the station concludes your trip – it's time to begin your journey back to Hanoi!



## DAY 3 – BACK TO HANOI

Your journey back to the city will allow you reflect on all the new memories you have made during this incredible weekend away. The approximate 8 hour journey should have you back into the country's capital by 4am. Depending on the day of your return, you may use this day to catch up on rest or return to project.



## ACCOMMODATION

You will spend your journey to and from Sapa on board a night train or bus (as per your choice). Your one night in Sapa (between Day 1 and Day 2 on the itinerary) will be spent within a homestay. This accommodation will be basic but clean and comfortable.

## MEALS

Meals will be typical Vietnamese cuisine. You will be served breakfast, lunch and dinner during the two days in Sapa. Any drinks or snacks will be at your own expense.

## TRANSPORT

You will travel to Sapa from Hanoi and back via coach or train. This must be arranged independently and the mode of transport may be by bus or train. The PMGY team can assist with booking this and the return cost can be expected between 30-60 USD.