

THIS MESSAGE UNDER CINCPAC SSO CONTROL

26 APR 75 22 46

Explore Indochina

adventure expeditions in Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam

The Ho Chi Minh Trail

HT#3

The legendary Ho Chi Minh Trail was the supply line used by North Vietnam to link North and South Vietnam during the American War. Soldiers, ammunition, weapons and supplies were carried by hand, bicycle and truck for hundreds of kilometres through the otherwise impenetrable jungle that covered Vietnam's mountainous border with Lao. A testimony to the ingenuity, fortitude and commitment of the North Vietnamese, the Trail slipped from use at the end of the war and was taken back by the jungle. Recent road works that follow original sections of the Trail have changed this. Besides incredible driving, deep in the Vietnamese countryside, this ride takes in the former imperial capital of Hue, the ancient trading town of Hoi An, Khe Sanh battle site, the infamous A Shaw valley, China beach, Vietnamese war museums and the DMZ. We also take time to stay overnight in a traditional Thai hill tribe village and visit the former Imperial Tombs of Hue. Take this one off chance to be among the first to traverse the Ho Chi Minh Trail!

Length: 1,788km - Difficulty: Moderate

Hanoi - Mai Chau - Vinh - Phong Nha - Dong Ha - A Luoi - Kham Duc - Kon Tum - Buon Me Thuat - Nha Trang
(11 days, 10 nights)

Day 1 : In the morning we visit the Ho Chi Minh Trail museum on the outskirts of Hanoi. Then we jump on the bikes and pass extensive farming lands comprising a sea of paddy fields split by tree-lined roads punctuated by limestone karst scenery. After a light lunch near Hoa Binh we cross two mountain passes before descending to the mountain valley settlement of Mai Chau. Overnight in a Thai ethnicity stilt house in Mai Chau (B, L, D) 140km

Day 2 : In the morning we explore the mountains to the north of Mai Chau, passing Hmong and Dao hilltribe communities living as they have for centuries. In the evening we enjoy a traditional music and dancing performance. Overnight in a Thai ethnicity stilt house in Mai Chau (B, L, D) 80km

Day 3 : We head south on a beautiful winding road which follows the banks of the Ma River until we join the new Ho Chi Minh Highway. This newly carved route leads us due

south, through remote back country, not far from the Lao border. In the afternoon we cut eastwards towards the coast and stay overnight in the coastal city of Vinh, which is close to where Ho Chi Minh was born. Overnight in Vinh. (B, L, D) 286km

Day 4 : We head south along Highway One, before heading inland towards the Lao border. We pass the Dong Loc intersection, (main junction for supply lines during the War) which is widely regarded in Vietnamese eyes as the beginning of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. We then pass through remote back country, close to the border, as the scenery steadily becomes dominated by karst limestone rock formations. We pass two famous intersections where until 1972 most of the Trail's traffic passed over into Lao. In the afternoon we arrive at the World Heritage site of Phong Nha where local civilians and military sheltered from incessant bombing during wartime. Overnight in Phong Nha. (B, L, D) 186km.

CINC	ASST	F/ILT	C/S	C/S	INSP	PA	JT	SEC	PLNS	INF	DPS	LOG	PLM	CEL	FAO	SEC	ASST	OPR	IPC	OPR	NOG	SSG
100	1361	7027	101	102	103	104	105	106	107	108	109	110	111	112	113	114	115	116	117	118	119	120

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Day 5 : In the morning we drive down to the coastal town of Doing Hoi, which was heavily shelled by US warships during the war. We strike south through foothills which were once sprayed heavily by Agent Orange towards the former DMZ. There is still much evidence of bombing on the mountain sides and from time to time we will see remnants of the original Trail. We take in the famous Hien Luong Bridge (former demarcation line between North and South Vietnam, the Truong Son cemetery and the Vinh Moc tunnels. Overnight in Dong Ha. (B, L, D) 135km

Day 6 : In the morning we head deep into the former DMZ, passing the rockpile on Highway 9 before reaching Khe Sanh (former US Marine base) and Lang Vie (former US special forces base). We then head south over the Da Krong Bridge (built by the Cubans in 1973) into the infamous A Shau valley, an area of intense wartime activity. Passing Hamburger Hill and mountains still barren due to the extended effects of Agent Orange, we arrive at A Luoi, where there are many Bru Van hill tribe people. Overnight in A Luoi (B, L, D) 168km

Day 7 : Many Ta Oi and Co Tu people will be seen tending their fields. In the morning we head further south into the A Shaw valley, past former battle sites and then we skirt the Lao border on the side of a large mountain covered in thick jungle. At the remote town of Hien we continue south through the forest to Kham Duc, made famous by a dramatic rescue during the war. Overnight in Kham Duc. (B, L, D) 210km

Day 8 : We strike into the mountains, from there we head up the towering Lo So Pass, passing through remote areas thinly populated by peoples of the Ba Na ethnicity. Edging close to the border with Laos, where a number of Trail arteries crossed over in Lao, we continue past Dak To and on to Kon Tum. Overnight in Kon Tum. (B, L, D) 165km

Day 9 : In the morning we head south through the 'Tay Nguyen' (Central Highlands), passing Plei Ku and the Ia Drang valley battle site, before continuing onto Buon Ma Thuot, the city where northern forces launched their final assault on the then Saigon. Overnight in Buon Ma Thuot. (B, L, D) 235km

Day 10 : We take an easy drive back down off the Tay Son highlands towards the coast, arriving at Highway One some 30km north of Nha Trang. Taking in this scenic coastal stretch past turquoise waters and scarlet fishing boats, we arrive in the bright lights of Nha Trang and its relaxing holiday options. Overnight in Nha Trang. (B, L, D) 183km

Day 11 : A free day by the beach before gathering for a seafood feast to recount our adventure and toast the Ho Chi Minh Trail. (B)

CINCPAC	ASST	F/JLT	C/S	REP	INSP		JT	PERS	INF	DPS	LOG	PLN	C&L	TRD	SEC	ASST				SSA
088	3361	7022	188	302	56X	PA	504	01	12	13	14	15	16	114	17	008	18	008	100	-

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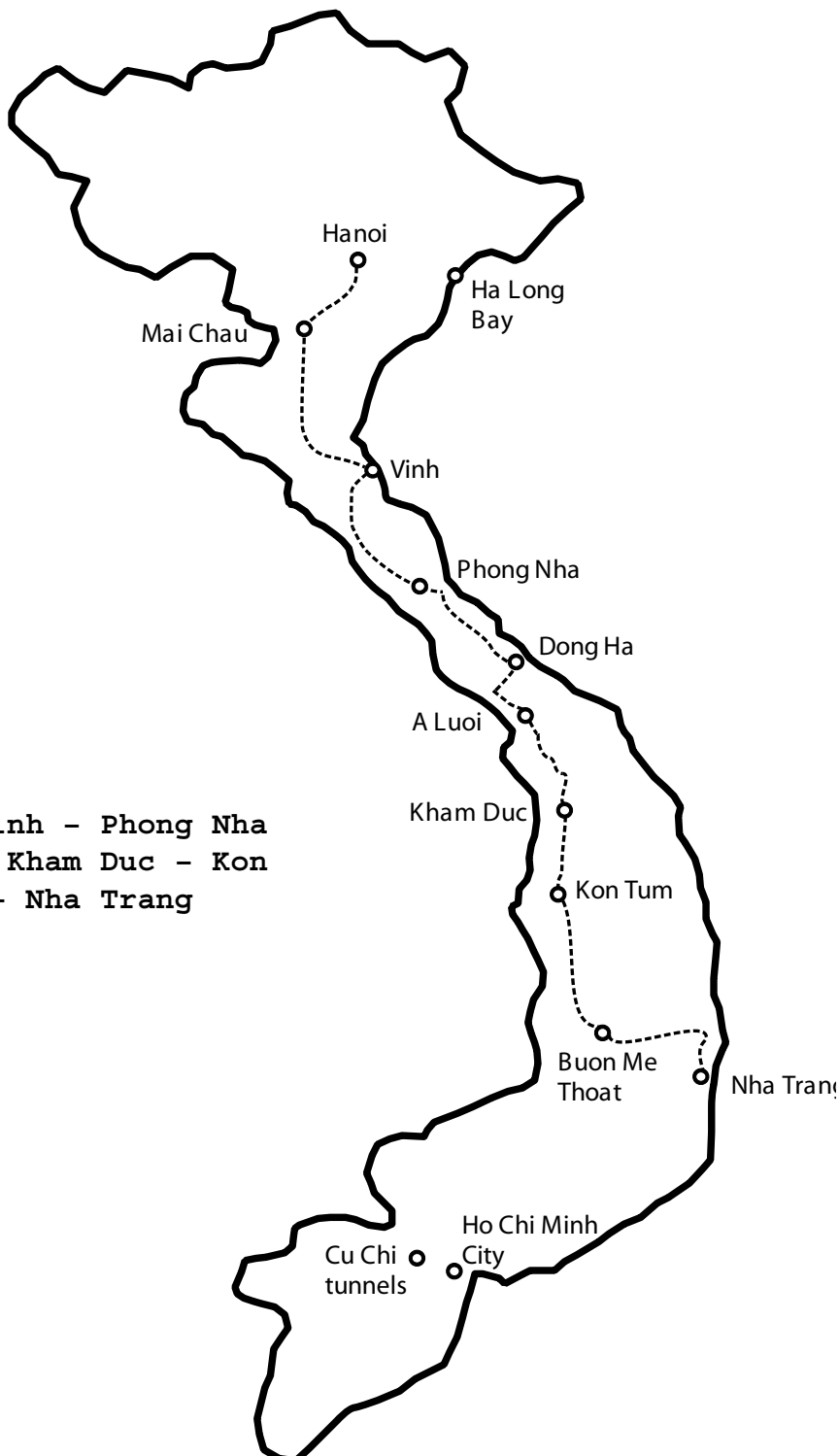
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REG	3361	7022	100	102	100	PA	304	01	12	13	14	15	16	114	11	000	100	000	100	-