

# Textile Traditions of Vietnam's North

3-16 April, 2010.

## Lead by Fiona Wright

Visiting the North of Vietnam we will have an opportunity to savour a culture rich in textile traditions. That is just the beginning... the first word that springs to mind when thinking of this region is peaceful ...and the second is friendly; the food is an art in itself, the scenery so inspiring...and the textiles!

Once we leave Hanoi with its wonderful Silk Street [perfect to get something sensational tailored for yourself] cottage industries of embroidery, weaving and indigo dyeing abound.

People are friendly and happy for us to pop in and see what is going on, others are kindly going to teach us. We will have the opportunity to sit around with some of the local ladies, chat and stitch.

A chance for us to learn their approach to reverse appliqué, cross stitch in luscious thick silks, seeing the results of dunking the odd piece of cloth into indigo until it becomes a rich blue/black.

A time to experience a different pace of life, a place where handiwork helps support a family and is an integral part of the culture- this is Vietnam's North.

**We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organizations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category.**

**Don't worry there are also lots of other markets we can visit too!**

**Creative Arts Safaris tours are – art and culture based with a hands-on, get out and about type attitude.**

- all inclusive utilising good quality mid-range up to flash accommodation and excellent dining experiences – we look for atmospheric places to stay [off the beaten tourists trails where possible] always good, clean bathrooms, friendly service and comfortable rooms.

- groups of 8-14 participants

*These trips are not traditional package tours, rather it is hoped we can travel as a group of friends; Creative Arts Safaris have done the research, our tutor handles the artistic side and a host makes sure it runs smoothly; we all share our observations and knowledge along the way. [any info you pick up in preparation is easy to share with the group via the internet and helps you 'meet' the others too]*

**Day 1-Saturday 3 April, 2010** **Hanoi**

Arrival at Hanoi Airport. You will be picked up from the airport. We will be staying in the very picturesque Old Quarter of Hanoi.

**Day 2-Sunday 4 April, 2010** **Hanoi/Mai Chau**

Tempting though it is, we will leave exploring Hanoi for the moment and head to the countryside. Following road meandering through the mountains we will arrive

the White Thai and Mung Minority area of Mai Chau.

Along the way we will drop into visit a village where much fine weaving takes place. Hopefully we will see the weaving part of the production of a golden silk fabric– silk worms are just waking up at this time so depending on the season we might see the first hatchlings on the mulberry leaf as well. We will have a home-stay, staying near Mai Chau in the wooden stilt homes of White Thai people tonight and spend our afternoon stitching with some of the local ladies. Mai Chau produces fine, colourful contemporary embroideries and is renowned for its brocade weaving, dinner will all arrive fresh from the families' gardens, farm yards and fish ponds [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 3-Monday 5 April, 2010**

**Mai Chau**

We will be heading further up the road to a village where batik production takes place. Here is all look and see, unfortunately; we would have to stay for at least 2 weeks if we wanted to produce a piece ourselves. That is the length of time needed to produce the deep indigo blue of the fabrics. Back to our cosy stilt house and stitching in the afternoon. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 4-Tuesday 6 April, 2010**

**Mai Chau/Cuc Phuong National Park/ Tam Coc**

A relaxed start to the day, wandering through some local villages and the rice paddies then off to Cuc Phuong National Park , where The Endangered Primate Rescue Centre is a wonderful experience, the 'monkeys' are so gorgeous and the successes of the centre laudable. We will stay in Tam Coc this evening; a place compared to Halong Bay– with same amazing rock formations rising out of the rice paddies of the delta. [inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 5-Wednesday 7 April, 2010**

**Tam Coc**

Tam Coc is famed for its fine embroidery traditions and we can meet some of the locals to marvel over their work.

This morning we will be tutored by some of the local girls at Mrs Lieu's establishment.

Then a little time to wander through the village before meeting to visit the family home and farm of our friend Khanh to learn to make traditional Vietnamese Spring Rolls. Khanh boasts they are the best in Vietnam and I think he may be right! So it will be off to Khanh's to have a cooking class and make our dinner.

[inc- breakfast, dinner]

**Day 6-Thursday 8 April, 2010**

**Tam Coc/ Hanoi and sleeper train**

We will visit a large local market this morning, so interesting to check out where the locals shop and what they buy, the peaceful time boating in some of the backwaters of the Mekong Delta and lunch at a small hidden treasure of a restaurant overlooking lush rice paddies before we head up to Hanoi.

A bit of a taster of Hanoi today when we arrive in the afternoon we will visit the Temple of Literature and have dinner at Koto.

Koto was set up as a training facility to help youth off the street and into a career, look at [www.koto.com.au](http://www.koto.com.au) for more info about this inspiring effort and look forward to a great meal.

[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]

**Day 7-Friday 9 April, 2010**

**Sapa**

We will have very comfortable sleeper accommodation on the

**Cost – Au \$3350-twin share**

[all inclusive except your shopping]

Single Supplement Au \$550

Deposit \$500 to book today

Full payment due 14.2.2010

Email [fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com](mailto:fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com)

or phone +61 [0]2 49 389 410

## Creative Arts Safaris

- live, laugh, learn

train arriving early in the morning to drive up through the mists to our mountain top destination of the small village of Sapa. After booking into our hotel, time to refresh and breakfast we will take a wander through town. My ladies of 2009 really appreciated the advice to tell yourself to just look during your first foray into town, there is so much amazing work around you can start to go into overload! We will set tomorrow aside for shopping. Later today we will be meeting up with a friends who are of the Black H'mong people and take time to see some of their indigo dyeing work and stitch with them. We will find a comfortable spot to sit and stitch just like the locals do, learning some of the secrets behind their wonderful embroideries. *inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner*

**Day 8-Saturday 10 April, 2010** **Sapa**

Today is market day in Sapa and what a busy day it is! Many tourists and many, many of the local Ethnic Minority People descend on town to buy and sell their wares. What a day for looking and soaking up the atmosphere, the ladies with their extraordinary, beautifully stitched clothing, the opportunity to gently bargain for your own pieces- just wander around and enjoy. Perhaps an afternoon walk down to a local village, see indigo growing and visit a lady who has a working vat set up. *[inc- breakfast, dinner]*

**Day 9-Sunday 11 April, 2010** **Sapa/ Bac Ha/ sleeper train/Hanoi**

An early start to get to Bac Ha and their very colourful market. The market fills up with many Flower H'mong people in their beautifully and colourfully embroidered costumes. It is a good place to buy water buffalo and other household animals, check out the textiles and handicrafts and soak up the atmosphere. In the afternoon we will take a walk to one of the neighbouring villages through the very beautiful countryside before heading back to catch the night train to Hanoi.

*[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

**Day 10-Monday 12 April, 2010** **Hanoi**

An early arrival into Hanoi, with our comfortable hotel waiting for us- after a rest and breakfast we will visit the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, take lunch in a traditional pho restaurant and then have an interesting afternoon at the Museum of Ethnology.

**Weather** at this time of year is mild to warm, the good news is we travel in an air-conditioned mini-bus. In the mountains it will be cooler. A range of layers is a good idea. An umbrella can be useful for the sun or occasional light shower.

**Clothing-** light weight cotton clothing is good- to respect local customs best for skirts or trousers to be mid-calf length at least, tops not too revealing. Pack a pair of socks and cardigan for the cool of the mountains. A sun hat is a good idea.

**Shoes-** sensible walking shoes. Surfaces are often rough and you really want your footing stable so you can focus on all the wonderful things everywhere to look at!

**Money** ATM's are everywhere so you can use a travel card or visa debit or credit advance easily. If you plan to use a card overseas DO warn your bank to expect overseas activity- some will freeze the card wondering what is happening. Money changers abound to change travellers cheques or currency.

**Camera** we have a laptop so can download your pictures onto a memory stick [ don't forget your connection leads]

**Power** 240 volts, European adaptor plugs are the most useful.

**Tippping?** We cover tips for the group- eg bags into and out of hotel, dinner etc. Do think of our guides and drivers- a tip there is a comment on their services.

Step lightly on our environment, be frugal in water use, turn off power switches, take rubbish with you where possible  
Say NO to Plastic! please bring a carry bag for your shopping.

*[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

**Day 11-Tuesday 13 April, 2010** **Hanoi**

We will start with a stroll past the famous Hoam Keim Lake, central to Vietnamese National Mythology [I'll tell you the story as we go] to the Women's Museum. Then to the edge of Hanoi and a village famed through the centuries for its silk weaving traditions to visit a silk workshop The local temple which was started in 865 AD is a place many leaders have come to over the centuries to meditate; looking for answers in times of need. Free time in the afternoon and a Water Puppets Performance in the evening. *[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

**Day 12-Wednesday 14 April, 2010** **Hanoi/ Halong Bay**

Ha Long is our destination where we will board our own boat for an afternoon cruising before we drop anchor in a quiet cove to dream the night away. This is a relaxing time of our trip, it will give us time for show and tell and to discuss our own textile interests and perhaps jot down a few ideas for some creative work when we get back home. The view is spectacular, perhaps you can finish off some of the pieces we started stitching with the Ladies in the Mountains. *[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

**Day 13-Thursday 15 April, 2010** **Halong Bay/Hanoi**

We are heading back to Hanoi and a Farewell dinner to celebrate our time in this friendly and inspiring country. *[inc- breakfast, lunch, dinner]*

**Day 14-Friday 16 April, 2010** **Hanoi/Home**

Departures today, we will drop you to Hanoi Airport to meet your flights. *[inc- breakfast]*

#### **Creative Arts Safaris tours include:**

- pickups from the airport for arrivals on Day 1
- departures last day of tour

*[we are happy to organise pick-ups if you arrive earlier or depart later at an extra fee, we are also happy to help with accommodation etc if you wish to stay longer]*

- accommodation from the evening of Day 1 up to and including the night of our Farewell Dinner

*Our accommodation is generally mid-range. We use more traditional feeling hotels where we can. All places are clean, friendly and have western bathrooms! It is ambiance and friendliness we are looking for. This is the range where we may meet locals as well – top end is far removed from this and just full of foreigners!*

- all transportation, road taxes and fuel costs for the tour
- all breakfasts and most other meals

*Food is a reflection of the culture and we are pleased to say we will sample a range of good dining experiences.*

- sightseeing entrance fees [which covers the use of a still camera]

- all tuition fees

*all tips for meals, bags etc are included See tipping in the notes section for tipping for personal requests or other tipping instances.*

#### **You need to cover:**

- some lunches
- bottled drinking water
- laundry
- the one expense that we can't guestimate' for you is shopping!

*[this is not a shopping expedition but you will see some amazing things and you will probably want to indulge!]*

- **airfares**
- **travel insurance**
- **visa** [where necessary]

We support Fair Trade and Self-Help organisations where we can and so the only 'shops' listed on our itinerary come under this category [more info in the notes to follow] Don't worry there are also lots of other markets we can visit too!

#### **Creative Arts Safaris**

Gresford, NSW, Australia +61 [0]2 49 389 410

Pushkar, Rajasthan, India +91 98 68 080 318

fiona@creative-arts-safaris.com

www.creative-arts-safaris.com

**Creative Arts Safaris**  
- live, laugh, learn