

## Local Markets: The best way to get to know rural Vietnam.



They say that if you want to get to know more about a country, then “eat where the locals eat, and shop where the locals’ shop”.

Vietnam is rich in colour and still has a over 54 ethnic minority groups still living as they have for hundreds of years. If you are keen to know more about the ethnic history of Vietnam then you will find a visit to a rural market an enlightening fun experience, and a great way to engage with locals.

From Lao Cai or Sapa, you can visit the markets and back in within half a day or a day. Let us to take you to 4 of our favourite ones in the far north of Vietnam for a real taste of rural Vietnam.

### 1. The Bac Ha Market – Sunday

Chosen as 1st among the top 10 most original mountain markets in Southeast Asia by Serendib magazine, the **Bac Ha ethnic market** is the most lively and important of the mountainous regions, attracting a dozen different ethnic groups from the region and its surroundings.

In a recent Travel Podcast produced by What About Vietnam - S2-24 – Explore the Bac Ha Markets – Rich in colour and tradition – click to listen [here](#).



The Travel photographer \_Mike Pollock interviewed on the show, had this to say about the markets:

“they start very early in the morning. People are setting up their stalls before sunrise. And the market will be very busy by about 10:00 a.m. And then by about noon, people are going home. So the best way to tackle this is to get there the night before. If you sleep in Bac Ha on Saturday night and they have what they call a ‘night market cultural’ show, and it’s really not so much of a night market, but they do have a stage in the town centre run by the little temple downtown, and every Saturday night there’s a performance of not just Hmong people. And I don’t think this is really a tourist-orientated thing. They’ll come from a long area to go to this market, and they will trade many traditional things, livestock, buffalo, horses, goats, pigs, chickens, ducks, that sort of thing.”



## 2. Simacai Market on a Sunday

This market is located approximately 40 kms of from Bac Ha. Beware the road is windy and bumpy.

The name Simacai means “horse market” in H’mong language and the old people have said that in a bygone era it was the biggest horse market of the region.

However, life is changing fast and horses are not the only things for sale.

The market place is simply a large ground area which is cleared every Sunday for stalls and areas for the horses. The Simacai market attracts thousands of H’mong, Zao, Phu La people. They come from far and wide to shop, catch up on gossip, and enjoy themselves meeting friends and relatives...

They spend most of their time at the market talking, and possibly drinking too much as you will soon find out.

## 3. Muong Hum market – Sunday

The market we like the most is the Muong Hum hill tribe market.

The reason being it typically attracts five ethnic groups. Taking place each Sunday morning, visitors can expect to see Hmong, Dao, Ha Nhi and Giay people trading their local wares in a very traditional and intimate village setting. With vendors focusing on getting sales from the local population it is a market where observing local transactions and sampling real food becomes the mainstay and something you don’t get to see every day. The geographic location of Muong Hum is next to a pretty little river. The views are stunning on route to the market site and you will feel like you are visiting one of the last frontiers of Vietnam. It’s a taste of rural Vietnam you will never forget.



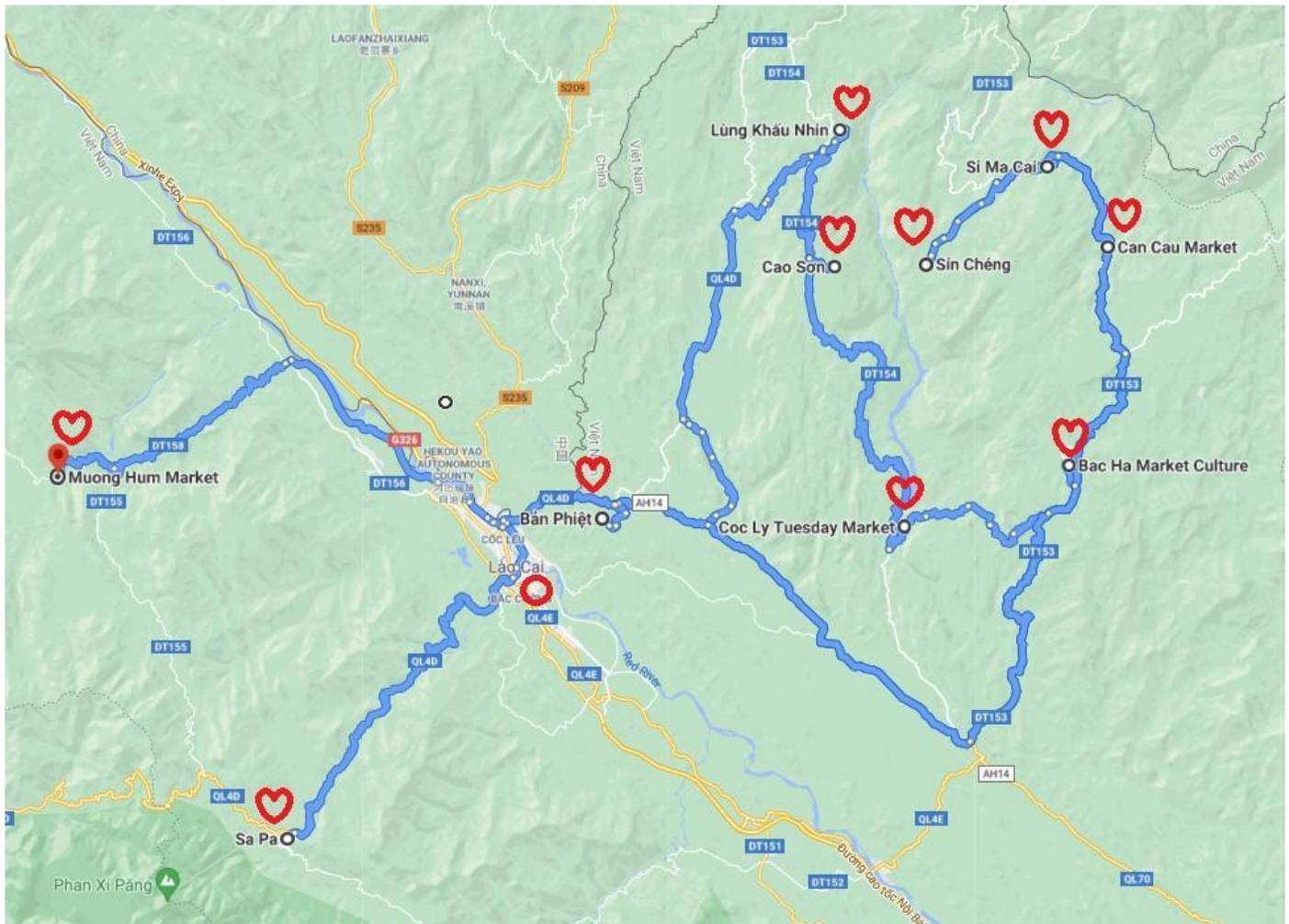
## 4. Ban Phiet market – Monday

These take place on Mondays, they are small compared to others in Lao Cai, but definitely very colourful and are a stand out favourite with the White Hmong people who flock to them very early in the morning in their highly coloured clothes. While the location attracts very cold weather and heavy mists, they offer the traveller a chance to experience some of their local foods, “happy water”, and purchase home spun and traditional dyed clothes, rugs, and many other household goods.

From the capital of Hanoi, you can take an overnight train to Lao Cai Province which costs about VND 800,000 for a return fare with a bed in a four-person cabin. Upon arrival in Lao Cai Town, you can either hop on a bus or taxi to Sapa which is located 34 kilometres (about 30 minutes away) from the train station.

There are many other markets located near and around Sapa, and Lao Cai province which we can organise tours for you to experience with guides and accommodation to suit:

<http://itsvietnam.com/indochina-tours/hanoi-sapa/>



- Can Cau Market - Saturday and Sunday
- Coc Ly Market - Tuesday
- Cao Son and Sin Cheng markets on Wednesday
- Lung Khau Nhin market on Thursday

### COVID UPDATE

You would have noticed in recent media that Vietnam is going through possibly it's toughest fight against the COVID 19 virus and Delta Variant since it began in 2020.

As of 16th July,, HCMC is in a tighter lockdown causing much concern for those not able to get access to proper food and healthcare in the city. All in all, the government is going hard on trying to get Vietnam vaccinated. The biggest issue here is getting stocks of vaccine to meet the demand of a country with nearly 100 million people. However, it is encouraging to see vital donations of vaccines from various countries around the world being delivered into Vietnam in the coming weeks.

Further discussions re the opening of Phu Quoc continue. Residents are being offered the vaccine with the hope of being able to vaccinate enough locals to allow international tourism to open up later in the year.

See our latest FULL report [here](#).

**Contact us for more information**

Please feel free to contact us for any questions or itinerary ideas at – [info@itsvietnam.com](mailto:info@itsvietnam.com) or call us at **Suite 1705 - Artex building - 172 Ngoc Khanh, Ba Dinh, Hanoi, Vietnam** [\*\*+84 24 62514052\*\*](tel:+842462514052)

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