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# Sapa Travel Guide

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## I. Introduction



source of poetic inspiration, lights up the whole region.

At the height of 1,600m above sea level, the average temperature of the area is 15-18°C. It is cool in summer and cold in winter. Visitor to Sapa in summer can feel the climate of four seasons in one day. In the morning and afternoon, it is cool like the weather of spring and autumn. At noon, it is as sunny and cloudless as the weather of summer. And it is cold in the evening. With no advance warning of a thunderstorm short and heavy rains may come at noon on any summer day. Subsequently, a rainbow appears, transforming Sapa into a magic land, which for years has been a constant

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The best time to witness the scenic beauty of Sapa is in April and May. Before that period, the weather might be cold and foggy; after that period is the rainy season. In April and May, Sapa is blooming with flowers and green pastures. The clouds that settle in the valley in early morning quickly disappear into thin air.

Sapa has many natural sites such as Ham Rong Mountain, Silver Waterfall, Rattan Bridge, Bamboo Forest and Ta Phin Cave. Sapa is also the starting point for many climbers and scientists who want to reach the top of Fansipan Mountain, the highest mountain in Vietnam at 3,143m. Hoang Lien Mountain Range is also called the Alps of the North Sea area since Fansipan Mountain is not only the highest peak in Vietnam, but also in the Indochina Peninsula.

The pyramid-shaped mountain is covered with clouds all year round and temperatures often drop below zero, especially at high elevations.

The first thing you notice when approaching the resort town are some detached wooden mansions and villas perched on a hill top or hillside, behind thick pine forests and almost invisible on this foggy morning.

Old and new villas with red roofs now appear and now disappear in the green rows of pomu trees, bringing the town the beauty of European towns.

Fresh and cool air in Sapa is an idea climate condition for growing temperate vegetables such as cabbage, chayote, precious medicinal herbs, and fruit trees such as plum, pear...

Sapa is home to various families of flowers of captivating colours, which can be found nowhere else in the country. When Tet, the Lunar New Year Festival, comes, the whole township of Sapa is filled with the pink colour of peach blossom brought from the vast forests of peach just outside the town. Sapa is regarded as the kingdom of orchids. Here, orchid lovers are even amazed by the choice, when trekking in the forest filled with several hundred kinds of orchids of brilliant colours and fantastic shapes, such as Orchid Princess, Orchid of My Fair Lady's Shoe. Some orchids are named after lovely singing birds such as the canary, salangane's nest, and more.

Sapa is most beautiful in spring. Apricot, plum and cherry flowers are splendidly beautiful.

Markets are crowded and merry, and are especially attractive to visitors. Minority groups come here to exchange and trade goods and products. Market sessions are also a chance for locals to promenade and young men and women in colorful costumes to meet, date or seek sweethearts.

Visitors to Sapa will have opportunities to discover the unique customs of the local residents.

### **Sa Pa- the city in the clouds**

Sa Pa has special grace of a city permanently merging in the clouds, with many romantic names such as Silver waterfall, Cloud Bridge... There are about 200 villas with most diverse and original architectural designs which are fancifully coloured by different styles of different ethnic minorities: Dao, Mong, Day, Kho Mu... However, they still have the appearance of modernity with garden surrounding them and all merging into the dusk of the cloudy valley.

Sa Pa is a garden with flowers and fruits of temperate climate type, embedded in the generally tropical nature of Vietnam, with pine, cloudy forests crouching at the foot of the sky-high mountain range of Hoang Lien Son. Once you have been to Sa Pa you will never be able to forget the Autumn-like fresh air, the softly sweet and sour taste of the Sa Pa peach and Ta Van plum.

The four seasons are distinctly felt in Sa Pa when Nature changes her costume. Spring in the season of pear, peach and plum flowers. Summer comes blooming with Gladioli, Pancies, Dahlias, Sun-flowers and numerous temperate fruits. Autumn is the time for perfume mushrooms, woodears and plenty of specious medicinal plants such as Black Ginseng, Amomum, Cinnamon, Anise etc.

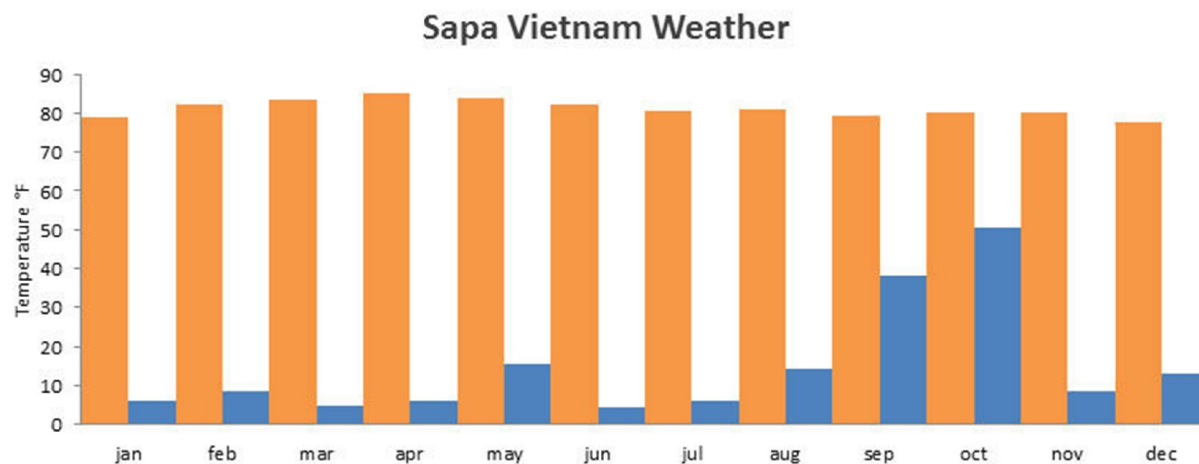
The sky is the vividly brightened with golden sun-rays and playful white clouds which seem to land on the ground, over the heads of people or on tops of trees. In Winter, the forest is almost whitened with snow, making the landscapes look more attractive.

But Summer is said to be the most charming season in the year. It is extremely interesting to experience all the four seasons within a summer day time: spring in the morning, summer at noon, autumn in the afternoon and winter in the evening and at night.

Sa Pa, with its surprisingly wonderful and original nature, the sky, the air, the clouds, the flowers and fruits there is openly inviting...

## II. Weather in Sapa

Spectacular views, fascinating destination, the most ideal convalescence, the best must-go in Viet Nam are those you may hear about Sapa. Coming to Sapa, you will enjoy the best landscapes than ever in anytime of the year. However, to get your perfect trip to SaPa, you will need to know clearly about the weather or climate here as followings.



Sapa always looks beautiful without the distinctions of seasons. Perching at 1650 m (5413 ft) above the sea level to North West of Viet Nam, Sapa town enjoys the sub-tropical climate that means Sapa's weather is cool all year round. Particularly, a summer day in Sapa has all four characteristics of four seasons: spring in the morning, summer in the noon with light sunshine, fall evening with slight fog and little cloud in the sky and winter at night that means the temperature often reaches 14- 15oC. In general, the average temperature of Sapa is at 15oC annually. Due to its ideal position, the town is considered one of the best places for convalescence in Viet Nam with lots of French-style colonial villas and fascinating tourist spots. Sapa does not suffer with the severe sunlight of summer like other Northern regions of Viet Nam and in the winter, it also looks beautiful with falling snow and fog even snow covering gradually the town and its landscapes. The average rainfall of the town ranges from 1.800 to 2.200 mm, particularly reaching the highest level from May to August. That is why the peak seasons in Sapa are from September to November and from March to May. However, Sapa own the unique beauties of each season, which are waiting for you exploring.

### 1.Spring

It is said that spring is the best time for traveling in Sapa. The temperature at this time ranges from 15 to 23oC. You can enjoy numerous superb landscapes and nature attractions here under the ideal weather

with clear blue sky, a little sunlight, cool breezes and more. It is also the time for hundreds of flowers blooming, which makes the whole Sapa and its surroundings sink to the colorful world of flowers, including peaches, orchids, plum flowers. The cool weather seems to be a unique feature of the spring in Sapa. Although the fog is not rich as in the winter, it still covers the town in spring, which makes Sapa looks more beautiful like a heaven. It is time for you trekking to explore the charming of Sapa at ethnic villages, ancient tourist spots like the Old Church, caves and Muong Hoa Valley.

## **2.Summer**

There is no doubt that summer in Sa Pa is absolutely suitable for your trip to get away the hot weather. The average temperature is just 25oC. Sa Pa is a famous destination for French-style resorts, ancient villas waiting for the tourist to the town staying and enjoying the cool atmosphere and fresh air. It is time to contemplate the superb sceneries of amazing waterfalls like Thac Bac Waterfalls and adventuring the challenge of the Fansipan Peak. It is still cold a little bit in the early morning full of fog. Then there appears sunshine in the noon and the cloud wanders in the blue sky. In the evening, fog comes back and covers slight the town besides sudden rains. Hanging out in Sa Pa's roads or markets is a wonderful experience that you should try on your trip to Sa Pa in the summer.

## **3.Autumn**

This is the best time for you experiencing the beauty of Sa Pa's terraced paddy fields, especially Lao Chai village's. The temperature often ranges from 21 to 25oC In autumn, the ripe terraced field which is selected as one of the most fantastic rice fields in Asia and in the world generates the superb sceneries of yellow rice and green of hills and forests surroundings. On the way to the town center, you may feel the autumn comfort and pleasance through the little cold breezes and slight sunshine. In the early morning of the fall, the cloud has not clear out yet and the fog has wandered around the town, which looks peaceful and fabulous like a picture. The picturesque sceneries under the cool weather may seduce most of the visitors to Sa Pa right the beginning of a trekking day. When the evening falls down, the sunshine is gradually replaced by the star night and slight light from the windows of smalls houses in the villages. Fall in Sa Pa is always pleasant, slight and comfortable. The evening in Sa Pa's fall is pretty quiet but romantic at which you need time to enjoy such the best atmosphere apart from the bustle and hustle of the city life.

## **4.Winter**

Sa Pa is one the few spots having snow in winter in Viet Nam. In the past, from 1957 to 2013, there were 21 snowfalls in this town and the strongest was on February 13, 1968 which the snow kept falling from 3:00 am to 14:00 pm with the thickness of snow layer up to 20 cm. Although it is a low season for tourism

of Sa Pa due to its cold; however, if cold weather does not bother you at all and make sure that you following our tips, touring to Sa Pa in winter must be an amazing experience for you. The town is covered by drifting fog under the low temperature. A winter day in Sa Pa is so special with lots of climate condition changes, which could be slight sunny when you are sitting in front of a certain hotel's hall and just 5 minutes later, the fog might cover around you and the ancient streets then disappear in the fanciful scenery. Winter in Sa Pa seems to be colder than other tourist attractions in the North of Viet Nam; however, it is time that you can see the most fantastic Ham Rong Mt. with lots of fascinating peach lines blooming. This is considered the best time to take a tour to Sa Pa's night markets to explore the best souvenirs, craftworks and enjoy the yummy cuisines with lots of grilled and baked dishes that seems to be so suitable with winter conditions.

### III. Sapa Villages

There are many villages in Sapa which are located mostly along Muong Hoa stream. Each village has its own style of living and cultures. You will find the different ethnic people, different way of livings, way of dress and houses achitecture...

#### 1. Cat Cat Village



Sapa attracts tourists not only by the naturally breathtaking landscapes but also the traditional cultural features. One of the most ideal destinations in Sapa is Cat Cat – the old village of the ethnic groups – attracts tourists from all over the world for its distinctive customs and practices. The following are some interesting information which is very useful for you if you intend to visit Cat Cat village in your trip.

##### **Cat Cat - A miniature cultural space for the Mong ethnic minority**

Cat Cat village was founded since the 19th century and nestled in a beautiful valley about three kilometers from Sapa town. It is famous for the H'Mong ethnic minority who has the rich cultural tradition. The H'Mong ethnic people, especially the Black H'Mong lived along the mountain side and cultivated surrounding their home. They grow rice on terrace fields and corn on the mountains according to the handicraft cultivation method.

The houses of the H'Mong ethnics were built by the special architecture. These houses contain three rooms with three doors, one in the middle and two other on either side. The main door always closed except on special occasions: New – year days, wedding, funeral,... The roof is made of pomu wood which insects do not attack and isn't deteriorated when in contact with water. If the roof is made of pomu, it will last up to 70 years. However the walls' material is sawn timber. In addition, there are other indispensable parts of the house such as altar, kitchen and places for sleeping.

The costumes are an important part in the culture of the H'Mong. Although the life has changed a lot, the traditional costumes are still preserved here. The H'Mong is very famous for making cloth from hemp and

dying it a deep indigo blue. The women wear long blouses which are decorated with batik flowers over short trousers. They wrap long scarves around their legs. More interestingly, they wrap their long hair around their head and wear a blue turban. The Mong men often wear long jackets with shirts, a long waist coat which is embroidered at the collar and a small hat.

## 2. Lao Chai Village



Lao Chai, also a hot spot of tourism in the Sapa upland town, is home of the Black H'Mong. This is a commune combining three main villages of more than 100 Black H'mong families who are considered to always welcome you with the best hospitality and warmth.

You can reach this beautiful commune by going about 7 km to the southeast of Sapa town and Lao Chai shall be on the west bank of Muong Hoa Stream waiting for you. You may go by car or motorbike to get to the villages but it shall be more stunning if you spend time trekking following the path

along with the mountain side to go there. A trek is always the best recommendation to explore Sapa's ethnic villages and their very culture and customs. Lao Cai or Sapa and the Northwest of Vietnam in narrow sense often is developed its tourism industry with a form of community-based tourism, so then trekking to Lao Chai village, learning about the local's life and exploring the beauty of the very nature in the village are some of the most interesting and appreciated activities when coming to the upland town. By the way, it is very nice when from a high position on the main road, you can get great panorama of the whole village looming in high mountains along with the most beautiful river. Lao Chai almost lies in the middle of rice and corn terraces, so you also have a good chance to trace along with narrow but fabulous path on the fields to contemplate the whole zone of terraces. The best time for visiting Lao Chai from September to next April on which the village is so attractive with the most wonderful rice terraced fields. The locals' houses are built on the half side of the mountain to prevent from floods on the wet season. The H'mong here focus their cultivation in rice farming which is carried out on the lower land close to the bottom of the valley and sometimes they cultivate corn on the mountain slopes on terraces as the subsidiary food for life. The trip must be very interesting when you mix with groups of H'Mong people on their ways to the village or to the terraces for work and though they intend to make some business, they do not force you to buy their products but chat with you friendly and share their experience and life. You are recommended bringing along with some candies or small cakes to give the ethnic children; because the children in villages love seeing the strangers coming to their homes, they are always happy for such small gifts. You do not forget to take some used comics or newspapers, magazines as gifts for them. However, absolutely do not give them money. It is a kind of unwritten rule.

With the form of community-based tourism, you will have a chance to experience handicraft manufacturing operations along with the travelling route, in which includes brocade weaving, traditional dyeing and more. Then you are highly recommended buying such products not only for their distinction

and beauty but also the practical features with good benefits such as brocade scarves, embroidering cushions, especially ethnic instruments like “Khen”, “Dan moi” for beautiful souvenirs.

It shall be very nice if you can participate in the local’s routines by staying in their rudimental houses, communicating with such hospital and friendly ethics and mingling with their life which is definitely close with natural space and particularly enjoying their local dishes with exotic but yummy taste that always deserve at least a try. Thus, on your way to Lao Chai, you might receive simple but unforgettable experiences with preserved and precious traditional characteristics and customs of the local here and be obviously impressed with the ethnic’s hospitality and frankness despite the subsistence living.

### Information

- Distance from Sapa center: 7 – 8 km to the southeast
- Area: 29.35 km<sup>2</sup>
- Numbers of households: 100, mainly the Black H'Mong ethnic
- Attractions: Muong Hoa Valley, Muong Hoa Stream, rice and corn terraces, Hoang Lien Son range, Ham Rong Peak, handicrafts of the Black H'Mong.

### 3. Ta Phin Village



This 12km-distance village from Sapa town which is home of the H'Mong and Red Dao always deserves to be set as one of the hottest tourism highlights on the trip to the paradise of the Northwest – Sapa.

To get to this picturesque village, you may need to drive half an hour from Sapa center then you will get to Ta Phin which is located in the valley and surrounded mostly by mighty rice terraces, high mountains and marvelous forests. However, it is highly recommended trekking such wonderful 12 km, particularly from late September to next May, to witness yellow to green mighty rice terraced fields and try the risky but exciting narrow path winding to the terraces.

Standing on Ham Rong Mount, 3km distant from Sapa town (you can completely walk to this spot), you can contemplate the panorama of Sapa, including Muong Hoa Valley, Sa Pa commune and Ta Phin Village looming under mysterious fog. What you can expect from your trip to Ta Phin are definitely fresh and stunning nature, characterized cultures and pristinely traditional customs of the Red Dao with its well-known weave and herb bathing.

About 1km from Ta Phin People’s Committee Headquarter to the North, there is a limestone mountain range, a branch of Hoang Lien Son Mountain Range, in which exists a small mountain with a fabulous cave. The cave is 5m high and nearly 3m wide and you definitely should spend time exploring this

stunning cave by crossing a underground walkway then you will meet a fantastic space with diversified fauna and flora system and superb mutishaped stalagmites.

Coming to the village, you can also comtemplate the anciently colonial-style monastery, the spectacular Ham Rong to the South East and visit the Mong and Dao's brocade houses which are always full of vivid and impressive brocades and handicrafts. By the way, to the Dao's area, you are recommended enjoying their unique the herb bath with lots of herbal ingredients only in the very Dao's recipe to get a better health and relaxation for next trekking days. If you are already in Ta Phin, do not forget its tasty specilities like "Ruou thoc" (Red Dao's wine), "Banh Chung Den" (Black Chung Cake), corn cake, colored sticky rice and yummy fermented pork.

Anyway, Ta Phin is a highly recommended tourism spot that you must at least put on your trekking list in Sapa to go sightseeing many fantastic landscapes as well as savor the very ethnic cuisine and exploring the traditional life of the ethnic people. Coming to Ta Phin is never a waste of time.

#### **Ta Phin village information**

Location: Ta Phin Village is about 12 kilometers from Sapa

Ethnic groups: Mainly the Dao, the Mong

Attractions: Ta Phin Cave, Ham Rong Mount, rice terraces, Muong Hoa Valley, Red Dao's herbal bath, specilities such as Ruou thoc" (Red Dao's wine), "Banh Chung Den" (Black Chung Cake), corn cake, colored sticky rice and yummy fermented pork.

#### **4. Ta Van Village**



Being one of the most stunning spots in Sapa, about 8km distance from the town center, Ta Van is home of ethnics living in which are mainly the Dzay. On your way to Sapa, it is a must.

This fabulous destination owns lots of must-sees for your trip to Sapa, Vietnam like the mysterious Ancient Rock Field, challenging Cau May (or May Bridge) and it is also definitely a nice place when you will have a chance to explore plenty of traditional features characterizing the upland town such as special food with exotic and fascinating recipes and natural ingredients and of course, the unique stilt houses in this village are obviously fantastic, so remember not to miss this character. When reaching to Ta Van, you also should pay a visit to its neighbor on the way like Lao Chai. You can go to Ta Van by jeeps, motor taxis or even trekking. If you follow the winding pass path down to the Hoang Lien Son Mountain Range's foot, you will meet one of the most stunning spots of Sapa – Muong Hoa Valley and contemplate the breathtaking Ham Rong Mountain on the way to the great mountain range. On your trip to Ta Van Village, along with dreamy beautiful Muong Hoa Valley which sometimes looks so magnetic and mysterious under the fog, you also have a chance to witness floating clouds atop of imposing

Fansipan Peak. On your way to Ta Van, you also pay a visit to beautiful terraces in Lao Chai and this spot is more important and attractive to travelers as its location to Ancient Rock Field area.

Though the pass path is quite creep and winding, it must be your best experience, especially you are adventurous visitors. However, discovering the ethnic life, long-standing culture and unique custom here is indeed your must-do in Ta Van for the most memorable trip to Sapa. That's why home stay in this ethnic village is definitely highly recommended. Anyway, coming to Ta Van, you shall enjoy the real Sapa and its hidden beauty on which you can't help missing out. Home-staying in this village is 100 percent recommended and you will not need to worry about the facilities because the locals equip with essential appliances and devices so that it will be always convenient and efficient for you taking a relaxation after a long-day trip.

Since this village is home of the Zday and H'Mong mainly, this is an ideal place to explore the differences between the ethnic life and their cultures. You shall see that the Zday prefers stable settlement; therefore they usually reside in low areas near the valleys to cultivate water rice meanwhile the H'Mong in Ta Van prefer living in the higher position to farm corns, sweet potatoes, cassavas and terraced rice, though they also choose some lower ones for residence today.

It was built a road for car; however, the trail from Y Linh Ho crossing Lao Chai to Ta Van is the best path to get the most amazing trek and it is definitely recommended.

Not only in this land, but it should say that Ta Van Village is a fantastic place to enjoy Sapa's specialities such as Muong Hum stream fish, Muong Khuong Thang Co (with the main ingredient of horse meat), Van Ban colored sticky rice and Bac Ha "cap nach" pigs. This tourism spot also bring you lots of chances to enjoy its delicious fruits and peach fruits and plums for examples. Besides enjoy the exotic and yummy food, you can have a chance to enjoy the interesting performances of ethnic music and dance, including Then dancing, Ken dancing and harmonious melodies between boys and girls.

### **Ta Van village information**

**Location:** about 8 kilometers from Sapa center

**Ethnic groups:** Mainly the Dzay, the H'Mong, the Tay, the Red Dzao (the population of about 1000 habitants)

**Attractions:** Muong Hoa Valley, May Bridge, Ancient Rock Field , ethnic cultures, foods like Muong Hum stream fish, Muong Khuong Thang Co, Van Ban colored sticky rice and Bac Ha "cap nach" pigs, arty performances like Then dancing.

## **5. Ban Ho Village**



Ban Ho or Ho Village or Ban Ho Village is one of the most important and interesting tourism spots in Sapa, Vietnam.

If [your trip is to Sapa](#) to explore its stunning ethnic villages, Ban Ho is definitely a must-go. Located at 30 km distance from Sapa center to the southwest, this village is home of ethnics including the Mong,

Dao, Tay, Dzay and Nung living. Because the weather here is warmer and more comfortable comparing to other areas in Sapa, Ban Ho is always recommended for year-round trips. Tourists to this place can never resist praising for the charming nature, pristinely long-standing customs and since the locals are completely friendly and hospitable, you may get an invitation to a meal in their homes or participate in their routines to explore the very ethnic life in Sapa.

If you are in Sapa, do not drive or ride to Ban Ho but trek to explore the pristinely stunning beauty of the nature here. You should spend time in its mighty terraced fields then scattered stilted houses with typical construction along with winding pure and magnetic streams of Muong Hoa and Lavie as well as May Bridge. These are obviously worth a visit and besides, you are recommended managing your trek to go with superb waterfalls and many other stunning cultural features. Though it is beautiful, the winding and adventurous pass paths may challenge you with some difficulties; however, it is also an worth experience when reaching to the village in such paths if you are risky and energetic. While you are Ban Ho on occasions, you can take part in awesome local festivals like “Xuong dong” festival and come and join in fascinating activities with the local, for example, Sap dancing and Xoe dancing.

Ban Ho center is Ban Den hamlet, where Muong Hoa and Lavie meet together. It also remains a legendary love story about these streams that the locals are always willing to tell you. Coming to Ban Ho, you almost witness the most pristine ever images of traditional stilted houses scattered on along the streams and hill sides. It is recommended coming in group or with family so that you can enjoy the warm and cosy atmosphere with the local when homestay. Homestay in Ban Den is very nice with 29 biggest and most beautiful houses in the hamlet. In morning, it is time to visit Hoang Lien Son National Park to explore the various species of plants and animals. The weather in Ban Ho is usually better and warmer than in others, ranging from 18 to 25 Centigrade, so you should spend time discovering dreamy Lavie Stream and watching breathtaking Ca Nhay Waterfalls. Companying with Muong Hoa Stream, Lavie Stream is one of the two main sources of water playing significant parts in the local life. Winding over forests, hills and mountains and mighty terraced fields of the Tay’s village nestled in the marvelous Muong Hoa Valley, it looks like a charming symbol of Ban Ho Sapa. In addition, swimming in the fresh and clean Lavie is an unforgettable experience and when you trip to the northern town of Vietnam in summer, Lavie is a must. Differing from Muong Hoa Stream supplying with water to tens of villages that it runs over daily, Lavie Stream flows to Ban Den from the high mountains and virgin forests, so it seems to be more fascinating, mysterious and clearer. Besides Muong Hoa Stream and Lavie Stream, Ban Den’s surroundings are also worth a visit such as Ca Nhay Waterfalls, Silver Waterfalls, Love Waterfalls, Seo Trung Ho Waterfalls, in which Seo Trung Ho from the height of more than a hundred meters, travelers can catch the image of the waterfalls like a natural white silky band crossing the mountain half side.

The tourists coming here always remember the appealing natural landscapes, reserved customs and the hospitality of the locals. Thus why don’t you pack your backpack then trip to Ban Ho – Sapa?

#### **Information**

- Distance from Sapa center: 30km to the southeast
- Ethnic: the Mong, Dao, Tay, Dzay and Nung, mainly the Tay

– Attractions: May Bridge, Ca Nhay Waterfalls, Silver Waterfalls, Love Waterfalls, Seo Trung Ho Waterfalls, Hoang Lien Son National Park and ethnic traditions.

## 6. Giang Ta Chai Village



Coming to Sapa, you shall need to arrange Giang Ta Chai village on your trek list because it is one of the most amazing destinations for traveling and spending your holidays in this upland town.

Giang Ta Chai village, an ethnic village in Sapa, Lao Cai always deserves you to explore and experience in more Sapa's attractions.

The village is situated on the foot of Fansipan Mountain, at the right side of fascinating MuongHoa Valley, next to MuongHoa Stream. Coming to Giang Ta Chai, tourists are offered with numerous gorgeous views of superb mountain ranges, adventurous bamboo forests, huge rice terraces and challenging trails to the village. Opposite [Su Pan Village](#) in other bank of Muong Hoa Stream, the village is a worth to try besides other ethnic villages since it is so fascinating with naturally beautiful attractions like big century-old trees, green bamboo groves, amazing terraces and next to a giant and superb waterfalls. From the main road, you can see the trail to the village – one of the most interesting engagement to tourists coming and challenging themselves with the narrow and small path to the village and it is more fascinating when you need to across MuongHoa Stream and pass Giang Waterfalls to reach Giang Ta Chai housing at giant Hoang Lien as it is so excited and challenging. From my point of view, stone fences here are fabulous attractions that are one of the most impressive images of the upland in Northwestern Viet Nam. Stone fences in Giang Ta Chai are so amazing and well-made, obviously. When coming to this village, you should pay a visit to Giang Ta Chai Waterfalls and bamboo forests as well as across the stunning Cau May (Cloud Bridge or May Bridge). Being as a well-known destination for exciting trekking tours and holidays in Sapa, Giang Ta Chai appeals travelers, particularly who love adventuring and exploring, to its interesting trekking paths through bamboo forests and giant old trees, rice fields, manmade suspension bridge to reach the other side of the streams. A warning is that boots are highly recommended for a trip through the bamboo forests since it may be very slippery and a bit wet in case of rain and preparing a walking stick if needed. If you are adventurous, this trek is a must. You can follow the normal trails to get to the village or try adventurous trekking routes that are usually up to the mountain to Su Pan Village and it shall be so amazing and experienced if you choose the latter. Giang Ta Chai is home of the Red Zao. These ethnic people prefer building their houses in areas of gravelly soil on the mountain sides and reclaiming surrounding lands for cultivation. Coming to Giang Ta Chai, travelers will have chances to meet and communicate with the Red Zao then experience their lifestyle and explore their unique culture and customs as well. Each minority in Sapa has the joint characteristics and its separate outstanding features waiting for visitors to come and discover. Therefore, the Red Zao ethnic which is the second biggest group (after the Hmong – 53%) also have lots of amazing culture and norms and the people themselves that are available for you experiencing. One of the visual features of this ethnic is that they always wear very colorful brocade clothing which are their traditional costumes with vivid man-made embroideries and adorned coins on their clothing. Their brocade products

are sophisticated and vivid too and you are recommended buying them as souvenirs or remembrance of the Giang Ta Chai village and its Red Zao. Staying overnight on in Red Zao's houses and trying their traditional treatment which is herb bath with up to more than dozen kind of herbs is so high recommended.

Anyway, Giang Ta Chai village itself and its people always are the best attractions seducing travelers to the upland Sapa.

## 7. Ma Tra Village



This is a new Mong village distant 5 km from Sapa town to the east in some low hills, which must be one of the best destinations for tourists coming to the upland town.

Stretching for about 12 km, the village is an interesting destination for tourists who love exploring the ethnic's culture and traditional features and experiencing the lifestyle through such

villages. Trekking along with the main road from Sapa center (direction to Lao Cai) for over 4km long, you are offered the chance to enjoy the splendid panorama of the whole valley. The way to this village is easier and more convenient since a 15km motorway was constructed over ten years ago, so it only takes you a half an hour to get to the village. However, if you are a risky trekker, you will need to follow the trail that conducts you to walk on the high hill path around the valley rather than follow the normal way in order to discover the real life and experience. Trekking along with the adventurous trails in Sapa is always a must. Lots of tourists to Sapa usually choose Ma Ta – Ta Phin route as their main route to explore Sapa and it is obviously one of the best choices. This is a very attractive travel route since if you are in this route, you can explore the real life of the people here at the same time of contemplate naturally stunning views. Previously, this route included destinations like Sapa, Sa Pả (a village of Sapa, differ from Sapa town in Vietnamese so do not misunderstand), Hau Thao, Su Pan, Ta Van, and with Ma Tra your trip shall last longer and more appealing. Thus, you may follow routes of Sapa – Cat Cat, Sapa – O Quy Ha – Thac Bac and Ban Khoang or Sapa – Ta Phin; however, this route is more recommended as it has the most tourism spots for you exploring.

Ma Tra is one of a few villages perching on the most beautiful and silent terrace valley in Sapa. There are nearly fifty households residing in the villages and most of them are the Mong's (also living the Red Zao). You can visit the H'mong's small primary school to meet little and pretty children and their rudimentary classes, sightsee lots of beautiful views on your way exploring this new village and enjoy the panorama of the whole valley. The village is also a must-go for its preserved culture and customs. Though the development and modernizing policies applied in the land, it is reserved with traditional folk art, including it exotic and beautiful traditional songs and dance, folk instrument performances. Additionally, Ma Tra is worth a visit for experiencing its traditional crafts like silver carving, forging, weaving and brocade production especially linen items.

Anyway, for the best [trekking trip in Sapa](#), this village is definitely a must.

## 8. Y Linh Ho Village



On the way exploring the upland Sapa, this is one of the best recommendations for your trip.

Y Linh Ho village, a part of San Sa Ho commune, Sa Pa is a small but interesting village, especially for travelling and visiting. From 7km distance of Sapa town, on the way to Lao Chai village, you can contemplate the superb panorama of this picturesque village. It said that the name “Y Linh Ho” referred from an old story of the Dao that it was originated from the

name of the initial explorer of the land – “Ly Linh Ho” and then though the Dao moved on to other land and it became the Mong’s residence, it has been called “Y Linh Ho” – a phonetic form – as a kind of the ancient recall. Distant from the main road, the path to the village is winding, tortuous and sloping, so Y Linh Ho is not noisy with crazy transport like in the center zone but being peaceful and quiet. The people here only depend on agricultural cultivation for living, mainly growing rice and corn, then terraces in the village are large and fascinating despite in summer when the green covering all the fields or in late autumn at which the terraces are all silky golden like an arty picture. This is also a place for best homestay to explore the lifestyle and culture, customs of the resident. It is definitely a must. The destination is also famous for the dreamy and fascinating Muong Hoa Stream, beautiful houses of the Mong, and the hospitability and friendliness of the resident of the land. Coming to the village, you shall have a chance to learn and explore about traditional customs and culture of the Black Mong who usually wear dark clothing like in black or navy. Tourists to Y Linh Ho will meet the Black Mong’s routines such as weaving, dyeing with their unique method by using indigo. Though Y Linh Ho village is just a small commune with some small hamlets scattering on the tough halfway of high and steep mountains, Y Linh Ho is an attractive destination for tourists, particularly for whom love trekking and adventuring. With its rudimentary but beautiful houses, steep hillsides, the splendid rice terraces and the dreamy Muong Hoa Stream, travelling to Y Linh Ho is a must on your trip to Sapa.

Distance from Sapa center: 7km (3km from Lao Chai)

– Numbers of households: over 200, mainly the Black Mong

– Attractions: Muong Hoa Stream, rice terraces, image of wood-made houses, weaving and dyeing methods, winding paths along hillsides.

## 9. Sin Chai Village



Sin Chai is one of the best-view spots in Sapa, distant 4km from the city center and homed of about 1.400 Mong people.

Sin Chai is located in Ta Giang Phinh commune where the locals consider a unique gift given to the Mong by God. This village is located in the lower of Thau Stream which is never out of water and the foot of Ngu Chi Son Mountain Range. It perches on the high mountain with fog coverage on the way of “winter section” crossing

the mountain side. You can reach the village by getting from Sapa then passing Lanh Waterfalls, Ngu Chi Son Slope. The weather here are always cool and sometimes it brings chilly wind and the fog is the familiar image that you can get when you are Sin Chai; therefore, though it is only far 40km from Sapa center, Ta Giang Phinh or Sin Chai is featured with unique charm and beauty. Mysterious Ngu Chi Son Mount (Five Fingers Mount), magnificent rice terraces, hundred-year-old Mong valley, traditional and tranquil houses full of the Mong-made equipment (so sophisticated and useful) are those symbolizing the village then making it one of the most interesting must-gos in Sapa. At present, the trail to this spot is more convenient since it is built more concrete roads. Anyway, if you come to Sapa, you had better try its natural and tranquil paths, such as through forests or narrow hill-paths to get the very trek. Ngu Chi Son Mountain Range is well-known as the most beautiful mountain range in the Northwest, consisting of five main mountains running to the southwest – northeast. Ngu Chi Son is 3.000 m high and it is the second highest mountain, which is just behind Fansipan Mount. That's why you are completely suggested passing the fabulous Cong Troi (Heaven Gate) then conquering this Mount and it shall be interesting and challenging not less than doing with Fansipan Peak.

The Mong usually have a custom of construction houses in the haft-way or on the top of the high mountains and such houses are distant from each other; however, in Sin Chai Village, the local gather together and reside in the valley, along with the crystal and fresh stream running from imposing Ngu Chi Son's foot. The Mong here prefer building breeding facilities far from their houses instead of right under the main houses as in the past or in other ethnics' area. Therefore, the life of the local is more hygienic and the source of water is more secured, so it is avoided from epidemics. When referring to Sin Chai, it is “hundred-year-old Mong valley” which is one of the featured characteristics in the village. Most of the old Mong in the village are in hundred-year-old. It is deemed that the genes, fresh air, pure water source, safe and natural food are those prolonging the life of the local in Sin Chai. The local here also prefer using herbs collected from Ngu Chi Son Moutain Range to cure themselves when they get some ailments like colds, fevers instead of using medicines or visiting hospitals.

The Mong in Sin Chai are so friendly and kind. There is a cultural house in the middle of the village, where important issues and tasks of the village and commune are discussed. This is also a place held traditional activities like art performances for festivals or some holidays and exchanged the knowledge and experience about how to cultivate linen, weave brocades and print beeswax on the cloths.

As the convenience and modernization, it is opened a new fantastic tourism route of Sapa – Ban Khoang – Ta Giang Phinh – Ban Xeo, which is typical with mountain climbing, culture exploring and the Mong's life experience. With its pristine natural landscapes, hospitable local and characterized culture, this tranquil and beautiful village is always worth a visit.

## IV. Sapa Transportation

*Sapa is a highland town, is a famous resort of Sapa district, Lao Cai province, Vietnam. Located about 379 km from Hanoi City, Sapa is the residence of the ethnic minorities including Mong, Dao, Tay, Giay, Xa Pho, Kinh, Hoa, etc. Sapa is actually one of the most ideal destinations for tourists when visiting Vietnam. To get to [Sapa from Hanoi](#), you can refer to 3 ways that we share as follows:*

### 1.By train



If you travel by train, you will depart at Tran Quy Cap Station in the city center of Hanoi and stop at Lao Cai Station. This trip from Hanoi to Lao Cai Station will last more 10 hours. The ticket price depends on the quality of services on the train, e.g. hard chair or couchette, normal day or holiday. To get tickets, you should make a reservation at the train station. It's better for you if you book a round-trip ticket for both outward and return journey from Tran Quy Cap Station to Lao Cai Station and vice versa. From Lao Cai Station to Sapa Town, it takes you about 40 km of the sinuous mountain roads. You can catch the bus or motorbike taxi to reach to Sapa; however, it's safer and more convenient for you to travel by bus. For the return journey, the train will leave Lao Cai Station around 7 p.m and arrive in Hanoi at 4 a.m. Therefore,

you should prepare for this by booking taxi or contact someone to pick you up after leaving the station at such an early hour.

## 2. By car



Like travelling by train, it's relatively popular to get Sapa by car. You can catch the car at My Dinh Station, Luong Yen Station, Giap Bat Station or Gia Lam Station. It's much more convenient because these cars will go straight to Sapa Town without stopping at Lao Cai Station as when you travel by train. There are some car firms with the route: Hanoi – Sapa such as Hai Van, Sao Viet, Hung Thanh, Viet Bus. These cars often depart at night to save time. The ticket price can change depending on the providers. It takes you about 8 – 9 hours to get to Sapa. Besides, you can also hire a private car (the cost depends on the type of car what you hire) for your group or drive your own car.

## 3. By motorcycle

You can also travel to Sapa by motorcycle, but it's not a safe way because of the far distance and difficult terrain; this is only proper for the adventurers. There is a variety of routes to get to Sapa. There are two main routes as follows:

(1) Hanoi – Vinh Phuc – Viet Tri – Phong Chau – Doan Hung – Yen Bai – Lao Cai – Sa Pa ( Total: 360 km ).

(2) Hanoi – Hoa Lac – Son Tay – Thanh son – Along 32 nation road ( Total: 420 km )

## V. Top 10 best hotels in Sapa

Are you extremely busy looking for perfect accommodations and hotels in Sapa and wondering whether those desiring hotels make you satisfied or not in terms of price, quality and standards as well? Don't worry; this article will be taken as an approximate guide to help you get the best view of 10 hotels in Sapa.

It's a piece of cake to find out a wide range of the best hotels and choice luxury and boutique options only by a few clicks on any hotel websites. However, according to the world's largest and most popular travel review website named Tripadvisor, there are the list of **10 best hotels in Sapa** that are highly recommended by most tourists.

### 1. Sapa Lodge Hotel



Welcome to Sapa Lodge Hotel, a leading hotel with a convenient location where you can feel Sapa completely. So as to enjoy an intensely romantic holiday with your friends or your family, Sapa Lodge is a more suitable choice than ever. Situated on the southern end of town on the rim of the valley hence, Sapa Lodge Hotel is always like a relief to return to the oasis of calm and getting back in through the front door, which certainly overwhelms you at first sight. Designed perfectly with every detail of architecture, customers will feel like you are in a very special place in which you can admire the whole beautiful scenery of mountain forests from the third floor in order to be closer to nature. Coming to this colonial style hotel, tourists will easily impressed by the level of service and 28 deluxe rooms with big view from balcony at Sapa lodge Hotel. These rooms are almost impeccably presented and greatly clean and

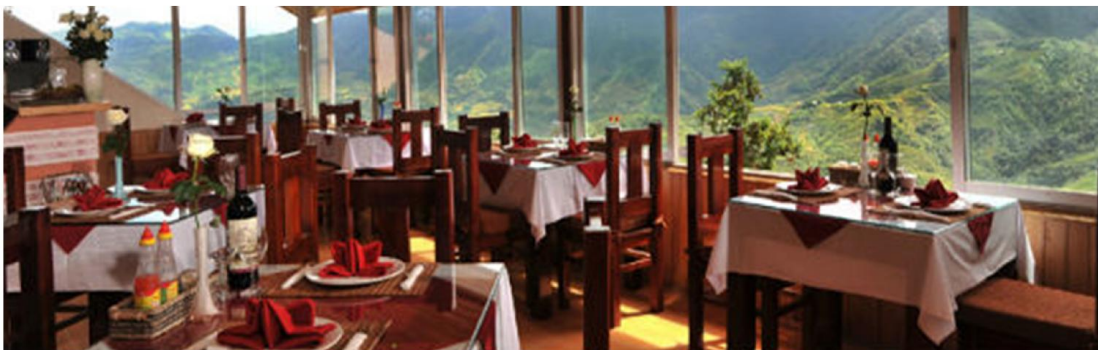
comfortable. Besides, the staff couldn't have been more hospitable, thoughtful and attentive. All of which contributes making Sapa lodge Hotel become the best choice for views, price and service.

## **2. U Sapa**



Located in the heart of Sapa town, which is close to Sapa cathedral, Sapa Market and Sapa Lake, four-star hotel bearing the name u Sapa is nothing less than an ideal destination for family trip to take a walk for discovering. Moreover, U Sapa is also a perfect stop for those people who desire to conquer legendary Fan Si Pan Peak. Designed in a beautiful French Colonial style with an indigenous twist combined with services that are delivered with U's unique concept, the architecture and interior of U Sapa hotel all ensure that guests have a totally relaxing holiday experience at U Sapa Hotel to recharge and reconnect with the local environment and its beauty, promising to bring back them with the most memorable moments of a life time.

## **3. Elysian Sapa Hotel**



It's merely 1 minute away from Sapa market, Sapa Church and the legendary Sapa love market, on the most ancient street – still known as Food Quarter, Elysian Sapa Hotel is reviewed by numerous tourists on the famous travel website TripAdvisor as one of the best boutique hotels in Sapa. Elysian Sapa Hotel offers a modern and diverse range of services and facilities such as Wi-Fi Internet, cable TV, electric kettle, great bathroom with standing shower, hairdryer and free toiletries. In addition, with an array of well-appointed rooms, the boutique Elysian Sapa Hotel offers you a most relaxing & comfortable accommodation in Sapa thanks to cozy decorated and fully featured rooms. In addition, all rooms are well maintained in an absolute cleanliness and hygiene. In particular, the menu of the restaurant's hotel is filled with both Western and Asian dishes, which may satisfy either adult or kids at once. In short, Elysian Sapa Hotel is the ideal place for astute travelers whether you are visiting Sapa for leisure or business.

#### 4. Sapa Unique Hotel



Regarded as the new building hotel in the heart of Sapa town, only a two minute walking to the Sapa Market, Church or Sapa Centre, Sapa Unique Hotel is really a a unique and dynamic tour operator continually developing new and undiscovered trips and show you all the real things in Sapa in particular and in Vietnam in general. Coming to Sapa Unique hotel, you will have wonderful time with awesome views of the mountains; rice terranes, valleys and streams as well as a lot of experience in great customer service, great staff attitude and a cosy friendly environment with plenty of charm, modern comfort and facilities. Besides, you are also welcome to enjoy desert or drink including a large buffet breakfast or a special menu for lunch and dinner, both Vietnamese and and Western cuisines on the terrace, to get closer to majestic nature of Sapa. Let's come and experience unforgettable moments at Sapa Unique Hotel from right now to possess the most improved standards and services and enjoy the most spectacular views ans unique culture.

## 5. H'Mong Sapa Hotel



After a night bus from Hanoi, tourists will be warmly welcomed with gorgeous and astonishing views from lovely and comfortable rooms, which are readily prepared with good showers in the bathroom of H'Mong Sapa Hotel away from the main street. The terrace facing this view is available all day because the room itself is large and has big windows with a stunning view of the valley, which is ideal to relish a beer or food from the restaurant at decent prices that offers an amazing value for money. Moreover, the hotel also provides bar/pub, shops, concierge, tours, Wi-Fi in public areas, concierge to ensure our guests the greatest comfort. Therefore, guests can choose from 30 rooms, all of which exude an atmosphere of total peace and harmony. However, what makes this hotel even more amazing though, is perhaps the quality of staff. All the staff is super friendly and work hard to meet all your needs to make sure that you have a great stay. The hotel is ethical in many ways and shows concern for the environment and local people. There is also a nice gift shop which sells quality handmade products for tourists to make souvenirs of their holidays.

## 6. Mountain View Hotel



Situated in the heart of Sapa town, on Cau May Street, the Mountain View Hotel is a more perfect stop than ever for backpackers who desire to discover all around ethnic minorities tribes in Sapa. This wonderful hotel is also highly recommended for its professional female trekking guide in the town and attentive English speaking staff to help you understand well about the country, people, and so on. In addition, the accommodation of the hotel fulfilling all the most important criterions with nice rooms, tasty Vietnamese meals, and especially easy prices also win millions of tourist hearts each year. With excellent location and high qualified rooms, the Mountain View Hotel promises to bring you convenience and unforgettable memory of your good stay.

## 7. Sapa Paradise View Hotel



Located in a central location, about 50m far from the Stone Church and famous Sapa Market, Sapa Paradise View Hotel offers picturesque views drawing an extremely poetic mountain landscape and free wi-fi access throughout the precinct. All the elegantly furnished rooms come with satellite TV, a seating area, and minibar and so on. Coming to this hotel, you will possess private bathrooms with showers and personal hygien items for free all the time. Besides, 24-hour front desk staff is absolutely attentive to assist guests with their luggage service and bike rentals. Here, guests even can dine at the campus of restaurant, which serves both International and Asian cuisine. Coming to this hotel, you can also enjoy the relaxing atmosphere of the massage, garden throughout the day. Sapa View Hotel is really a smart choice for travelers to Sapa (Lao Cai), offering a relaxed and hassle-free stay every time.

## 8. Sapa Victoria Hotel



Located in Sapa, 380 km Northwest of Hanoi, among the Hoang Lien Mountains, in Lao Cai Province, Victoria Sapa Hotel is famous for its pristine environment, unparalleled scenery and cool climate. Sapa Victoria Hotel was opened in March 1998 and honoured to be the only four-star and luxurious hotel in North-Western region of Vietnam. At the minimum rate of US\$160 per room/ night, you may easily imagine how luxury the superior quality of this hotel is. The luxurious traditional mountain chalet blends harmoniously with the surrounding scenery, allowing guests to enjoy something truly distinctive. Besides, the location and services have been carefully planned to allow guests to experience something different and unique in close harmony with nature and the local hill tribe people. Therefore, coming to Sapa Victoria Hotel, tourists will experience the finest services including high-end restaurant, indoor and outdoor pool, spa & sauna, fast internet access, business center, tennis court and gym and so on.

## 9. Sapa Eden Hotel



Not so far from the city center, situated in a quiet street leading to Cat Cat Village, Sapa Eden hotel impresses tourists with the incredibly spectacular view of valley and Fan Si Pan Mount, whether you are sitting in the restaurant or your room balcony during your time staying here. This lovely boutique hotel is highly recommended by its 15 spacious and comfortable rooms that meet fully international standards. In addition, the hotel's restaurant is also considered the best in Sapa with an extensive choice of delicious both international and local specialities. All in all, Sapa Eden Hotel is ideal for those who wish to have a great comfort and convenience, stay in a very friendly atmosphere and enjoy the beauty of this "misty town".

## 10. Auberge Hotel



Auberge Hotel is the tenth best hotel ranked by Tripadvisor, which is a fine old place with a French style built in the style of many mountain-top retreats from the colonial period, one of the first private properties in this mountain resort. At Auberge Hotel, all comfortable and cozy rooms are tastefully decorated with air-conditionings, lovely spacious bathrooms with tubs and a fireplace for colder nights, which is at a reasonable price of only \$25 for all. Besides, with the super friendly and fantastic English and French speaking professional staff, tourists will be taken on a stunning walk through the breathtaking views across paddy fields, exotic flower gardens, bamboo forests and mountains. Why don't you come and experience to take a lot of affection with amazing service here from right now?

Sapa has loads of places to stay which can make you are spoilt for choice, particularly at weekends and peak holiday periods. Therefore, if you have set your heart on somewhere in [Sapa](#), you should book an available in advance from right now. Hope that you can choose the most suitable room for your budget or travelling taste thanks to our consultancy.

## VI. Special food in Sapa

Sapa is famous not only for the natural beauty of the forests and the wonderful climate, but also for the unique food of the northwest forests.

### “Com lam”

“Com lam”, “bamboo cooked rice”, is a famous rice dish of the ethnic minority people in the Northwest of Vietnam. “Com lam” is cooked by sticky rice and grilled in the bamboo tubes. This dish is cooked by pressing the wet sticky rice, some salt and spring water into the bamboo tubes. This special dish is very delicious and popular; especially people are attracted by the impressive flavor of the sticky rice, spring

water and the sweet smell of bamboo.

#### **Five-colored “xoi” of Tay ethnic people**

Coming to this misty land, you can catch the image of colorful “xoi” baskets sold in the market. “Xoi” has 5 colors: green, red, violet, yellow and white. The Tay ethnic people cook “xoi” in very special way. They make “xoi” from sticky rice mixed with some types of leaves in the forest to create the attractive colors of “xoi”. For example, the red of “xoi” is from gac fruits; the green is from the leaves of ginger or grapefruit peels; the yellow is from saffron; etc. The colors of “xoi” is created by many different types of forest leaves that are unharmed to people.

#### **Sapa Peach**

Peach is a familiar type of fruits to us, however, Sapa Peach is special. Why is it such special fruit like that? As you know, the weather in Sapa is extremely cold in the winter and cool all year round, so it's a good condition to plant fruits, especially peach. Sapa Peach is both sweet and a little bit sour that creates its unique flavor. Coming to Sapa, you not only enjoy this type of delicious fruits, but also have a chance to visit the peach gardens and sightsee the smooth beauty of peach blossoms, especially in the spring. Peach is the precious gift that the nature gives Sapa.

#### **“Thang co”**

This is an extremely special dish of Mong ethnic people, sold in almost the villages and markets in Sapa. “Thang co” is made from horse meat and 12 types of spices. People often enjoy this dish with many types of vegetables. Especially, when combining with drinking corn wine, it creates a wonderful and unforgettable flavor.

#### **Black chicken**

This is a special type of chicken of Mong ethnic people with black skin, bone and meat. The black chicken meat is steady, delicious and crisp. This type of chicken is proved to be good for health, especially your heart. Sapa black chicken is grilled with honey and eaten with the peppermint leaves dipped with salt in a mixture with pepper and lemon.

## **VII. What to buy in Sapa**

Whatever we go anywhere in the world, we always buy a gift which is specialty of that place for friends and relatives. [Shopping in Sapa](#) is one of the most interesting activities that draw tourist to [visit Sapa](#). So what Sapa has gift that you can buy as a gift for loved one?

#### **Brocade**

Being a mountainous area with many ethnic tribes live together, Sapa is the place that expresses cultural features most fully. Once visiting Sapa, you can easily see a lot of ethnic minorities in their colorful brocade cloths. More interestingly, you can buy these brocade cloths which are made by the local minority people.



The brocades are sold in markets, souvenir shops or even from the streets. The ethnic women can take two weeks when sewing a one-span piece of brocade. More complex, it takes up to months to completing one traditional brocade dress. Each brocade clothes represent local girls' sewing skills and all women must know weaving, embroidering and sewing clothing for their whole of family. You may be amazed because the girls embroider their wedding dress by themselves. Sapa brocades are famous for the unique material and gorgeous embroidery patterns because Sapa ethnic women attach much importance to clothes and costumes. Mass-produced brocades and handmade ones are two kinds of brocades available in the market. It is rather easy to realize it: Mass-produced brocade has brighter color and more designs than the handmade one which is dark with many harmonious patterns and containing the high traditional value. Along with brocade clothes, you can buy many other brocade products like bowler hats, scarves, shoulder bags, purses or bracelets with colorful motifs. Especially, there is one thing which visitors should buy in the brocade stalls is blanket cover, pillow cover or bed cover. Using it in your bedroom you can see it cozy, beautiful and luxurious.

Along with brocades, you can buy other local handicraft, souvenirs or silver jewelry such as necklaces, earrings, rings, chain which all ethnic women wear. Everything is beautiful and meaningful souvenirs.

### Local fruits

With temperature climate, Sapa has been known as a land of fruits, especially peach. In Sapa, peach has many different kinds such as H'mong peach, France peach and Van Nam peach but "Ro peach" or "mountainous peach" are very popular for the locals and tourists. Peach is not only planted in the garden of the locals but also grow on mountain sides and forests. Sapa's peach is as large as a tea cup, covered by a thin layer of white powder. Enjoying a Sapa peach, you can taste both sour and sweet. People often harvest peaches on May and June and put it a bamboo baskets that help avoiding bruised. Peach is a mountainous gift for visitors who come to Sapa in the summer.



Sapa is very famous for fresh vegetables, especially chayote which has good reputation all over the country. Going anywhere in this "city in fog", you can catch the green chayote. Due to cold climate and suitable soil, chayote is grown all around the year and has good quality. Boiled chayote and fried chayote vegetables will make you feel the flavor of Sapa in the dishes. Chayote is also considered a Sapa specialty which visitors can't miss when coming to Sapa.

Coming to Sapa in any season, you are invited to buy dried mushroom which is the specialty of Sapa's mountain. Sapa dried mushrooms have unique flavor and excellent quality.

### **Vietnamese medicinal herbs**

The provinces in the northern in Vietnam have been known as the world of precious medicinal herbs. The ethnic minorities live on the mountain and they are very good at medicine. Their life is closely related to forests and their traditional medicament is made up of medicinal herbs for healthcare. These medicinal herbs can be fresh or dried but it is still very useful. If you have chance go to Sapa, you will find that medicinal herbs are sold in the markets or the villages of the ethnic minorities. It can be sold separately or packed together for treating many different diseases. In addition, raw honey is also among one of the most favorite specialty in Sapa. Most of visitors coming to Sapa, buy raw honey as a precious gift for their family and friends.



#### **Tips:**

- Bargaining with the sellers if you intend to buy a brocade product
- Checking the fruits and vegetables carefully before you pack
- Going with the local friend or guide to choose the right herbs and at reasonable price.

## VIII. Useful tips for a Sapa trekking tour

Taking part in a **trekking tour**, tourists have to go on foot and prepare essential items by themselves. Because destinations especially in Sapa are usually on mountains or in forests, it does not appear in any map. It is also the reason why a trekking tour will give participants the feeling of conquest. Another advantage of a trekking tour is the low cost. However, it requires tourists to prepare carefully about itinerary, luggage and food. Following are some useful tips you will need for a **trekking tour in Sapa** for sure.

### 1. Necessary luggage

- Warm clothing, wading boots, sport shoes and raincoats. Tourists are suggested to wear waterproof clothes or clothes to be quickly dried. If not, it is hard to move.
- Shoes and socks of anti-leech types are essential especially if tourists go into the forest. Clothes should have many pockets. Backpacks should be made of waterproof canvas not to be easily torn. Backpacks should have belts to be pressed to the waist.
- The medicines of cold, fever, diarrhea, antibiotic, bandages, vitamin and Snicker candy (a kind of candy providing energy) are indispensable. Some cosmetics for skin care are also necessary.
- If tourists intend to rest in local villages that provide home-stay service then eating is no longer a problem. However, in case that you want to spend nights in forest or food of local people are not your appetite, it is suggested to bring some fast foods like bread, canned meat, packaged noodles and nutritious biscuits.

### 2. Notices:

- A normal person is able to walk from 12 km to 15 km per day. Based on that figure, tourists should research the terrain map to make a suitable plan. Visitors also should calculate the distance so that it is appropriate for health and against the dangerous situations.
- It is recommended to keep track of weather forecast to get contingency plans ready. Referral should be prepared if your destinations are the borders.
- A trekking tour is a genre of tour on which visitors should go with a group and have a tour guide. A tour guide has the ability to keep you from getting lost. A team will help each member in case of an incident. Going alone is never advised especially when crossing a stream or a chasm
- When pausing for a little while, you should make use of your backpack as a backrest rather than taking it off.
- There are many local villages in Sapa providing home-stay service so tourists can choose any of that to be an overnight stop. Otherwise tourists' camps should be set near a village rather than in the forest. Local people are happy to help you cooking or buying ingredients for dinner.
- When visiting a village, tourists should get acquainted and talk to local people. It is an opportunity to explore the unique culture of local people and understand the characteristics of upcoming ways.
- A trekking tour is truly a worth-trying **experience in Sapa**. It will help visitors explore the wildest features of Sapa in a whole new way. It is the way that you will never forget.