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Phong Nha-Kẻ Bàng National Park, located in the Quang Binh province of central Vietnam, is home to many colorful caving adventures. The park is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site made up.

It has several ancient monuments, weathered colonial buildings and many modern hotels and office blocks. A combination of old and new, Hanoi is a city that has weathered through the long centuries with style, grace and pride. The younger generation are very friendly and the city has a definite cosmopolitan feel to it. Hanoi-the Capital of Vietnam today is very different to what it was 10 years ago. Hanoi is situated in a region steeped with historical sites and beautiful landscapes. The city itself is a treasure-chest of places to visit. Advance planning may be necessary to see everything but with so many sites, you may need to stay a little longer. Spring and autumn is the best time to visit Hanoi since the temperature is warm but not too hot nor too cold. From May to November it is incredibly hot and humid. You shower and dry off only to be sweaty again. From November to February Hanoi can be very chilly, with everyone wrapping up in coats and gloves. After Emperor Le Thai To 33 had successfully defended his country against the Ming Chinese army, he sailed on the lake. A golden turtle suddenly appeared and took back the charmed sword that had secured the Vietnamese victory, restoring the sword back to its original home. Like the sword Excalibur from the British Arthurian legends, this sword represents divine intervention in times of national crisis. The Tortoise Tower may be dilapidated but it sits majestically on an island in the midst of the lake. Large turtles actually inhabit the lake and are said to be a variety of Asian softshell tortoise. When the water levels fell dramatically in turtles were seen quite often. There is a park which surrounds the lake. On most mornings joggers run around the lake and people practicing tai chi Chinese shadow boxing. Today it is one of the most beautiful things to see in Hanoi. The temple is built on the earlier foundations of the Khanh Thuy Palace. The palace was established in but burnt down some years afterwards. It was constructed in A room to the side of the temple contains a preserved turtle and a collection of photographs of the creatures which call the lake their home. The pagoda is simply stunning. Being shrouded by trees and surrounded by water, it makes for a beautiful photographic backdrop. The Old City today stretches from the north but it used to lay to the east of the citadel. It used to have a dark reputation, disease-ridden and full of squalor. Today, however, it is one of the most charming areas of Hanoi. Each of the narrow streets are named after the product it used to sell or continues to sell , such as Silk Street, Paper Street, Basket Street etc. This makes it an extremely colourful and atmospheric area. Not only this, but the streets were usually inhabited by people from a different area of the country or from the same village. They lived, worked and worshipped together. There are parts of these old traditions still in practice today. It stands in its own little square to the west of Hoan Kiem Lake. It was built between and and is important as it was one of the first colonial buildings in Hanoi to be finished. There are still some original stained-glass windows here. Stone Lady Pagoda Located around yards in front of St. Nestled inside a narrow alley, the pagoda was built in and known as Sung Khanh Pagoda. It needed rebuilding in the 15th century. A stone statue of a woman was found inside the pagoda and was worshipped. In the walls needed rebuilding once again; the foundations were dug even deeper and the stone statue found once more. Since then the walls have not needed to be rebuilt again. Although the pagoda is primarily a place for Buddhist worship, it is clear that it has had a mixed spiritual history. Opera House Opera-House-the-capital-of-vietnam The Opera House was built in by Francois Lagisquet and considered one of the finest French colonial buildings in the city. Around 35, bamboo piles were used to make a strong foundation for the building in the mud of the Red River. The exterior of the building is breathtaking with shutters, little balconies and griffins decorating it. Inside the Opera House is even more spectacular, reminiscent of the French period. The rooms are set up in chronological order starting on the first floor. The American involvement in Vietnam is just another chapter in a long history of struggles against outside invaders. The rooms to the end of the galleries highlight peace, prosperity and reunification. This was an illustrious archaeological and ethnological research institute established by Ernest Hebrard. This museum showcases artefacts ranging from all periods of Vietnamese history from the Neolithic to the 20th century. Galleries are laid out in chronological order. Some of the

artefacts are sadly reproductions but are still incredible to behold. Furthermore, the last prisoners were not released until 1975. In 1999, a Singapore-Vietnamese joint venture purchased the prison and today it is a hotel and shopping centre complex. However, the deal was part of the prison had to be used as a museum. Visitors are shown around the prison. Their conditions under colonial rule are highlighted. The structure you see today was built during the French colonial period. The pagoda looks somewhat Chinese from the exterior. Inside, there is a wealth of stone statues of the past, present and future Buddhas. At the rear of the pagoda there is a room where Buddhist students listen to lectures. Visitors should dress conservatively, walk sombrely and do not talk. The mausoleum was constructed between 1902 and 1910. It took Dr Sergei Debrov a year in a cave to preserve his body. It was the place where the Vietnamese Declaration of Independence was read by Ho Chi Minh on 2nd September 1945. The Palace was built during the French colonial period. It was built for the Governors-General of French Indochina. Ho Chi Minh refused to live in the palace and instead lived in the house of an electrician on the same compound. Behind the palace is the bomb shelter and the hut where he died in 1969. It is a remarkable structure, one of the few that has survived from the first foundations of the city. The French destroyed it in 1954 when withdrawing from Vietnam. It has since been rebuilt. The pagoda was originally built according to a passionate dream the emperor had. He dreamed that the goddess Quan Am the equivalent to the Chinese goddess of mercy Guanyin was sitting on a lotus. She held a young boy that she handed to the emperor. His counsellors interpreted the dream and the emperor had this lily-shaped temple in the midst of a water-lily pond. Not long afterwards, his wife gave birth to a son. The pagoda is supported by a single concrete pillar. A brick and stone staircase runs up one side. Dragons run along the graceful up-turned tiled roof. This beautiful building is one of the most elegant and charming monuments in Vietnam and one of Hanoi points of interest as well. There are traditional Vietnamese music performances held here. Confucianism had a huge following in Vietnam. It is said that the temple was modelled on a temple in Shantung in China where Confucius was born. Confucianism replaced Buddhism and this temple became the intellectual and spiritual centre. A cult of literature and education established itself throughout the city. Visitors enter the southern end of the compound. The Van Mieu Gate is embellished with dragons dating from the 15th century. This was built in according to the principles of ying-yang and dedicated to the Constellation of Literature. Beyond this lies the Courtyard of the Stelae. The names of the 1,199 successful examination scholars are recorded on the stelae. Two buildings flank either side, dating to 1782 and 1783. They have been destroyed in 1954. The friezes contain depictions of dragons, phoenixes, lotus flowers, clouds, flowers and yin-yang symbols. These are meant to reflect the hierarchal order of society as stated by the gods. An altar sits inside, upon which sits a statue of Confucius and his disciples. Another interesting fact is that the Dai Thanh Sanctuary Great Success Sanctuary connects this building and contains another statue of the great sage.

2: Exploring Hanoi the Capital of Vietnam - Food and Travel Vietnam

Fodor's Exploring Vietnam by Fodor's Travel Publications, Inc Staff Fodor's Travel Publicatio Fodor's Exploring Guides are the most up-to-date, full-color guidebooks available. Covering destinations around the world, these guides are loaded with photos, essays on culture and history, descriptions of sights, and practical information.

Vietnam --Geared toward the long-term visitor, this guide is invaluable for any traveller who wants to learn about the culture, etiquette, religious beliefs and everyday customs of this often misunderstood nation. From food and language to folklore and festivals, this good-hearted guide will make you feel right at home. Wink Dulles tells you how to plan your trip and get around, and leads you to all the sights and outdoor adventure opportunities. He also includes a wide array of hotel, restaurant and shopping recommendations in all price ranges. Driving itineraries, walking tours, numerous maps and a full-color format set these guides apart. Perfect for a short trip or quick preparation before a guided tour. It guides you to all the sights, both on and off the beaten path and has lots of good maps. He provides comprehensive sightseeing information and practical tips on everything from red tape, transportation and accommodations to outdoor activities such as trekking and diving. She covers all the sights and tips on accommodations, nearby excursions, and transportation around the region. Site plans, maps and beautiful color photographs by eminent photographer Michael Freeman complete this lovely package. Hotel and restaurant recommendations concentrate on the budget to moderate range, and Buckley emphasizes nature and outdoor activities throughout the three countries. Good historical and cultural background, detailed maps and solid research make this guide a good choice for any independent traveller.

Lonely Planet Lao Phrasebook Background Reading Highway to a War --Michael Langford is an Australian photographer who disappears while covering the war in Vietnam and Cambodia, after losing the impartiality so essential to a journalist. His story is told by his friend Raymond, who travels to the war-torn region to find out what happened and hopefully bring Michael home.

Motorbiking Down the Ho Chi Minh Trail --Christopher Hunt is a young American man with little or no recollection of the Vietnam War who sets out to travel by motorbike the entire length of the famous supply route from northernmost Vietnam all the way south. Needless to say, he runs into numerous obstacles and adventures along the way. Hunt is often surprisingly misinformed about Vietnamese history, but that is the whole reason for the trip--to learn firsthand about the war and to uncover the "real" Vietnam. These twenty short stories, all by contemporary Vietnamese writers living in Vietnam and abroad, take the reader from traditional life in the mountainous jungles of the North to the hip youth scene in Saigon, from Buddhist monasteries to family life after the war.

George Condominas lived in the village of Sar Luk in , and in journal form chronicled the lives and communal customs of its inhabitants. In this beautifully written and compelling story, Condominas brings us close to a way of life that was shortly to disappear as a result of the Vietnam War.

3: Fodors Travel Guide – Plan Your Trip Online

Fodor's Exploring Vietnam gives you great tips on dining and lodging for all budgets as well as tips on basics such as getting there and getting around and when to go and what to pack. Read more Product details.

Learnt a bit about the area Ate fruit We left the Mekong Delta area at about 5pm and were back at our hotel for 7pm. It absolutely chucked it down – fun to watch from the safety of our restaurant. The food was yum, and I would definitely recommend. Here we had an ice cream for dessert and got some water for the journey from the shop. At 11pm the train left the station for Nha Trang. Thankfully, or I may have cried, they let us check in at 6am. We had a shower and a sleep before a delicious hotel breakfast which was included in the price at 9am. It was a simple room, but suited us and the view from the breakfast room was incredible. I had to break at a coffee shop. One hour later and I was able to continue the journey, just. We walked over the bridge taking photos, and then went up to the pagoda which cost 12, dong to get in 40p. We spent just over an hour there, it was so, so hot. Pretty cool to look around though and the temples were, odd. We then made our way down and had lunch at one of the river-side restaurants. We walked for about an hour trying to find the market. Eventually we did but were too hot to face the stalls so grabbed a beer and sat and watched the goings on for an hour or so. We popped into the mall there with the aim of getting some cheap earphones: It was like shopping at Harrods, not sure how it can sustain itself, but it must do somehow. We then went for a delicious dinner at Galangal. It was next to a cool art gallery, which was what caught our eye originally. The food was incredible. I wish I could taste it now. We walked after dinner and stumbled across the Tarantino bar – every single thing in it was based around Tarantino, from the cocktail menu, to the bar names to the films showing on the wall. We drank cocktails and played pool for two hours, then left. Funky Monkey Snorkelling Tour We were up early to get our 8: We were taken to an aquarium and two different spots to snorkel and jump off the boat. We had a delicious lunch and sang some karaoke. Saw maybe one fish, but had a great time making friends with the rest of the people on the boat and sunning ourselves on the deck. The staff were awesome. They dropped us back at around 5pm. It was all burger joints, pizzas or pubs. We wanted something more authentic and ended up at a BBQ grill place where they cook the food in front of you. It was cheap, but no taste and we had a woman with us cooking at the table the whole time, which was awkward when we just wanted to chat. The PR girl ended up whacking my boyfriend one in the arm and accusing him of pinching her bum. It turned out it was her friend, but we were done there. We went home to dream about owning a boat and riding the ocean waves, not being falsely accused and assaulted in a skanky bar in Nha Trang. Nha Trang Egg Baths We slept until about 11am. I salivate when I think about it now. Anyway, moving on, this post is getting wordy. We went for a coffee and a smoothie at the Sailing Club on the seafront. Awesome, delicious, and they had some great toilets, if you need. Click the link to find out more. Back in Nha Trang and we decided to go to the Galangang restaurant we went to on the first night again, it was that good. We ordered loads and sat there and scoffed it with big smiles on our faces. I randomly decided to just check our train tickets again and realised the train left in an hour, not three, oops. We scoffed up and went back to pick up our bags. We took a taxi to Nha Trang Train Station, seeing as we were running a bit late. I popped to the shop before we left then and bought two more for a fraction of the price. If you want to know more check out my trains in Vietnam post. We stayed at the Huy Hoang Garden Hotel, which was by far the worst of the trip. Staff were rude, beds were hard and the room was full of bugs. Absolutely full of them. After a little chill out we ventured down to Hoi An to see what was going on. Hoi An is awesome and needs to be on any Vietnam itinerary, no matter how long you go for. We walked by all the tailor shops, a little intimidated, and went for a coffee along the river. The coffee in Vietnam is absolutely delicious. We just hung out for the day in Hoi An, lazily walking along the river and still pretty tired from the train journey. We ate more delicious Vietnamese food, including the White Rose that Hoi An is famous for, and more spring rolls. More on that disturbing story later. The river in Hoi An is absolutely incredibly by night and a definite must. Today was another day of wandering around. We went on an epic walk as far as we dared and were rewarded with some great views out to sea. It was also good to see what Hoi An was really like beyond all the buzz around the river and the market. We finally got

stuck into the shopping and got quite carried away with three dresses, three necklaces, a tie, a top, a bag and two pairs of shoes between us, all made bespoke and for great prices. Other attractions in Hoi An you could see: Collect shopping and go to Hanoi We collected up our shopping and had a final look around Hoi An before getting a taxi to the airport direct from our hotel. Ah well, at least we go there a bit quicker. Ah well, cheeseburger it is then. Our Jetstar flight left at 3: There were cheaper planes but they were too early. The plane was comfy and easy, just another low cost airline. It felt quite luxurious after all the train journeys. We arrived in Hanoi and got another taxi. We passed some pretty dodgy places and were both getting worried, but it all turned out ok in the end. It was very odd. We went on the search for some food and were directed to the backpacker district near the Old Quarter. We went in the first place we saw "72 Ma May Restaurant" and were led upstairs to what luckily for us turned out to be our own private balcony overlooking the street. We were soon joined by two backpackers who we ended up having a really good night with, lots of chat and fun and I was sad when they left. You have to find this restaurant if you visit Hanoi. Then we went and had a few drinks in the are and ended up seeing one of the weirdest things in Hanoi. Sightseeing in Hanoi Lots of walking today " we must have done a few miles around the city.

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