



VIETNAM

We travel with PHOTO JOURNALIST **LIZ BARRRY** to this beautiful country



Vietnam bears a turbulent history, but its people offer a great warmth and hospitality to all who visit. A country of contrasts, it is a blend of ancient and modern sights.



Main photo top left: Halong Bay, Northeast Vietnam with 3000 islands and inlets of Limestone Carsts. Small fishing boats move silently through the mist



Beautiful and Peaceful

Tracks through the rice terraces lead to the villages, wooden houses sit on the valley floor. The landscape is



Photo above: Village with terraces - Sapa

An Agricultural Lifestyle

In the countryside life still revolves around the cycle of the rice crop, from the rice terraces of the north inhabited by the hill tribe communities, to water villages and markets of the south and the food basket of the Mekong Delta, through to the bustling city of Saigon and the old merchant town of Hoi An. Sapa lies in a beautiful valley close to the Chinese border; the area is frequently shrouded in mist which only adds to the atmosphere of the region. It is home to hill tribe communities including the H'mong and Dao people, the largest ethnic groups in the region. An estimated 10% of Vietnam's total population live in the high country; they share a rural agricultural lifestyle.



Market Day

Binh Lu is a small town where many ethnic tribes come to the Saturday market. To get there takes several hours by jeep. photos above left: Portrait of lady in Binh Lu Market, above right: baby on mother's back in Binh Lu Market The Black H'mong tribe from the village of Lao Chai; Their linen clothes are dyed from the indigo plant which grows in the area. In the village we saw a large wooden barrel full of blue indigo water with garments soaking.



beautiful and peaceful; the surrounding mountains rise up to the clouds. On the steps of the village school a small girl stands forlorn. The classrooms behind have a few tables, posters and alphabet letters along the wall and two teachers who have travelled from another province.

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Two girls from the colourful Flower H'mong Tribe in their village in the mountain region of Sapa

Red Zao of Ta Phin

The Dao (or Zao) are famous for their dress. The women's clothes show elaborate weaving with silver coloured beads and coins, (the wealth of a woman is said to be in the weight of the coins she carries). The embroidery skills are passed down from each generation.



River Town

Hoi Ann is a picturesque river town in Central Vietnam. Coffee and noodle stalls open early as the water front market is in full swing.

Fish are being hauled up from boats covered in ice, vegetables of all colours and shapes sit on the roadside along with a basket of fluffy yellow chicks. Crowds move in every direction, bicycles are laden with herbs and salads of all descriptions. Sampans move out in the channel, and along the river bank, people are unloading the boats like a colony of ants.

The Mekong Delta is the southernmost region of Vietnam. It is known as Vietnam's 'bread basket' as the Delta is known for its wealth.

Cae Ring, the largest floating market in the Mekong Delta is a busy market where large junks collect all sorts of crops brought to them by the small farmers aboard sampans piled high with papayas, durian fruit, onions and melons. High above the large boats hang strings of vegetables or bunches of spring onions showing what they are in the market to buy.



Photos above: Floating Market - Mekong



Photos above: The fading colours of an ancient city, Hoi An. Lanterns, patterned china dishes and chillies, the colours and textures of Vietnam.

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Saigon

Urban Jungle

- ◀ In Saigon, (Ho Chi Minh City) the streets are buzzing and to cross the road you have to brave motorcycle mayhem. As you walk vehicles drive around you and the air vibrates with the sound of blasting horns. Alternatively you can take a Cyclo-rickshaw ride and encounter the traffic head on perched precariously on a seat behind the driver-- or hire a bicycle, the preferred mode of transport especially in the rural areas.



Cyclo driver