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# A JOURNEY ACROSS VIETNAM

Where can I find my hometown on the map of Vietnam?

What makes the place where I was born and raised so special?

You know, our country is very beautiful. From the white frothy waterfalls in the Northwest to the alluvial streams of Cuu Long River in the Southwest, from the vast forests home to many rare creatures to the offshore islands where our red flag with yellow star flies on top of the oil rigs, from the ancient lands with layers of history to the modern cities full of life... all of these come together on this beautiful S-shaped stretch of land, as if a spectacular treasure created, preserved and defended by our ancestors over thousands of years has now been passed onto us. Travelling through the country from north to south, from high up in the mountains down to the sea, is also a journey for discovering the distinctive and diverse cultures of the 54 ethnicities.

Regardless of where you are on this S-shaped stretch of land, every road you take, every dish you eat, every work of architecture you see, all bear with them the mark of history, the essence of culture drawn from many generations. The 63 provinces all have their own geographical properties, and thus the terrain, the ethnic makeup and the cultural identity also carry their own signature imprints. All of these elements, together, create a unique landscape, differing yet harmonious, that brings about the dazzling beauty of an embroidered piece of tapestry that is called Vietnam.

Our goal here is to bring forth a reader-friendly book that covers the geography, history, cultures, and people, suitable to all ages. We aim to provide school students a specific and vivid picture of each region, each province on the map of Vietnam. In every piece of information, illustration, and color palette, lies the love of the proud descendants of our home country. PICTURE ATLAS OF VIETNAM - THE LAND OF CHARM, the journey to discover 63 provinces, has started from a place of such aspiration.

Despite our efforts, this publication is still the work of a small group, with some specific choices being made, and thus may not objectively reflect the features of each province. We welcome any suggestions from the readers in order to further refine the contents of the book.

Now, the train travelling across this S-shaped land is about to depart. Please get aboard and ready for the most enjoyable trip to discover the wonderful country of Vietnam. Let's go!

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# NORTHERN MIDLANDS AND MOUNTAINOUS REGION



Total area: 10,137,828 hectares  
Population: 14,063,500



# DISCOVERING THE CULTURE OF THE NORTHERN MIDLANDS AND MOUNTAINOUS REGION

Now, our journey will begin in the North and travel southward. Let's first visit the Northern Midlands and Mountainous Region!

This is the Northern territory of Vietnam, the largest amongst the regions, taking up over 30% of the total area in the country. However, due to the mountainous terrain and difficult traffic conditions, the population density here is sparse. Sharing borders with China and Laos, this area is also home to the tallest peaks in our country, such as Fansipan – the tallest in all of Indochina. There are up to twenty different ethnicities living together in this region, most of them being Thai, Muong, Dao, H'Mong, and others in the Northwest; Tay, Nung, Dao, Mong, San Chay in the Northeast, all intermingle with the Kinh people commonly found in most places.

Highlights of the region include:

- Terraces: paddy fields grown on slopes, by converting the land into flat terraces. The people here use a special waterworks system that utilizes the slope to lead water from higher grounds into the fields.
- The cuisine is unique and diverse. Some of the most noteworthy are *thang co* stew, kitchen-smoked buffalo jerky, *cap nach* pork (Sa Pa black pigs), etc. You should definitely try these when you get here!
- In this region, you can also enjoy the special cultural activities of the highland people, such as bamboo dance, *xoe* dance, gourd lute playing, and highland fair.

## Bac Ha fair

This highland fair is held every Sunday and acts as a hub for highland folks to meet, sell, buy, exchange, and engage in various other cultural activities.



# HA GIANG

Ha Giang is the northernmost province of Vietnam. The province is very famous for the buckwheat flower festival. The flowers bloom around the end of October and the beginning of November every year.

Terrain: high mountains.

Climate: tropical monsoon, maybe very cold in winter (2°C) and very hot in summer (40°C).

Notable produce: *Shan tuyet* green tea, mint honey, *ngoc cau* mushroom.

Local ethnicities: H'Mong, Tay, Dao, Kinh, Nung.

-  **Area: 7,929.48 km<sup>2</sup>**
-  **Population: 870,200**
-  **Provincial capital: Ha Giang City**



## DONG VAN KARST PLATEAU GEOPARK

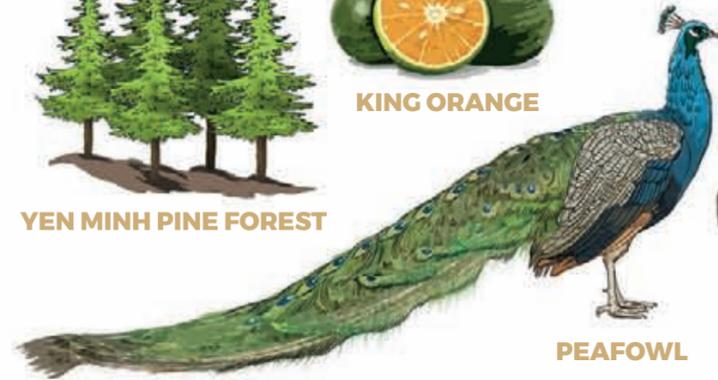
The geopark is recognized by UNESCO as a member of the Global Geoparks Network in 2010.



## YEN MINH PINE FOREST



## KING ORANGE



## PEAFOWL



## BUCKWHEAT FLOWER MEADOWS

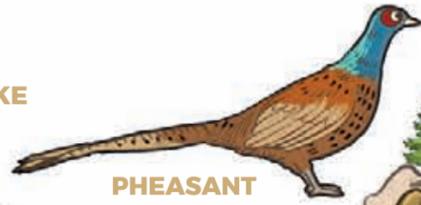
This special flower in Ha Giang has light pink petals and blooms during the final months of the year.



## PYTHON



## SNAKE



## PHEASANT



## PANGOLIN



## PLUM



## PEAR



## SWEET POTATO



## CORN



## BEAN



## TAY CON LINH PEAK

2,431 meters high, the peak is nicknamed "the roof of the Northeast".

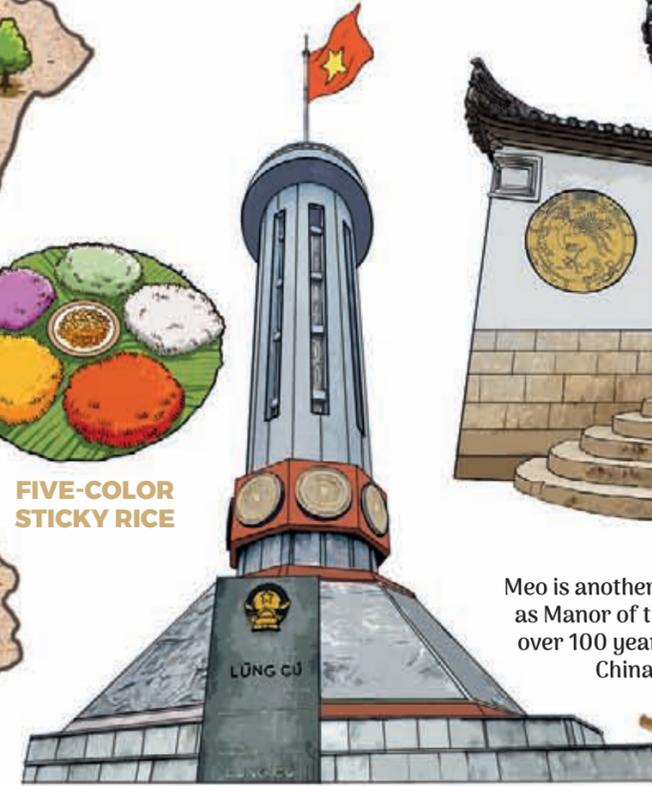


## MA PI LENG PASS

This is a perilous pass stretching 20 km long. Its name means "horse's nose bridge" in the language of the H'Mong.



## FIVE-COLOR STICKY RICE



## LUNG CU FLAGPOLE



## MANOR OF MEO KING

Meo is another name for the H'Mong people. Also known as Manor of the Vuong clan, this is a National Heritage over 100 years old with architectural influences from China, France, and the H'Mong people.



## HONEYBEE



## TEA LEAF



## BAMBOO STICKY RICE



## GRILLED MOSS



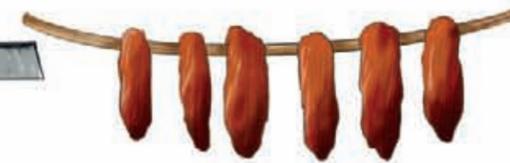
## TAY ETHNIC GROUP



## NUNG ETHNIC GROUP



## H'MONG ETHNIC GROUP



## KITCHEN-SMOKED BUFFALO JERKY



## THANG CO STEW

An original dish of the H'Mong people.