

Tam Coc Caves and Hoa Lu Temple in Vietnam.

Many [Hanoi hotels](#) offer Vietnam Day trip for going out to Tam Coc and for a sampan ride in the Vietnamese countryside and a tour of Hoa Lu (or Hua Lu).

Tam Coc is around 95kms south of Hanoi in Vietnam and the cost should be around USD 25 to 30 per person. This includes stopping off at Hoa Lu to look at the temples for a while plus a guide, transport, entrance fees, luncheon and the Sampan boat trip itself at Tam Coc.

It is also possible to cycle from Hoa Lu to Tam Coc which cost USD 5 for bike hire - but seeing the dusty and somewhat rutted state of the road - let alone the extreme heat - the majority of people will probably just opt to be taken there on the coach.

Visiting Hoa Lu Temples in Vietnam - with photos.

The first stop which is usually part of this day trip is to the former royal capital of Vietnam at Hoa Lu - this was built in 968 by Emperor Tien Hoang De, who was the founder of the Dinh Dynasty (968 to 980). There are two temples to visit at Hoa Lu - the first temple was restored in the 17th century and dedicated to the Emperor and still stands. Inside there is a statue of him and of his three sons. The second royal temple is dedicated to Le Dai Hanh who was founder of the early Le Dynasty which was from 980 to 1009. The Le Dynasty was credited with replacing Chinese currency with Vietnamese coinage. Originally the site contained a massive palace and citadel but little remains of it now - the ruins simply give an insight into what it once must have been like.

Taking a Tam Coc Sampan Ride between limestone hills and under low caves - Vietnam.

Tam Coc (or three caves) is an excellent trip to take - sampan's punted by local village women make the two hour journey along the Ngo Dong River taking you through paddyfields. The rounded limestone hills look as if they are coming out of the fields as they rise dramatically and very scenically all around. There are many boats making the trip and if you are really lucky, you can have a go at rowing the sampan yourself. The local women make it look fairly easy but actually it's surprisingly difficult and also quite hard work. The trip takes you through three very low tunnel caves.

Hang Cu, Hang Giua and Hang Cui before reaching Tam Coc. There is not actually much to see at Tam Coc itself - just lots of boats with women trying to sell drinks at quite expensive rates. The fairly minor scam is that they insist you buy a drink for your boatwomen however the drinks are never opened and are handed back later for reselling - and money gained is shared. You could upset them if you wish by opening the drinks you buy or just let them have their freebie.

An annoying thing though was at the end of the trip when they may quite strongly demand (seemingly with the complicity of your guide - who probably gets his share later...) to be given an excessive tip of at least USD5. USD1 is actually quite sufficient. Anyway it is annoying to have a tip demanded rather than have the opportunity to voluntarily offer one - which most people would of course probably do. However overall this was a really good scenic day out from Hanoi and well worth going on.

Source: [Get Vietnam Visa](#)