

# PHONG NHA-KE BANG NATIONAL PARK

A COMPLETE GUIDE

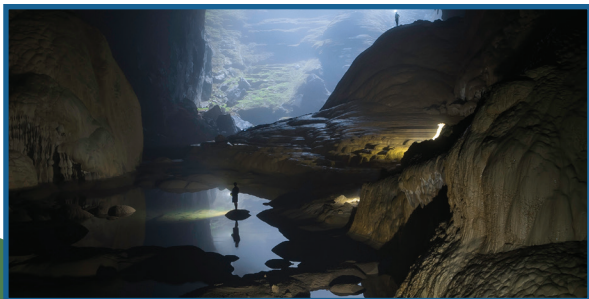


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## How To Make the Most of Your Visit to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park

Known for containing Hang Son Doong, the largest cave on the planet, Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park offers adventurous travelers a variety of spectacular sights, exciting adventures, set within the stunning beauty of carefully preserved wilderness.

While guided tours through the interior of Hang Son Doong are limited, Phong Nha-Ke Bang serves up an endless variety of activities suited for every kind of travelling style — from timid to bold. Let's explore just a few of the countless ways you can spend a day — or days — at this jewel of a park.



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## Things to Do in the Park

You don't have to be limited by budget or time during your stay at Phong Nha as activities abound for all budgets, fitness levels, and interests in this expansive parkland. From hiking and biking to more strenuous trekking, caving, kayaking, and even ziplining — there's something for every traveler in your group.

Since the park is so expansive, planning the details of your trip is critical. To help, we've provided a list of some of the most popular things to do in Phong Nha so you can make the most of the time you have.

## Lodging in the Park

The first order of business is to decide where you want to make your home base during your time in the park. Having comfortable accommodations is critical, particularly since you're bound to be very active during your time in Phong Nha.



### BRIGHT / LIVELY / HOSTEL

If you're the kind of traveler that likes the bright, lively atmosphere of a hostel, then Easy Tiger Hostel is a perfect choice. It's inexpensive, clean, and comfortable and you'll be able to trade tips and tricks with your fellow travelers after touring the sites. Like most hostels, Easy Tiger features dorm-like sleeping areas, but they also feature a swimming pool, restaurant, bar, and even live music in the evening.



### RELAXED / POOL / PRIVATE

For a more relaxed stay, choose the Phong Nha Farmstay, and watch the sun rise over the lush green foliage of rice paddies. The Farmstay provides free bicycles and features a restaurant that offers a variety of authentic dishes, as well as an outdoor swimming pool and bar for relaxing after a long day of fun at the park.

## Hiking and Biking in Phong Nha

As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, Phong Nha is a pristine park filled with meandering trails that take the avid hiker or biker along back roads, through villages, and along gently flowing rivers of azure blue.

Treks are available through dense jungle on winding paths of the Bong Lai Valley surrounded by lush greenery and a variety of fascinating wildlife, with guides that ensure the conservation of the land is respected so it will be enjoyed for generations to come.

You can take a short hike — or a several-day-long trek — depending on your time constraints and physical limitations. The details are entirely up to you!



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## Immersing Yourself in History

The local region has an exciting wartime history that's easily accessible to tourists. You can travel back in time in a Soviet-era motorbike or restored U.S. Army jeep that will take you along parts of the Ho Chi Minh Trail, an important byway during the Vietnamese War.

You can also visit Hang Tam Co, a cave which now stands as a poignant memorial to the Vietnamese soldiers who died inside after a bombing raid destroyed — and sealed — the cave's entrance.

## Get Up Close with Wildlife

If you want a chance to learn about the local flora and fauna and see some species native to Vietnam up close, then a visit to the Phong Nha Wildlife Rescue Center is a must-do. As the only rescue center in central Vietnam, this organization helps provide a safe haven for rescued animals and a way to help repopulate the local areas with native species.

Visiting the Center will give you a personal experience with how nature conservancy is carefully being conducted in this wild and beautiful park.

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## Ziplining - and Caving - with a Twist

Phong Nha is known for its spectacular series of caves, beginning with one of the most popular, Hang Toi (Dark Cave). Access to this pitch-black cavern is granted to thrill-seeking adventurers by an adrenaline-fueled ride on a zipline high above the tree-lined river. Visitors then participate in a short, but chilly swim into the cave itself.

The further you venture into the cavern, the dark it becomes until the narrow, mud-soaked passageways give way to the cool waters of a pristine underground lake, Thuy Tien.

When you're done exploring inside, a slow, leisurely kayak paddle through unspoiled scenery takes you back to the main jetty where you can continue your adventures in Phong Nha.



# Phong Nha Cave Tours

It wouldn't be a visit to Phong Nha without a tour of one of the many exciting and spectacular caves. With the park spanning more than 3,000 kilometers, there are caves of all shapes and sizes for travelers of all abilities.

There are many Phong Nha cave tours available for all of the caves in the park so it's easy to find one that will fit your interests, needs, and physical abilities. Here is a short run-down of some of the most popular — and interesting — caves in Phong Nha-ke Bang National Park.



## SON DOONG CAVE

Song Doong is the **largest cave on the planet**, with an entire rainforest of 100-foot-tall trees inside that are filled with colorful birds, cheeky monkeys, and even flying foxes.

It's one of the most expensive caves to tour, but definitely worth the spend. Just make sure you budget in advance.



## THIEN DUONG (PARADISE CAVE)

With limestone stalagmites and stalactite formations that rival the architecture any cathedral, Thien Duong cave allows visitors to drive right to the cave entrance, making it **very accessible**. The interior lighting is moody and well done, giving the cavern an intimate feel.

The cave does, however, get very busy during certain periods, so you'll want to plan enough time in your day in case of long lines.



## PHONG NHA CAVE

This gorgeous cavern is the namesake of the park. Home to **fourteen grottoes and the longest underground river on the planet**, it is a must-see for any visitor to the park.

It is also one of the most serene caving experiences in Phong Nha. Since you can float gently through the entire cave on a boat, the Phong Nha Cave is accessible to nearly everyone, regardless of physical fitness.



## HANG EN CAVE

Boasting the title of the **third-largest cave in the world**, the Hang En is a boon to photographers of all skill levels. Golden shafts of light pierce the gloom of the cavern to sparkle on a sandy beach framing crystal-clear turquoise waters of an underground pool — a scene that has been the setting for several movies and a lure to beauty-seekers of all ages.

## TU LAN CAVES

This cave system is not for the spur-of-the-moment traveler. With miles of walking — and some swimming, too — this system gives tourists a sense of adventure along with a good workout! There are a number of caves in this system, each with a special attraction — from incredible rock formations to pure, cold underground waters and pools to spectacular underground waterfalls — Tu Lan has something for everyone.

It may take several trips to see the full extent of all the caves in the system, so plan accordingly.



## HANG VA CAVE

For the most intrepid — and fit — of adventurers, the Hang Va cave is a dream come true.

There's swimming in bracing cold water, difficult hiking, and the chance to see inside a cave that have only been open to visitors for a few years, making it one of the most pristine — and beautiful — caves in Phong Nha.

The Hang Va is known particularly for the Tower Cones, a group of hundreds of stalagmites and stalactites that fill a large passageway. Tours are offered as a one day or two-day visit. Expect plenty of bouldering, trekking, caving, wading, and even some rope-traversing inside the cave itself.

## Prepare for a Phong Nha-ke Bang Park Visit with a Vietnam Visa

To avoid delays when setting out to visit the wonders of Phong Nha-ke Bang National Park, it's important to make sure you have a valid visa when entering Vietnam.

You will need to apply for approval in advance, then receive a visa stamp in your passport when you arrive in the country. Fortunately, Vietnam makes it very easy for tourists to get the approval they need by applying through [Vietnam Visa](#). There are four simple steps you'll need to take to get your visa processed:



### STEP 1

Fill out the [online form](#)



### STEP 2

Then, confirm and pay



### STEP 3

Next, print the Approval Letter



### STEP 4

Finally, get a Visa stamp when you arrive at the airport in Vietnam

You can also apply for a visa through a local Vietnam Embassy. Learn more about Vietnam Visa and [how to apply](#), then start your visa application process today. **The wonders of Phong Nha-ke Bang National Park await you!**