

Vietnam Travel - Traditional Craft Villages Attract Tourists

According to the Viet Nam Crafts Association, the country is home to more than 2,000 craft villages each with their own traditional art practice. Villages range from specialising in lacquer painting, pottery and porcelain, embroidery and rattan knitting through to textiles, paper, folk print and many others.

Almost all craft villages are located near major transportation routes, making them accessible for tourists who want to visit craft villages.

Ha Tay province has the largest number of craft villages in the country and has an increasing tourist trade. Its success in handicrafts is further helped by its annual traditional crafts festivals that promote the villages and their local hand-made products.

A Ha Tay tourism official said many export contracts worth billion VND were signed right at these festivals.

Other provinces such as Bac Ninh, Thua Thien-Hue and Da Nang have built websites on local craft villages to showcase products and promote tours.

Meanwhile, Ha Noi's well-known Bat Trang pottery village has a unique marketing initiative – using rustic carts to carry visitors to pottery kilns.

Local craftsman Nguyen Van Hai, 65, said the carts have helped increase visitors to the village.

"Thanks to this kind of vehicle, the number of tourists at our village has increased three or four times," Hai said.

One of the most popular tours for foreigners is the "Be a resident of the ancient town for one day" program in Hoi An town, central Quang Nam province.

Here tourists have the chance to make lanterns, dig in gardens and plant vegetables, or prepare meals using farm produce from Tra Que village.

According to the Hoi An Tourist Services Company, the Tra Que vegetable-growing village has thousands of international and domestic visitors every year. They say it has been increasing exponentially since 2005.

However, while some traditional craft villages such as Van Phuc silk and Bat Trang pottery in Ha Noi, and Dong Ho folk print and Dong Ky carpentry in Bac Ninh province draw numerous tourists, experts say villages need to find more professional ways to boost tourism.

They recommended local authorities and tourist companies coordinate and cooperate, particularly in advertising, in order to tap the true potential of craft village tourism.

The Tourism Administration's Travel Department Head Vu The Binh, said there is also a need to revive traditional skills and encourage cooperation between craftsmen and vocational training schools to develop skills for young generations and create products that entice tourists to visit the villages.

About the Author

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