

## Tourists pay thousands for fishing in pond, washing dishes in Southeast Asian country

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**Dhaka: A group of American tourists paid about USD 3,000 per person to spend nearly two weeks experiencing simple rural life in Vietnam, participating in everyday activities.**

According to Vietnamese tour guide Vu Ngoc Son, the four-member family visited northern Vietnam for a 10-12 day trip that included Hanoi and rural areas in Phu Tho province.

The family included two siblings, Jack, 22, and his younger sister Sunny, 19, who traveled with their parents. Both are students of Harvard University in the United States.

Despite the relatively high price of the tour, the family chose simple, down-to-earth activities instead of premium tourism services typically associated with high-end travel packages. Thus, the trip was organized

to offer authentic local experiences rather than luxury travel services.

During their stay in rural communities, the visitors took part in daily household routines at local homes. The activities included harvesting vegetables from gardens and cooking traditional dishes using wood-fired stoves. Alongside, they enjoyed catching fish in ponds and helping wash dishes after meals.

Son said many foreign visitors, particularly from developed countries, are surprised by the simplicity of rural Vietnamese family life and often find such experiences refreshing and memorable.

One activity involved Jack jumping into a fish pond to catch fish using traditional nets, while Sunny collected vegetables and later helped prepare a meal in the kitchen.



The siblings initially struggled a lot with the unfamiliar tasks. They kept dropping vegetables or missing their catches but treated the experience with humor and curiosity.

“In America, we spent most of our time studying, and neither of us had cooked a full meal before,” Jack said, adding that the trip allowed them to learn basic cooking techniques and traditional food preparation methods.

Sunny also learned how to light a wood-fired stove and prepare ingredients for a Vietnamese hot pot meal, including chopping lemongrass and preparing broth.

The group also participated in a 14-kilometer day hike through rural landscapes, where they encountered farm animals, including buffaloes, chickens, and wild boars.

According to Son, the tourists appeared to prefer tranquil environments and avoided crowded tourist destinations. Instead, they showed interest in interacting with local residents and observing everyday life.

Local hosts welcomed the visitors into their homes and encouraged them to join routine household tasks. Son described the homestay as an effective way to introduce foreign travelers to Vietnamese culture.

The experience also highlighted the hospitality of Vietnamese communities, where residents willingly share their lifestyle with visitors.

Son said many tourists leave such trips feeling more connected to Vietnam after participating in daily activities alongside local families.

He added that experiential tourism, where travelers engage in traditional lifestyles and community routines, has become increasingly popular among international visitors seeking meaningful cultural experiences rather than conventional sightseeing.

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