

# “Where The Dragon Descends into The Sea”

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**Photo of Traditional Junk Rig**

created when a giant mountain dragon charged toward the coast, its flailing tail gouging out valleys and crevasses. As the creature plunged into the sea, the area filled with water leaving only the pinnacles visible. Ha Long Bay is one of Mother Earth's most amazing natural wonders and one of Vietnam's most prized treasures. Located on the shores of the Gulf of Tonkin, Ha Long Bay is dominated by more than 1,600 limestone karsts and islets

It is said that the perfect way to discover and enjoy the world's natural wonders is to jump onto a traditional junk rig and sail to the far-most corners where there are hidden lagoons, unexploited beaches and exotic grottoes that can be found nowhere else in the world.

On November 2, 2015, our tour group boarded the Paradise Luxury Cruise (built according to the traditional junk rig design) for the purpose of cruising through Ha Long Bay (known as “where the dragon descends into the sea”). According to our tour guide, legend tells that this mystical seascape was



**Cruising through Ha Long Bay**

which rise out of the bay to heights of up to 330 feet. In addition, there are numerous caves and grottoes that spread throughout the bay. Designated a World Heritage site in 1994, Ha Long Bay's spectacular scatter of islands, dotted with wind and wave eroded grottoes, is a vision of ethereal beauty and Northern Vietnam's number one tourism hub.



**Steep Steps up to Sung Sot Cave**

The combination of environment, weather, geology and geomorphology has brought a high diversity of stunning landscapes and majestic caves. One of the most visited is the Sung Sot Cave. Situated in the center of the UNESCO World Heritage area, we arrived at the Bo Hon Island where the Sung Sot Cave is located, which is one of the most regarded cave.



The path visiting Sung Sot Cave (known as surprising cave) is covered with shady trees and foliage.

Walking up through steep stone steps, a few of our tour group members had a feeling of climbing a mountain and experienced the excitement as if they were stepping to the sky. Sung Sot Cave is divided into two main areas. The first one is like an immense theater. The ceiling of this area is covered by stalactites and stalagmites, which has the appearance like a silky “velvet carpet” with beautiful motifs or a myriad of glistering and aglow chandeliers. Entering the second area through a small path, we were able to enjoy a completely different space in comparison to the first one. At the side of the entrance, the rock seems to form the



**View from the top of Song Sot Cave**



**Local Merchant at Ha Long Bay**

shape of a horse with a long sword. As we traveled further inside Sung Sot Cave, there were many surprising sceneries waiting for us to explore, such as stalactites having many different shapes. The formations in the cave inspired a lot of interesting imagination of human and animals in varying poses. In addition, the cave was disturbed by monkeys that were looking for fruits which made for a lively landscape.

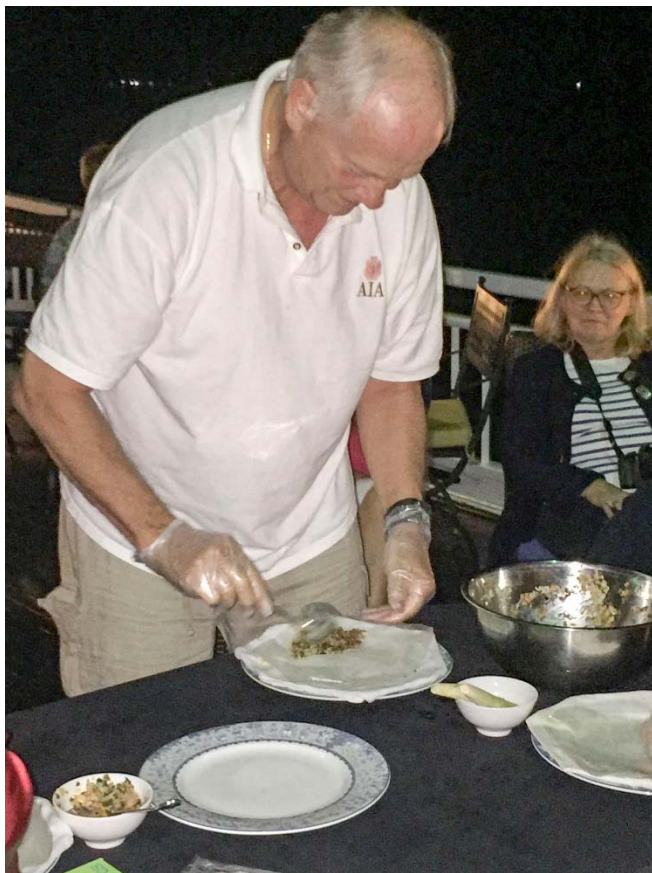
Our next journey after leaving Sung Sot Cave was to travel to Luan Cave (known as Tunnel Cave) located northeast of Bo Han Island on a small row boat (sampan). After

passing through Luan Cave, we reached a lake which gave the appearance of a stadium surrounded by a high podium. According to our tour guide, on the cliffs are many fossilized fresh water snail shells which are highlighted with pristine setting of ferns and orchards. We were fortunate to take pictures of beautiful golden monkeys zigging up and down trees and along cliffs requesting bananas from tourists. This setting was the perfect place to let your mind run free and enjoy the extreme peace of the magical bay.

Glide across the emerald waters of Vietnams Ha Long Bay and be prepared to be whisked away from a cosmopolitan city to a serene landscape. With more than 300 spectacular limestone islands, Ha Long Bay in Vietnam is one of the most visually stunning places in the world. We were able to sit back relax and



**Gold Monkeys at Luan Cave**



**Globetrotter preparing an Evening Meal**

soak up the epic landscape while enjoying scrumptious meals cooked on board the Paradise Luxury Cruise. I highly recommend taking a relaxing trip and staying overnight in the idyllic surroundings on a traditional junk rig cruise. This world heritage site is not to be missed in the Northern Province of Quang Ninh.