

Cat Ba Island

Haiphong · Vietnam

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Cát Bà is the largest island in the Hạ Long–Cát Bà archipelago, south of Hạ Long Bay. Most of the island is Cát Bà National Park, with forest, caves and limestone peaks. The main town sits on a harbour on the south-east coast and has the hotels, restaurants and boat piers.

Most visitors stay two nights. Days are for Lan Hạ Bay by boat, a hike in the national park and a visit to the old forts.

When to visit

April to June and September to November are the best months. The air is warm and the sea is calm. Summer from June to August is hot, busy and humid, with the beach season at its peak. Winter from December to February is cool and misty, and boats may be cancelled in rough weather.

MONTH	CONDITIONS	DAY °C avg / max	NIGHT °C avg / min	
January	Great Great for hiking	18° / 22°	14° / 10°	Dry air
February	Great Great for sightseeing	19° / 23°	15° / 10°	
March	Great Great for sightseeing	22° / 25°	18° / 14°	Humid air
April	Great Great for sightseeing	25° / 29°	21° / 17°	Muggy, humid air
May	Fair Fair for sightseeing	28° / 31°	24° / 21°	18 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
June	Fair Fair for watersports	30° / 32°	26° / 24°	19 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
July	Poor Poor for watersports	29° / 32° Feels like 33°	26° / 24°	22 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
August	Poor Poor for watersports	29° / 32° Feels like 33°	26° / 24°	25 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 9 (Very high)
September	Poor Poor for watersports	28° / 31°	24° / 23°	21 rainy days · Oppressive humidity · UV 8 (Very high)
October	Good Good for sightseeing	27° / 29°	23° / 19°	14 rainy days · Muggy, humid air
November	Great Great for sightseeing	24° / 27°	20° / 15°	Humid air
December	Great Great for sightseeing	20° / 24°	16° / 11°	Dry air

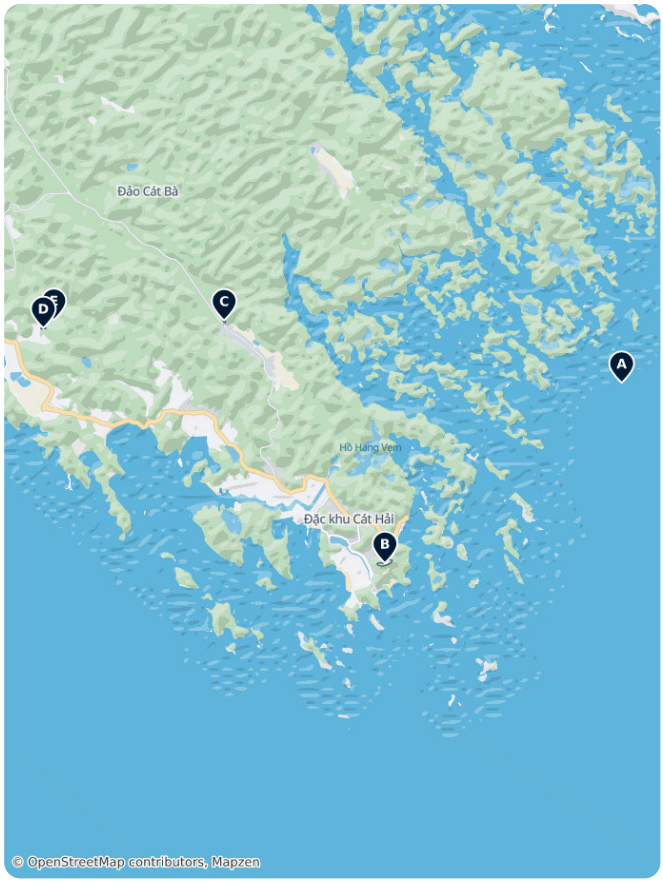
Best months: February, March, April, November, December

Climate data: NASA POWER + Copernicus ERA5-Land and ERA5 · 1996–2025

Top sights

- A Lan Ha Bay is a quieter bay of limestone islets, beaches and floating villages, south-east of the island.
- B Cannon Fort is a hilltop fort with large guns from the war and a view over the bay.
- C Hospital Cave is a large cave used as a hospital during the war.
- D Fisher Valley and E Squanch Wall are climbing areas on the island's limestone walls.
- Lighthouse is a lighthouse on the coast.

Cát Bà National Park has hiking trails to Ngự Lâm peak and Kim Giao forest. See the park's own guide for details.



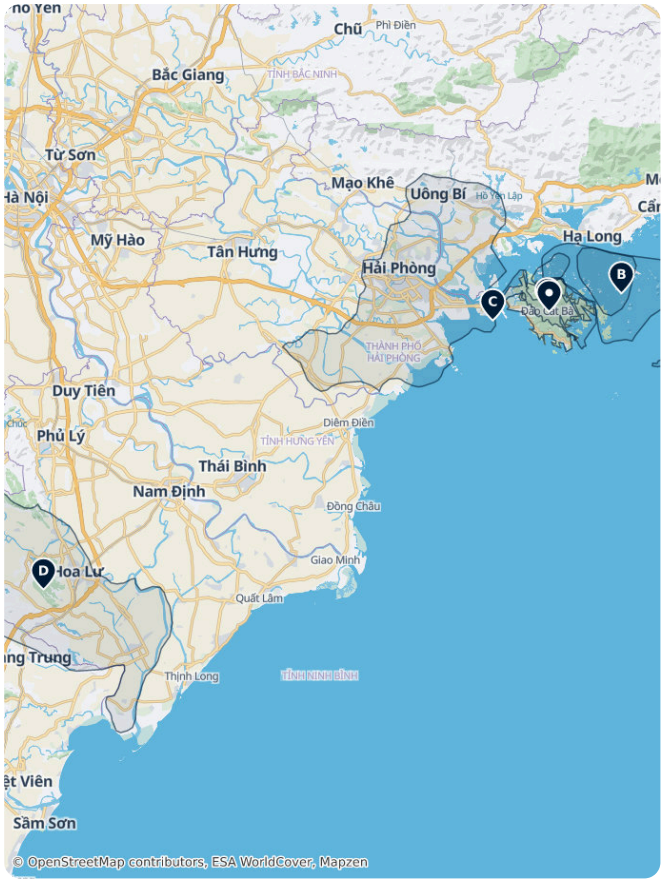
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What to experience

- **Kayak in Lan Hạ Bay**: Quiet water between limestone islets.
- **Climb at Fisher Valley**: Sport climbing on limestone walls, with local guides.
- **Hike to Ngự Lâm peak**: A forest trail in the national park.
- **Visit Hospital Cave**: A walk through a large war-time shelter.
- **Eat seafood at the harbour**: Squid, crab and grilled fish are on every menu.

Day trips

- A Cat Ba National Park: hiking in the national park and the viewpoint at Ngự Lâm.
- B Ha Long Bay: Hạ Long Bay is a boat trip north from the island.
- C Hai Phong: the port city of Hải Phòng is where ferries leave from.
- D Ninh Binh: a longer trip south for Tràng An and Tam Cốc.



Where to explore

- **Park**: Cat Ba National Park covers the protected forest on the island.
- **North**: Ha Long Bay has the most famous limestone bay.
- **West**: Hai Phong is the gateway city.
- **South**: Ninh Binh is another karst region.

Getting there

- **From Hanoi**: Buses with a ferry or speedboat link run to Cát Bà in about 3 to 4 hours. This is the easiest option.
- **From Hải Phòng**: Fast boats leave from Bến Bính and Đình Vũ. The crossing takes about 45 minutes to 1 hour.
- **Ferry crossing**: A car ferry runs between Gia Luận and Tuấn Châu. Tuấn Châu is the main mainland terminal.
- **By air or train**: Cát Bà has no airport or railway. Hải Phòng is the nearest hub.

Getting around

- **Motorbike hire**: The best way to reach beaches, forts and the park.
- **Taxi and electric buggy**: Short rides around the town.
- **Boats**: Needed for Lan Hạ Bay and nearby islets.
- **Walking**: The town and harbour front are walkable.

Getting around on foot & by bike

WALKABILITY

Moderate

The harbour town is walkable, but beaches and sights are spread across a hilly island.

CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE

Moderate

Roads are hilly, but cycling is possible between the town and nearby beaches.

Driving

- **Is a car worth it?** Not really. A motorbike or taxi is enough on the island.
- **Roads**: Main roads are paved but narrow in places, and hilly.
- **Ferry**: Cars cross by ferry. Queues grow on summer weekends.

Food & drink

Cát Bà food is about seafood. Try grilled squid, steamed crab, sea snails and fish hotpot. Local seafood is sold at the harbour and in the night market. Choose a restaurant that shows prices on the menu.

Vegetarian and western food are available in the main town.

What to eat & drink

BREAKFAST

Pho · Phở
Beef or chicken noodle soup with a fragrant broth, fresh herbs, and rice noodles; commonly eaten for breakfast.

LUNCH

Bun Cha · Bún chả
Grilled pork patties and slices served with rice vermicelli, herbs, and a sweet-sour dipping sauce; a Hanoi specialty.

Bun Bo Hue · Bún bò Huế
A spicy, lemongrass-scented beef noodle soup from the city of Hue.

Cao Lau · Cao lầu
A noodle dish unique to Hoi An, with thick chewy noodles, pork, and greens, traditionally made with local well water.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Banh Mi · Bánh mì
A French-influenced baguette sandwich filled with pork, pate, pickled vegetables, and herbs.

Banh Xeo · Bánh xèo
A crispy turmeric rice-flour crepe filled with pork, shrimp, and bean sprouts, wrapped in lettuce and herbs.

Goi Cuon · Gỏi cuốn
Fresh (uncooked) spring rolls filled with shrimp, pork, herbs, and vermicelli, wrapped in rice paper.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Che · Chè
A category of sweet dessert soups or puddings made with beans, fruit, jelly, and coconut milk, served hot or over ice.

DRINKS

Ca Phe Sua Da · Cà phê sữa đá
Strong drip coffee served over ice with sweetened condensed milk; Vietnam's signature drink.

Bia Hoi · Bia hơi
Cheap, light draft beer brewed fresh daily and sold at street-side stalls, especially in Hanoi.

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Safety & health

Cát Bà is safe, but the sea needs respect.

- Boat trips may be cancelled in strong wind or storms. Check with your operator.
- Wear a life jacket on boats and kayaks.
- Motorbike roads are hilly and wet after rain. Wear a helmet.
- Agree the price of boat trips and seafood before ordering.
- Summer beaches get crowded. Watch your belongings.

History

Cát Bà has been home to fishing communities for centuries. In the French period and the war years, the island was a defensive position. Caves such as Hospital Cave were used as shelters and hospitals, and forts were built on the hills.

Tourism grew from the 1990s. In 2004 UNESCO named the Cát Bà archipelago a biosphere reserve.

Country facts

Quick practical facts for Vietnam at a glance:

CURRENCY

VND ₫

ELECTRICITY



Type A / Type C / Type F
220 V · 50 Hz

LANGUAGES

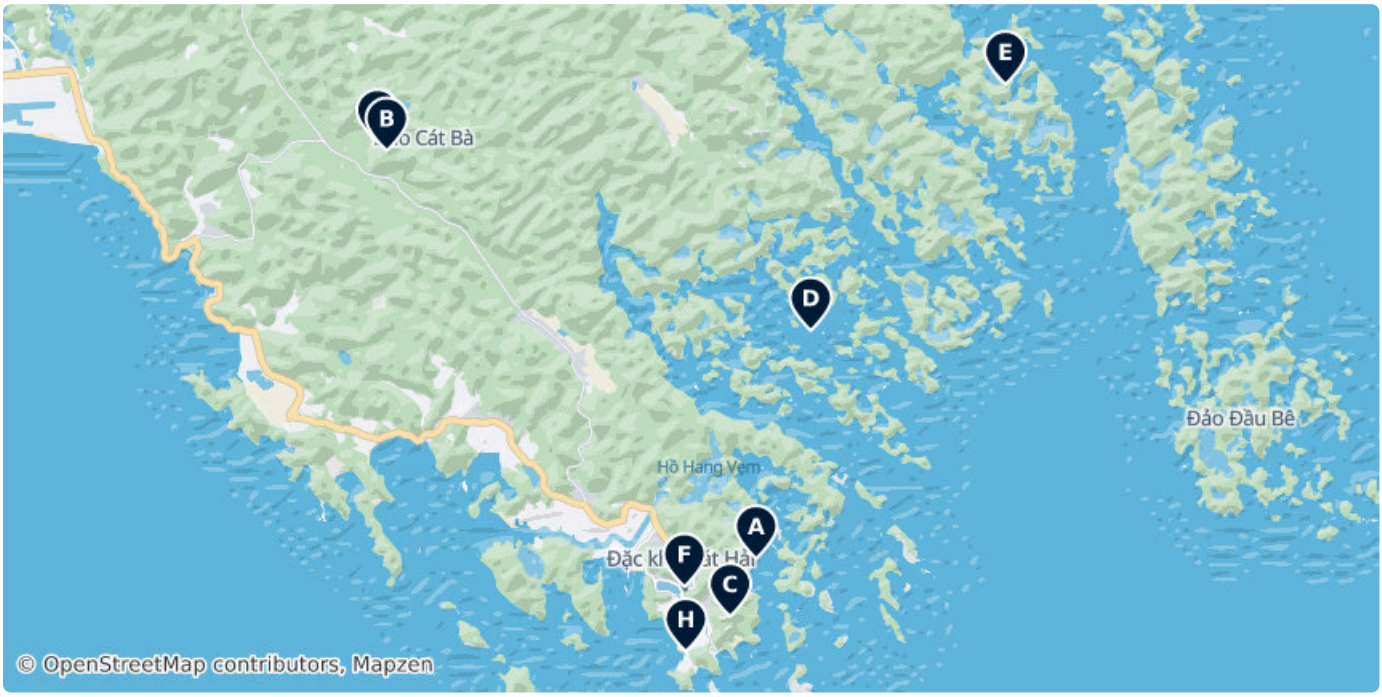
Vietnamese

TAP WATER

Not safe to drink

Đảo Cát Bà Essentials

Cat Ba Island combines limestone karst landscapes with the dense biodiversity of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. This selection highlights the island's strategic maritime heritage at Cannon Fort and the Cai Beo Terminal, the primary access point for the floating villages of Lan Ha Bay. High-altitude viewpoints like Đỉnh Ngự Lâm and Dỉnh Kim Giao provide perspectives across the national park's rugged terrain, while the local market and Dark Cave offer insight into the region's natural resources and traditional fishing culture.



A Cai Beo Terminal For Tourists

The primary departure point for boat tours to Lan Ha Bay and historic floating fishing villages. It serves as one of the oldest and largest archaeological sites in coastal Vietnam.

(20.73198, 107.05850)

B Đỉnh Ngự Lâm

A prominent peak in Cat Ba National Park reachable via a steep forest trail. The summit offers 360-degree views of the island's karst mountains and primary jungle.

Vietnam (20.79342, 106.99895)

C Cannon Fort

Built in 1938, this historic military site features underground tunnels, trenches, and artillery emplacements overlooking the bay from 177 meters above sea level.

(20.72327, 107.05430)

D Lan Ha Bay

A 7,000-hectare area of limestone karsts and emerald water south of Ha Long Bay. It contains hundreds of white sand beaches and several active floating fishing communities.

(20.76637, 107.06730)

E Dark cave, passage to lagoon on low tide

A 100-meter-long limestone cavern accessible by kayak or small boat during low tide. It serves as a natural tunnel leading into a hidden, enclosed lagoon.

(20.80346, 107.09872)

F Local Produce Market

A central market specializing in live seafood, dried fish, and local mountain fruits. It operates as the main hub for the island's food supply and daily trade.

84 Đường 1 Tháng 4, Cát Hải, Vietnam
(20.72775, 107.04694)

Mo–Su 06:00–19:00

G Dỉnh Kim Giao

A viewpoint in the National Park known for its forest of Kim Giao trees. Historically, this wood was used to craft chopsticks for royalty to detect poison in food.

(20.79469, 106.99743)

H LePont Panorama Bar/Restaurant

A multi-level venue situated on a cliffside, offering panoramic views of Cat Ba town's harbor and the surrounding karst formations.

Vietnam (20.71797, 107.04718)

DATA SOURCES

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IMAGE CREDITS

- Đinh Ngự Lâm — "Best Western Desert Inn" by booking.com

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