

# Development of Culture and Tourism in BAC Ha District, Lao Cao Province Today

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**ABSTRACT:** Bac Ha is a district in Lao Cai province, located at an altitude of 1,000-1,500m above sea level, about 60km southeast of Lao Cai city. The climate here is mild all year round, with an average annual temperature of about 25°C. Bac Ha has many beautiful landscapes imbued with nature and history. Along with the natural scenery bestowed such as majestic mountains, rivers and caves, the people are kind and hospitable. This land is also a convergence of ethnic cultural colors and unique specialties of the Northwest, creating a special attraction that holds back visitors from all over the world when coming to Bac Ha. However, the results achieved in tourism development are not commensurate with the potential, advantages, and budget revenues from tourism activities are not high. The article is conducted to analyze the current situation of cultural and tourism development of Bac Ha district, Lao Cai, thereby proposing the development of culture and tourism of the district to 2025.

**Keywords:** Tourism, Bac Ha District; Cultural; Lao Cai Province.

## INTRODUCTION

Talking about Bac Ha is talking about a “white plateau” of apricot and plum flowers, where the passionate corn wine yeast of the market has entered the lyrics and lyrics, moreover, Bac Ha is hiding a potential. tourism and investment opportunities.

Bac Ha district includes towns and 20 communes, is home to 14 ethnic groups, where the climate is cool with temperate pine forests like Nordic weather. Nature has created for Bac Ha a rich tourism potential with various types of resort tourism, ecology, culture, adventure sports. In recent years, with the investment attention of all levels, sectors, tourism economy of Bac Ha has prospered, the number of tourists coming to Bac Ha is increasing day by day, tourism and services are gradually increasing, affirming to be a key economic sector for local socio-economic

development with many unique historical and cultural landmarks.

To Bac Ha town, visitors will meet Hoang A Tuong palace - the residence of father and son Hoang Yen Chao and Hoang A Tuong. Hoang A Tuong Palace has a total area of nearly 4,000m<sup>2</sup>, built from 1914 to 1921. The architecture of the palace is Asian-European style combined with a closed rectangular layout. The palace is located on a large hill, with a charming landscape. Following the round steps on both sides of the palace, through the large courtyard, visitors will come to the two-storey main house with an area of 420m<sup>2</sup> used as a place of work, meeting and family activities. The highlight of the house is the arched doors and ornate motifs on the walls. In addition to the main room, the palace also has two rows of horizontal houses and an annex to house soldiers and servants.

Visitors can also attend Bac Ha fair, which meets from early Sunday morning every week. This is one of the largest markets in the border highlands. On the way to the market, visitors will see the magnificent scenery that nature has bestowed on this land with terraced fields stretching, majestic mountains beside deep blue abysses. Each group of ethnic Hmong, Tay, Dao ... wearing colorful brocade costumes, laughing and talking, leading horses carrying all kinds of goods to the market. People sell at the market all kinds of highland products such as vegetables, fruits, honey ... or necessary agricultural tools such as plows, hoes, shovels, knives ..., but the most attractive is still jewelry. and brocade dresses are hand-woven with vivid motifs, of the ethnic Bac Ha highland. Going to the market, do not miss the opportunity to enjoy the specialty of Thang Co with bowls of corn wine of the H'mong people in Pho village.

In addition to Bac Ha market, you can go to Lung Phinh market to experience, this is a trading place of many mountainous ethnic groups and also a place where many different customs and cultures meet. The opening time of Lung Phinh market is every Friday, unlike Bac Ha market, Lung Phinh market can be said to be not inferior to

Bac Ha market with the number of tourists visiting today is also extremely crowded.

Bac Ha is also a land rich in national cultural identity with festivals and customs of 14 ethnic groups, typically the Long Tong festival or the festival to the field, the Gau Tao festival of the Hmong, an activity religious beliefs to pray for favorable weather, lush trees, bountiful crops, and a prosperous life of the Tay, Nung, and Hmong... Before the festival, the families clean their houses and villages. Prepare food to welcome guests and a tray of offerings with banh chung, banh day, tea lam, and cake. The festival is usually held in the largest field in the village for people to make sacrifices to the Earth God and Thanh Hoang, and also organize fun activities and throw festivals to pray for a favorable business year.

#### **Current status of cultural and tourism development in Bac Ha district, Lao Cai province**

After 5 years of implementing Project No. 11 on "Preserving and promoting traditional cultural values for the period 2016-2020", most of the targets in the cultural field have met and exceeded the target. suggest. The movement "All people unite to build a cultural life" is implemented equally in localities, having a positive impact on the political, economic and social life of the district.

Manage and promote well the values of historical, cultural relics and scenic spots in the district such as: Bac Ha Temple, Trung Do Temple, Thien Long Cave, Coc Ly Commune's gnashing wood forest. Preserve the architecture of traditional houses, houses of the Mong ethnic group, and houses on stilts of the Tay ethnic group in association with the construction of a community-based cultural tourism village; Coordinate with the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism to restore, embellish and upgrade Trung Do Temple, hand over and put into use in February 2018.

Promote the construction, preservation and development of 03 traditional craft villages (cooking corn wine in Ban Pho, making saddles in Ta Chai village, 1 and 2, Lung Phinh commune, making village incense in Lung Tru, Thai Giang Pho commune). Filming documentaries about 5 typical cultural and artistic forms of ethnic groups, bringing unique cultural and artistic performances of ethnic groups to serve tourists at Bac Ha night market. Every year, communes and towns organize cultural and artistic activities imbued with traditional cultural identities to celebrate holidays and New Year, in which the use of folk songs and dancers is encouraged. perform at the service of the

People; develop detailed scenarios and well organize special festivals that are highly appreciated by people and visitors. Organize 10 teaching classes on Nom script of the Dao people. There are three artists recognized as excellent artisans (Mr. Lam Van Lu - artist "The" Xoe dance in Ta Chai commune and Mr. Lam Quang Cua - mantra artist in Bao Nhai commune, Mr. Ban A Ton artisan " Puttong" Fire dance ceremony in Nam Det commune).

Promote the implementation of the movement "All people unite to build a cultural life", up to now, in the district, there are 10,936/13,660, reaching 80% of cultural households, reaching 100% of the set target; there are 129/158, reaching 81.6% of villages, cultural quarters, reaching 116.6% of the project area; 128/128 agencies, units and schools meet cultural standards, achieving 100% of the set targets; The mass culture and art movement was built and consolidated, there were 19/19 commune art teams, 50 village art teams, reaching 100% of the set target.

The building of conventions and conventions has been highly agreed upon by the people. Up to now, there are 158/158 villages and residential groups with conventions and village conventions reaching 100%.

Always identifying tourism development as important in the economic development of the district, the Executive Committee of Bac Ha district Party Committee, term XXIII, has developed Project No. 06 on tourism development associated with cultural identity in the 2016-period. 2020. In the past 5 years, Bac Ha tourism industry has made good progress.

Tourism products have been built to attract tourists to the locality, promoting the development of typical tourism products such as: The traditional horse racing festival has become a typical event, associated with tourism. with Bac Ha tourism brand; Bac Ha night market every Saturday night preserves the rich traditional beauty of 14 ethnic groups in the district; Traditional festivals are held every year (Festival to the field, Say San, Fire dance...), models of community tourism, homestay associated with traditional craft villages, cultural and artistic activities. attracting domestic and foreign tourists to visit and relax (Ban Pho, Ta Chai, Bao Nhai, Na Hoi, Thai Giang Pho ...). Building 09/09 tourism products, reaching 100% of the set target.

About the number of tourists visiting Bac Ha tourism reached about 440,000 visitors, reaching 109% of the set target. Revenue from

tourism services reached 453/400 billion, reaching 113% of the set target.

Accommodation establishments in the district are 73/45 hotels and motels, reaching 160%, compared to the set target. Homestays are concentrated in some communes of Ta Chai, Na Hoi, Ban Pho, Ta Van Chu, Bao Nhai, Thai Giang Pho, Ban Lien... Visit and experience village life.

Food service establishments in the district have developed relatively abundantly, currently in the district there are over 137 restaurants and eateries (there are 04 restaurants located in hotels) basically meeting the needs of guests. However, there are not many restaurants with large scale and high quality service. The district's tourism technical infrastructure has been significantly invested and improved, attracting 03 large-scale investment projects such as: Ho Na Co amusement park, the road to the mother and son mountain and the spiritual complex on the mountain of parents and children; The high-quality bus routes increased by 9 trips compared to 2015 is a condition in connecting tourism, travel, visiting relatives, learning and exchanging between Bac Ha district and districts and cities inside and outside the province.

Promotion, association and tourism product development activities take place actively, cultural and tourism events are held regularly, initially creating destination image and positioning tourism product brand. Bac Ha in connection with the region attracts domestic and international tourists. Every year, Bac Ha Culture and Tourism Week is organized with many rich activities (wine festival, plum festival 2016, 2017, Ao Dai Festival 2018, highland colors 2019...).

In addition to the achievements, there are still some limitations such as the movement "All people unite to build the grassroots cultural life" which has been promoted but not comprehensively, the review of cultural titles in some places is still formal, not actually. Human resources involved in the development of grassroots culture are limited in both quantity and quality. The implementation of conservation and promotion of cultural values has not been drastic; The beautiful traditional cultural identity of the ethnic groups is still in danger of disappearing, the situation of child marriage and consanguineous marriage still takes place. Cultural and artistic movements in the whole district have not developed evenly, especially in remote areas. Investment equipment for the system of cultural houses in communes and villages, although interested in investment, has not yet met the actual needs.

The results achieved in tourism development are not commensurate with the potential, advantages, and budget revenues from tourism activities are not high. The number of days of stay of tourists is still low. The investment in the system of signposts, warning signs at attractions, the construction of stops, parking lots, scenic spots... is slow to implement. Lack of tour guides at the point. There have not been many new and typical tourism products; The quality of tourism products is not high.

The traffic infrastructure is not synchronized, the transportation system to tourist areas and attractions is degraded; there is no standard public toilet system; The management of the natural and social environment in many tourist destinations is still loose, without strong and sustainable solutions. Community-based tourism activities develop strongly but lack the connection with production and consumption activities of the people and the preservation of national culture. The services of eating, sleeping, playing and relaxing have not really met the needs of guests.

Some reasons for the limitation are that the investment resources of the central and provincial governments for technical infrastructure have not yet responded to the growing trend, besides the negative side of the market economy, integration and trade development. In addition, foreign cultural flows have penetrated into remote and isolated areas, resulting in a number of traditional cultural heritages and beauties of ethnic minorities that are in danger of becoming increasingly lost. The hilly and mountainous terrain is divided and there is no suitable ground to build cultural houses from communes to villages that meet the prescribed standards.

Natural disasters, epidemics, unusual and severe developments caused a lot of damage to tourism activities, at the end of 2019 there was a large-scale outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic, tourism activities were halted, tourism businesses were affected. tourism is facing great damage, disrupting the tourism supply chain. In 2020, Bac Ha tourism industry is estimated to suffer damage due to a decrease of more than 70% in the number of visitors compared to 2019.

Awareness of cultural preservation and tourism development of some grassroots government committees and people is not really deep. The district budget for investment in cultural preservation and tourism development is still limited; has not yet attracted many investment resources from the society to develop tourism. The system of mechanisms and policies for tourism and cultural development is still lacking; State

management staff in culture and tourism are mainly part-time, so they lack professional skills. Tourism promotion activities lack a long-term strategy, the construction and identity of Bac Ha tourism brand has not been paid attention to and invested properly.

Cultural activities and tourism development are mainly voluntary participation by the people, so they are not regular and of low quality. The management, exploitation and use of cultural and sports institutions from the district to the grassroots is still limited, with low efficiency.

### 3. Some solutions to develop culture and tourism in Bao Ha district, Lao Cai province

The first: about directing and operating cultural and tourism activities

Strengthen the leadership and direction of the Party committees and authorities at all levels, the advisory and coordination role of functional sectors and socio-political organizations at all levels in the implementation of the Project. . Set goals and tasks to develop culture, sports and tourism; effectively exploit the tourism infrastructure system, cultural and sports works that have been invested, preserve and promote the national cultural identity for sustainable development in the Resolution of the Party committees at all levels, plans of different levels of government to focus on leading and directing the implementation.

To promote the synergy of the political system and the whole people in preserving cultural values and developing tourism in Bac Ha district quickly, strongly and sustainably.

Strengthen the inspection and examination of cultural activities, business activities of tourism services and cultural products. Especially harmful cultural products imported from outside.

Second, on mechanisms and policies for cultural and tourism development

Strengthen inspection and review of policies and legal documents on culture and tourism, promptly propose all levels to amend, supplement and replace regulations that are no longer appropriate.

Implement the master plan and detailed plan to expand Bac Ha town into a tourist town and neighboring communes into satellites associated with Bac Ha town tourism center.

Research and apply flexibly the mechanisms and policies of the province and the central government (on land, on compensation for site clearance, on the grant of land use right certificates, on taxes, etc.) to attract large investors in the field of culture and tourism. Support for

preferential loans for households wishing to invest and develop tourism, especially community tourism.

Third, about investing resources for cultural and tourism development of Bac Ha district

The state budget continues to prioritize investment in construction of transport infrastructure for tourism development, upgrading important cultural and sports institutions, such as district multi-purpose gymnasium, cultural center, etc. district information; important cultural and sports works and institutions at commune level; support the repair and upgrade of cultural houses and sports areas at village level, giving priority to villages and communes with extremely difficult circumstances, deep-lying and remote areas, ethnic minority areas and fully registered communes. to build a new rural area in the 2021-2025 period.

Integrate with other relevant programs and schemes to make the most and effectively use all investment resources to carry out the tasks of the Scheme.

Promote the implementation of socialization, encourage and create conditions for individuals, organizations and enterprises to invest in building cultural, sports, tourism and entertainment facilities in accordance with regulations of law. provisions of law; participate in the construction of cultural life, provide financial support to organize cultural, artistic, physical training and sports activities for the development of local tourism.

Fourth, on organizational apparatus, payroll; human resource development

Focus on training to improve the quality of cadres, strengthen the contingent of highly specialized cadres; promote "self-training" activities among the staff to build the apparatus and human resources of the culture and tourism industry in a professional direction. Attracting high quality human resources, senior management team working in tourism business establishments. There is a mechanism to attract, train and use a team of tour guides and tour speakers who are ethnic minorities in the locality.

Encourage artisans to actively pass on traditional culture to future generations. Renovate and improve the efficiency of State management in the field of tourism, culture and sports.

Application of software to manage tourist accommodation in tourist areas and attractions; Digitizing data in the field of cultural tourism (building a database, virtual guides, applying smart tourism software...).

Fifth, about information and propaganda

Diversify information and propaganda work, promote the synergy of propaganda forces and types of propaganda in the implementation of the Project for the period 2021-2025; State management agencies, local authorities actively participate in propagating the implementation of the Scheme, effectively promoting the TB system from the district to the villages.

Propagating and disseminating, mobilizing people and tourists to actively and actively participate in environmental protection, landscape preservation, security and order, civilized behavior in cultural and tourism activities. Effectively propagate the code of civilized conduct in tourism activities.

Promote the propagation of civilized lifestyle in weddings, funerals and festivals; actively solve problems of child marriage, inbreeding, domestic violence.

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