


## Hands-on Experience

 Activity: Pacific Discovery tours.

 Location: Throughout Vietnam.

 Tip: If you want to see Vietnam through a tour bus window, these tours are not for you



Fansipan summit

This New Zealand operator keeps group sizes small, uses local transport and tries to be carbon neutral.

**The experience:** After years of working for tour companies, Scott Burnett and Rachel Sanson envisioned a way to operate tours that ensured a better outcome for communities that tour groups visited and a lower impact on the environment. They established Pacific Discovery in 2001. The company has extensive experience developing international programmes with schools and universities in the United States and New Zealand to provide customised travel/study programmes to Vietnam that focus on sustainable tourism development.

Pacific Discovery offers small group, educational and volunteer tours. They blend ecotourism, cultural immersion such as threshing rice and adventures like climbing Mt Fansipan. Pacific Discovery tours have set annual departures, but they also offer tailor-made tours with special departure dates for family, school, university and special interest groups. The company can adapt itineraries to suit any budget, interests and timeframe.

Visitors threshing rice



Pacific Discovery tours are personalized, interpretive and educational using the philosophy of experiential education – where learning is hands-on and tangible. They have developed meaningful connections with people and places visited which is reflected in the quality of experiences they are able to offer. The company's strong relationships developed over many years working with local communities and NGOs ensure a rewarding and inspiring experience for participants.

**How it helps:** As an ethical tourism operator, Pacific Discovery utilises locally-owned transport and accommodation, so participant's money remains in the communities they visit. Fascinating excursions and volunteer opportunities are integral to the experience, and Pacific Discovery's time spent working with local NGOs in education, youth development, health and the environment, enable cultural exchange, insights and increased awareness of issues affecting local communities. All tours are carbon-neutral through hands-on tree planting projects, and they support grassroots charities and NGOs in Vietnam.

Pacific Discovery educates its clients about the environmental and social impacts of their travel, and endeavours to ensure the tours are of benefit to the host communities and environments as well as of benefit to its clients. The company prides itself as an ethical tourism operator. Refer to its ethical travel guidelines (1) and sustainability policy (2) for details.

(1) [www.pacificdiscovery.org/ethics.pdf](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org/ethics.pdf)

(2) [www.pacificdiscovery.org/sustainability.pdf](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org/sustainability.pdf)

### Location and booking information

Pacific Discovery - insightful small group adventures  
Scott Burnett - director  
PO Box 899, Nelson 7040, New Zealand  
Tel: (+64) 3 546 7667  
E-mail: [info@pacificdiscovery.org](mailto:info@pacificdiscovery.org)  
Web: [www.pacificdiscovery.org](http://www.pacificdiscovery.org)

