

VIETNAM TRAVEL MAGIC #2

TOURING SAPA MOUNTAINS

Adventures by Scott David Plumlee

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CHINA

VIETNAM



LAOS



Welcome to Vietnam Travel Magic

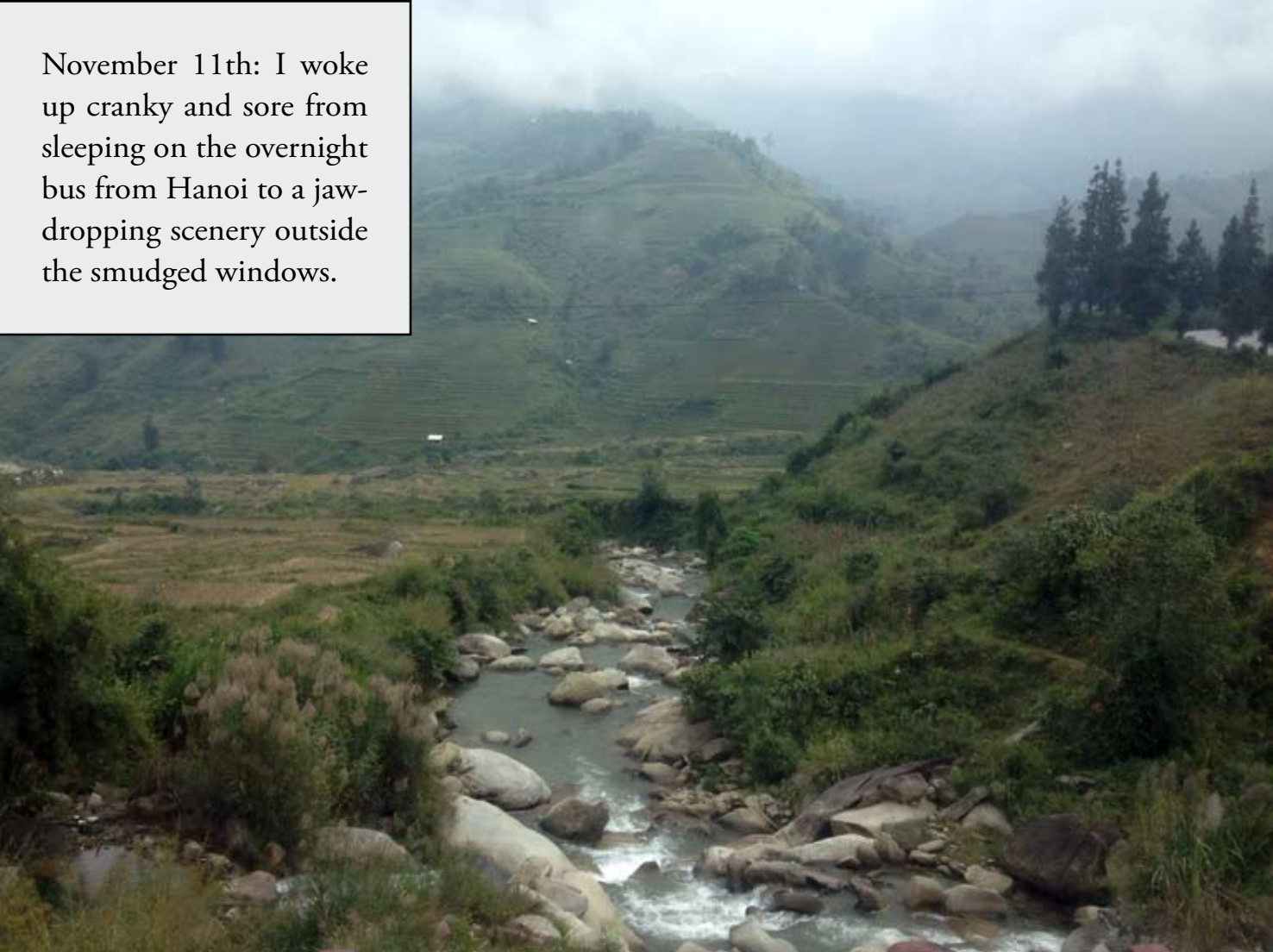
I have loved the past three months backpacking Southeast Asia across Thailand, Laos and Cambodia.

The next chapter of my adventure takes me across Vietnam; traveling from the north, starting in the capital city of Hanoi, heading south along the coastal beaches to Saigon.

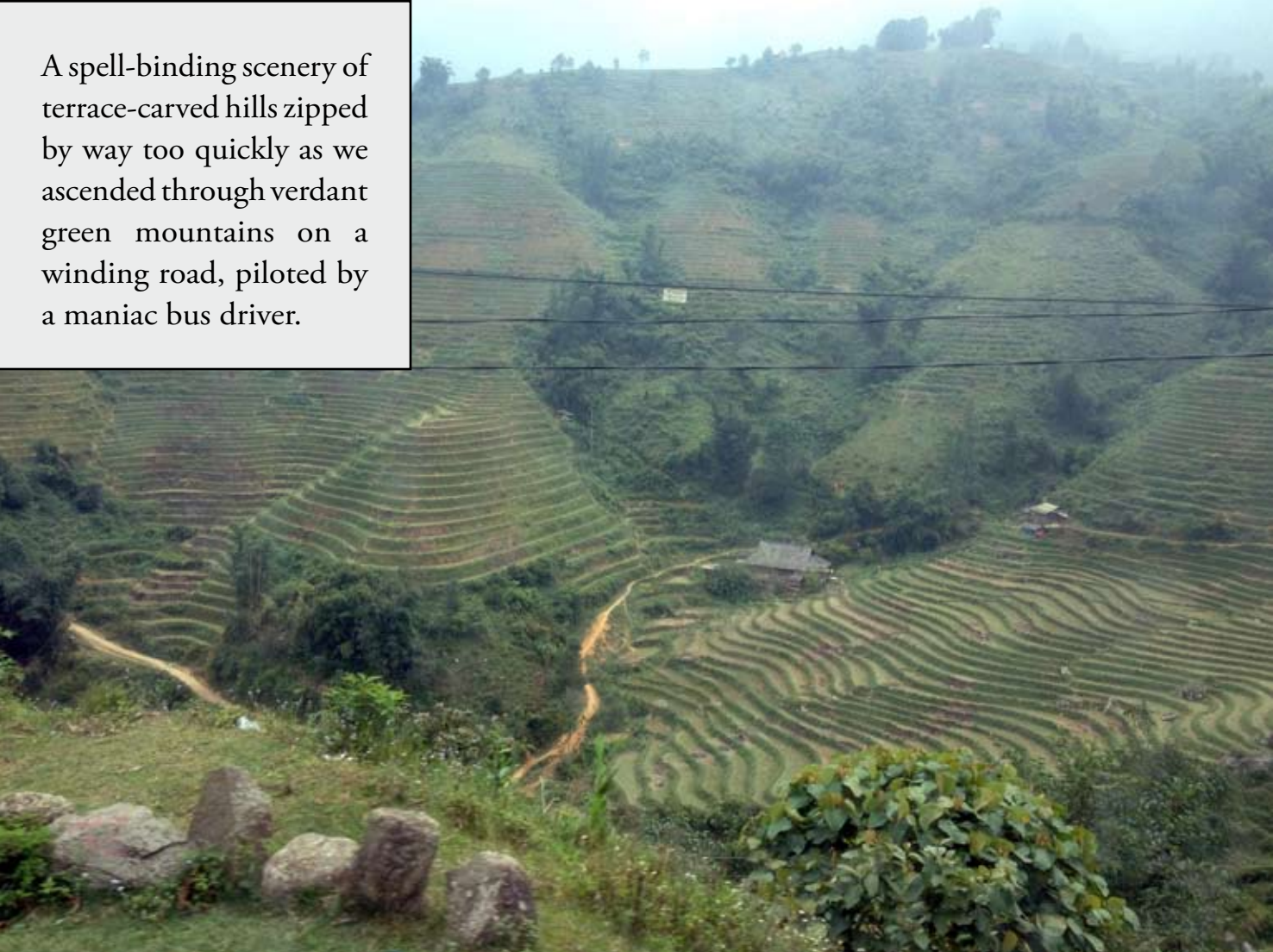
After wandering around the chaotic Old Quarter of Hanoi for a week, I'm excited to take a bus up into the northern mountains to the town of Sapa for some green hiking terrain and summit 3000m Mt. Fansipan.



November 11th: I woke up cranky and sore from sleeping on the overnight bus from Hanoi to a jaw-dropping scenery outside the smudged windows.



A spell-binding scenery of terrace-carved hills zipped by way too quickly as we ascended through verdant green mountains on a winding road, piloted by a maniac bus driver.



At 10am our bus arrived safe and sound in the sleepy town of Sapa. I checked into my hostel and saw my first tantalizing views of the surrounding mountains.





After breakfast, I met several Black Hmong hilltribe women along the road, who wore beautifully-woven clothing and wanted to guide me to their village for a steep price.

Photo Credit: Denise Koryzma



I only wish I had room in my duffle bag to take home some of these intricately designed fabrics, as their originality, quality and craftsmanship were truly amazing to see firsthand.

Photo Credit: John Spiri



Further down into the valley I walked past endless rice paddies, bordered by simple huts.

Photo Credit: Denise Koryzma



November 12th: After a three egg omelet and two cups of coffee my burning enthusiasm to summit Fansipan could no longer be contained. I arranged for a motorcycle ride up to Tram Ton Pass where the entrance to the trail starts up the 3,143m (10,312') mountain.



My enthusiasm soon faded when I was informed at the entry gate that I could not hike the trail without a guide, and that doing so would result in a 1.5 million dong (\$60) fine. However, they did sell me a ticket to visit the neighboring Love Waterfall. Although I was disappointed, this beautiful moth in the office window helped to rejuvenate my optimism.



I slowly walked along the cobblestone path to Love Waterfall as a spooky fog descended.

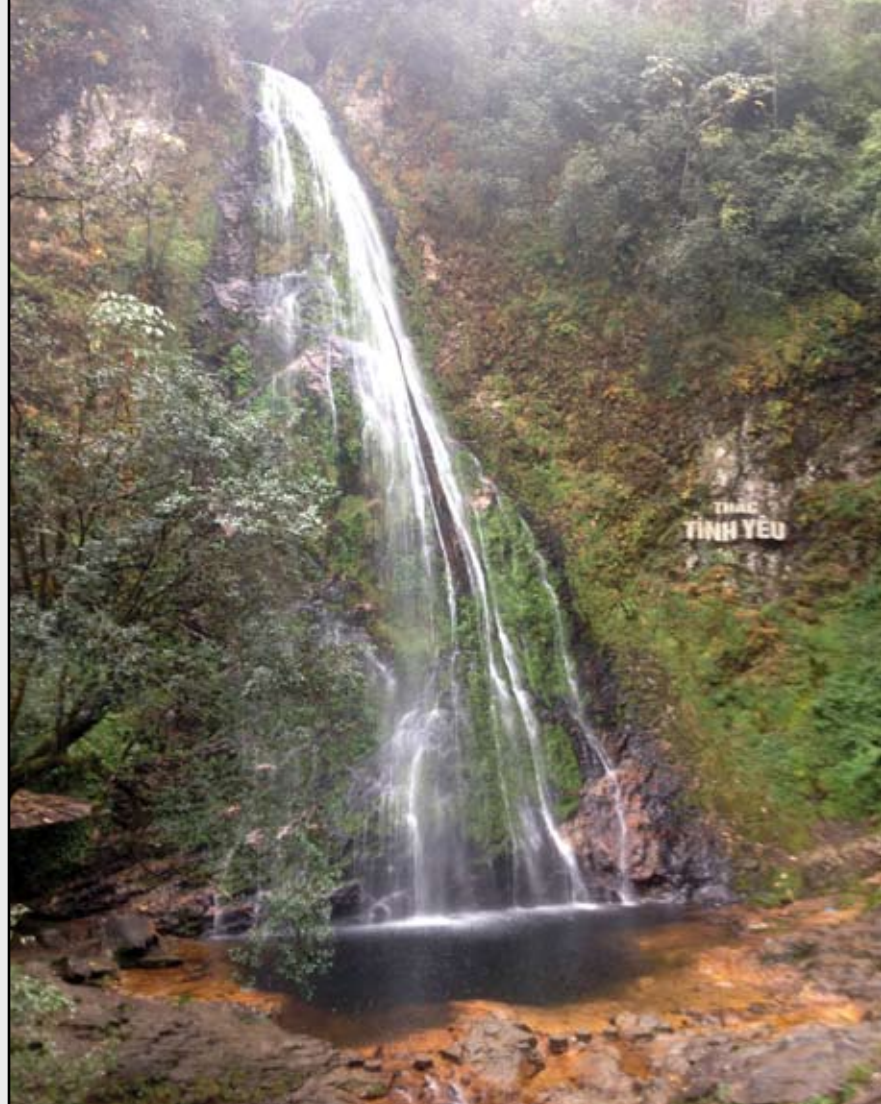
The waterfall was very beautiful and I felt so lucky to be the only tourist visiting at this early hour.

I found a place to sit for a while, letting the sound of rushing water flow over me and calm my mind.

In that Zen moment of meditative clarity, I questioned myself why I wanted to summit this mountain.

I realized that it was only the ego that desired this accomplishment to create a false sense of importance.

With this awareness of ego desire, I knew there was nothing I needed to prove to myself, and that I should be mindful of future ego-traps.



Just when I had resolved to give up on my mountain summiting dreams and leave unfulfilled, my navigation app showed that the trail to Mount Fansipan was just 100 yards through the jungle.

Yes, I knew it was against the rules to hike without a guide, and if I got caught there would be consequences for my actions.

However, I have discovered that making decisions based on fear and living with regrets is more damaging than paying a fine.

A voice inside me whispered ‘Carpe Diem—Seize the Day’, as the temptation of deviancy rejuvenated my hiking spirit.

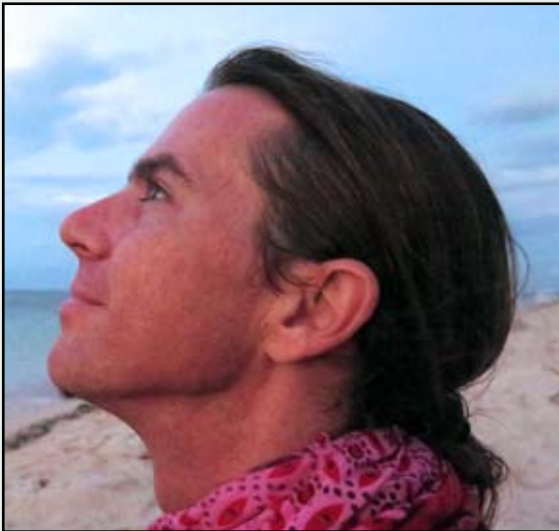


Map Image: Maps.me App

Thank you for joining me on this 15-page free preview to visit Love Waterfall, to continue the adventure with me up Mt. Fansipan, purchase the full 50-page eBook at Amazon.com.

Won't you join me for my next adventure to go kayaking in Halong Bay from Cat Ba Island?

The author, Scott David Plumlee, watching the sunset fade away, is an avid world traveler, photographer and writer. He has traveled to over 50 countries, taken millions of photos, and is always willing to share his jokes, stories and philosophies. Plumlee is also the author of the New Zealand Travel Magic eBook series, and currently loving his life in Thailand.



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