

In northern of Vietnam there is yet another volcano. But this one is something else completely. The crater of Ijen contains a spectacular blue lake, Sapa and the volcano produces massive amount of Sulphur. An amazing spectacle happens when the liquid sulphur comes in contact with fire from the volcano and the result is fire that burns so blue that you're certain you've somehow arrived at another planet!

Where

Sapa is located in northern of Vietnam, perfect location to stop over on the way to Hanoi. If you have already [Vietnam visa](#), you can visit from the villages of Hmong or Dao. The roads towards the volcano are pretty bad, so it is advisable to hire transport there. I joined up with a couple and we paid 600.000 for a jeep with a driver including entrance fee and two cameras. If you want to go down into the crater you can get one of the sulphur porters going down to guide you and your group (which is strictly prohibited by the way) for 50\$. They'll ask for 100\$ but will do it for 50. BE WARNED! Going down is very steep and once you're down at the bottom the incredibly strong sulphur fumes will make your eyes water and bring a cough that sounds like you've been smoking for 50 years to your lungs. But it's totally worth it!

When and how long

We were picked up at 12:30 am from Lao Cai and the drive was maybe an hour and a half. The climb up to the rim of the crater was about an hour and then maybe an hour and a half going down into the crater, 20 minutes there and back to the top. That gives you half an hour to get to the top of the rim for the sunrise.

Difficulty

I would say it's medium difficulty, getting down into the crater is a bit difficult (and scary) because it's so steep and if you fall you could seriously hurt yourself or be killed like a French tourist was some time ago. There's also the matter of the sulphur fumes, if you have any kind of respiratory problems, don't even think about going down there. Contact with getvietnamvisa.com to have more details.