



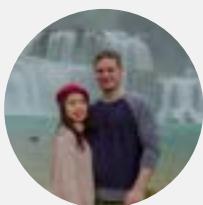
Local
Vietnam



VIETNAM

Travel Guide

PERSONALIZE YOUR EXPEDITION FROM HERE



A BOOK BY:
NHUNG & MARNICK



localvietnam.com



[Local Vietnam](#)

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Introduction

Greetings, adventurer!

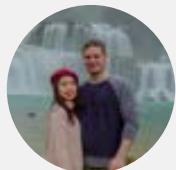
This travel guide is a gift from Local Vietnam, designed to prepare and assist you throughout your journey in Vietnam. We're thrilled to be part of your travel experience, providing valuable insights and practical information for an unforgettable trip.

Within these pages, you'll find everything you need to know about Vietnam, offering insider tips and expert recommendations. From best travel times to health tips, obtaining local SIM cards, and more.

We've handpicked remarkable destinations, delectable cuisine, and captivating activities, making sure you make the most of your time in Vietnam.

This gift from Local Vietnam is more than a guide—it's your passport to extraordinary moments and connections. Get ready for an incredible journey through Vietnam's wonders.

The Local Vietnam team wishes you an unforgettable adventure!



NHUNG & MARNICK

Welcome to Local Vietnam!

At Local Vietnam, we believe in a unique approach to travel. We fuse our extensive local knowledge with an understanding of western travel styles, creating an unforgettable experience that goes beyond the typical tourist destinations. We're not your average travel agency—we're here to provide you with an authentic and immersive journey through Vietnam.

Founders Nhung and Marnick embarked on this adventure to combine their expertise in western travel with their deep understanding of Vietnam. Having explored over 50 countries across different continents, they possess a wealth of knowledge and firsthand experience. Their time spent in both Europe and Vietnam enables them to cater to the specific needs and desires of fellow travelers.

With Local Vietnam, we offer handpicked, high-quality activities and services for every destination in Vietnam, all in one place. Whether you prefer private or small group experiences, our focus remains on creating meaningful connections with locals, immersing in the vibrant culture, and discovering breathtaking unspoiled nature.

We are passionate about crafting exceptional travel experiences that resonate with your desires. Join us on a journey that embraces the local culture, unveils hidden gems, and creates lasting memories.

Discover the real Vietnam with Local Vietnam.

Nhung & Marnick

Fun facts for on the road

Did you know...

1

Vietnam's coastline is 3,269 km long. That is even longer than Thailand (2,815km)?

2

Nguyen is the most popular surname in Vietnam. More than 40% of the Vietnamese population has this surname?

3

In Vietnam there are 60 million motorcycles out of a population of 95 million. This makes it the fourth highest number of motorbikes in the world?

4

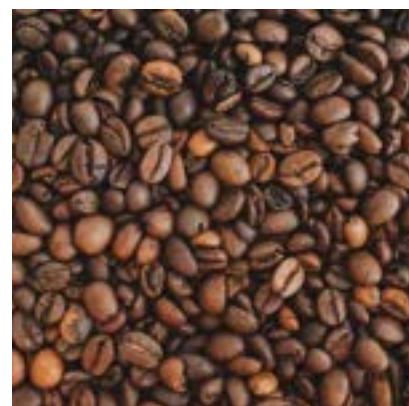
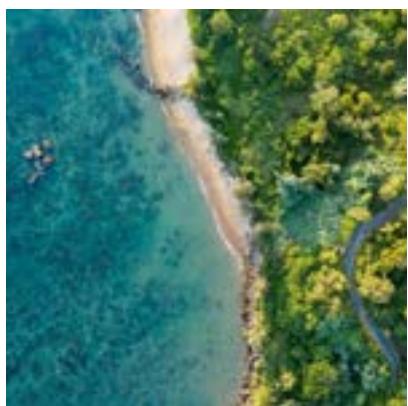
Vietnam is the second largest coffee exporter in the world after Brazil?

5

Vietnam is the world's largest exporter of black pepper and cashews? The country produces nearly a third of all black pepper and even half of the world's cashews.

6

The Vietnamese language also uses the alphabet, including 5 different symbols? With this, Vietnam has 6 different tones. By changing the tone, the meaning of the word changes or it means nothing anymore.



Fun facts for on the road

7

Vietnam was originally spelled in 2 words: Viet Nam - a name dating back to the 16th century. Although the name came to be known as Vietnam - especially in English - the Vietnamese government and the United Nations still refer to the country as Viet Nam.

8

There is a lot of superstition about food in Vietnam? A small part of the population drinks and eats things that are rather sinister for us, such as scorpion and snake wine, dog, cat and a duck embryo. Eating and drinking this is believed to be good for vitality.

9

In Vietnam you find the largest and the third largest cave in the world? The Son Doong cave is so big that a Boeing 747 can fly through the largest entrance. The cave is big enough for a 40-storey skyscraper and is so huge that it even has its own climate and clouds can form in it.

10

The Vietnamese flag has a meaning consisting of a gold star with five points, the different points represent farmers, workers, intellectuals, youth and soldiers. The red background is a tribute to the bloodshed during the wars.

11

Vietnam has the cheapest beer in the world? Bia Hoi can only be found at street vendors, especially in the north and is already available from 0.25 cents per glass.



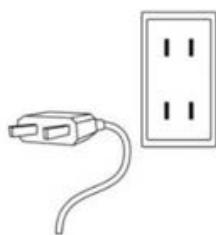
Practical information



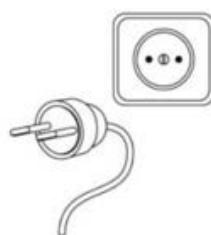
Language	Vietnamese	Driving on	Right side of the road
Capital city	Hanoi	Money	Vietnamese Dong (đ)
Biggest city	Ho Chi Minh City	State form	People's Republic
Population	97,500,000	Ethnic groups	Vietnamese 85% 53 minorities (15%)
Size	332,698 km ²	Climate	Tropical
Religion	73.2% Folk or Irreligious 12.2% Buddhist 8.3% Christian	Visa	Visa required
Country code	+84	Time difference	(UTC + 7)

Electricity

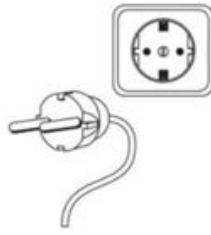
Electricity in Vietnam operates on a 220V/50Hz system. The standard socket type is the two-pin plug, which can accommodate both round and flat pins (Type A, C, or F).



Type A



Type C



Type F

Visa Guide

Visa requirements for Vietnam vary depending on your nationality.
There are two main ways to obtain entry to Vietnam:

1. Visa Exemption

This applies to citizens of Southeast Asian countries and 9 European countries, including: Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

This allows them to enter Vietnam without a visa. The visa exemption is valid for a maximum of 45 days for European countries and 21 to 30 days for Southeast Asian countries.



2. E-Visa



For most travelers, including Australia, United States and most European countries, obtaining an e-visa is the recommended option. You can apply for an e-visa through the official website of Vietnam. Be sure to apply well in advance of your travel dates to allow for processing time.

Visa Guide

How to apply for a Vietnam e-visa

Applying for a Vietnam e-visa is the best option for most travelers as it allows you to stay in Vietnam for up to 90 days and is a straightforward process. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to apply:

01

Go to [the official website of the Vietnam Immigration Service](#) to begin your application; do not use visa agencies: they often utilize the same official website. Choosing to use their services may result in higher fees and longer processing times.

02

Fill in the application form with accurate information, taking care to avoid common mistakes:

The screenshot shows the 'Passport data page' section of the application form. It displays a placeholder image of a passport and a real passport data page. A red arrow points from the 'Photograph*' field to the ICAO line on the passport data page, which is circled in red. The ICAO line contains the text 'PHOTO SPECIMEN CHARTER' followed by a series of letters and numbers.

Passport data page
image*

Passport data page
image*

Personal Information(PNR)

Full name in passport* Specimen Martin

Sex* Male Female

- Enter your full name exactly as it appears on the ICAO line of your passport.
- Ensure that your passport is valid for at least six months.
- Double-check your passport number for any errors.
- Select the correct place of entry, as changes cannot be made after submission.
- Upload a clear and high-quality portrait photo.
- When taking the photo, look directly at the camera without glasses and against a plain background.
- Note that the date format in Vietnam is day-month-year.

Visa Guide

How to apply for a Vietnam e-visa

Applying for a Vietnam e-visa is the best option for most travelers as it allows you to stay in Vietnam for up to 30 days and is a straightforward process. Here's a step-by-step guide on how to apply:

03

Complete the application by making the payment of 25 USD using a credit card.

04

The processing time for the e-visa is typically 3 to 4 working days, but it may take longer during holidays or if there are mistakes in the application. Apply well in advance to avoid any delays.

05

Once you receive the e-visa via email, print it out.

06

Present your printed e-visa during check-in for your flight to Vietnam. Airlines are strict, and without a valid visa, you may not be allowed to board.

07

Show your e-visa upon arrival at customs in Vietnam.

08

It is advisable to keep the e-visa with you throughout your trip and during your departure from Vietnam.

Essential travel tips



1 Time your trip wisely: Determine the ideal duration based on the regions you wish to explore, with 3 weeks for the highlights, 2 weeks for one or two regions, and 1 week for a single region.



2 Visa preparation: Ensure you obtain your Vietnamese visa in advance to avoid any last-minute complications.



3 Stay connected with a Vietnamese SIM card: Purchase a local SIM card for affordable and convenient access to communication, maps, and translation apps throughout your travels.



4 Fly to Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City? Consider the atmosphere and logistics of each city, with Hanoi offering a traditional experience and Ho Chi Minh City providing a smoother introduction. Check flight prices for cost-effective options.



5 Carry sufficient cash: Many local establishments do not accept bank cards, so it's important to have cash on hand for shopping, dining, and exploring markets.



6 Backpack or suitcase: Opt for a backpack if you plan on visiting multiple destinations, but if you have a door-to-door service, a suitcase is also manageable.



7 Pack light and do laundry along the way: Take advantage of affordable laundry services available everywhere, allowing you to travel light and have clean clothes within a day.



8 Dress in layers: Vietnam's weather can vary throughout the day, so dressing in layers will ensure you're prepared for changes in temperature.



9 Download Grab: Make transportation hassle-free by using the Grab app to book taxis and view upfront pricing.



10 Booking accommodations: Be mindful of room options, especially in major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, where some rooms may not have windows. Consider countryside accommodations in places like Hoi An, Sapa, and Ninh Binh for a different experience.

Essential travel tips



- 11 **Learn basic Vietnamese phrases:** Engage with locals and show your appreciation by learning a few key phrases, as it will often bring smiles and warm interactions.



- 12 **Indulge in Vietnamese cuisine:** Don't miss the opportunity to savor the diverse and delicious Vietnamese food. Consider taking a street food tour for an immersive culinary adventure.



- 13 **Respect local customs:** When visiting temples and religious sites, dress modestly and remove your shoes upon entering someone's home or a temple.



- 14 **Immerse yourself in ethnic cultures:** Experience the unique traditions of Vietnam's ethnic communities by staying in a homestay, visiting local markets, or exploring rural villages.



- 15 **Drink bottled water:** Stick to drinking bottled water to avoid any health issues and stay hydrated throughout your journey.



- 16 **Be mindful of public displays of affection:** In Vietnamese culture, public displays of affection are generally not common, so it's best to keep romantic gestures private.



- 17 **Respect local traditions and customs:** Familiarize yourself with local customs and practices to show respect for the Vietnamese culture and traditions.



- 18 **Bargain with a smile:** Bargaining is common in markets, but do it with a friendly demeanor to ensure a positive interaction and successful negotiation.



- 19 **Be cautious with street food:** While street food can be delicious, choose vendors with high turnover to ensure the freshness and safety of the food.



- 20 **Embrace the spirit of adventure:** Let go of expectations and embrace the unexpected. Vietnam offers incredible experiences, and being open to new encounters will enrich your journey.

Flying to Vietnam

Tips for booking cheap tickets

- Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi? See which airport is the cheapest.
- Try to be flexible with your travel date and times.
- Use different search engines: Momondo, Google Flights, Skyscanner.
- Search ticket prices as one person: Airlines always show the highest ticket price for a group of tickets.
- Book your flight ticket on time, but not too early: 6-8 weeks before departure or about three months in advance if you are flying to Vietnam during the high season.
- Set a price alarm: Handy feature of Skyscanner



International Airports in Vietnam

- Noi Bai International Airport (HAN) – Hanoi •
- Tan Son Nhat International Airport (SGN) – Ho Chi Minh City •
- Da Nang International Airport (DAD) •
- Cam Ranh International Airport (CXR) – Nha Trang •
- Phu Quoc International Airport (PQC) •
- Can Tho International Airport (VCA) – Mekong Delta •



Flying to Vietnam



Flying from Europe

Direct flights

1. London, United Kingdom
2. Paris, France
3. Frankfurt, Germany

Airlines

Popular airlines flying between Europe and Vietnam:

- KLM (stopover at Singapore or Kuala Lumpur)
- Emirates (stopover at Dubai)
- Vietnam Airlines (stopover at Frankfurt)
- Etihad Airways (stopover at Abu Dhabi)
- Malaysia Airlines (stopover at Singapore or Kuala Lumpur)
- Cathay Pacific (stopover at Hong Kong)
- China Southern (stopover at Guangzhou)



Flying from United States & Canada

Direct flights

San Francisco

Airlines

Popular airlines flying between both Canada and the United States with Vietnam:

- Korean Air (stopover at Seoul, Korea)
- China Airlines (stopover at Taipei, Taiwan)
- ANA (stopover at Tokyo, Japan)
- Delta (stopover at Seoul, Korea)
- Cathay Pacific (stopover at Hong Kong)



Flying from Australia & New Zealand

Direct flights

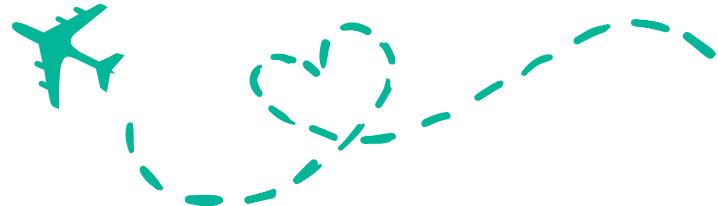
1. Melbourne, Victoria
2. Sydney, New South Wales
3. Perth

Airlines

- Jetstar (direct flight between Melbourne and Vietnam)
- VietJet Air (direct flight between Melbourne and Vietnam)
- Vietnam Airlines (direct flight between both Sydney and Melbourne with Vietnam)
- Air Asia (stopover in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)
- Thai Airways (stopover in Bangkok, Thailand)

From airport to city

From Noi Bat Airport to Hanoi City Center



The journey from Hanoi Airport to the city center takes approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour, depending on traffic conditions.

Taxi:

Look for taxi stands located outside the Noi Bai arrival terminals. Avoid accepting offers from individuals inside the terminal. Instead, queue up at the taxi stands. Airport taxis charge a flat rate of approximately 18 USD to the city center.

Grab or other taxi-apps are also possible at the airport.

Airport Transfer:

If you booked your holiday through Local Vietnam, there will be a pre-booked airport pick-up ready waiting for you.

Hotel Shuttle:

Some hotels offer pick-up services from the airport.



Bus:

Take Bus 86, which directly connects the airport to various stops in Hanoi city. The bus ride takes about an hour and costs VND 5,000 (approximately \$0.30) per ride. This bus route passes through Hoan Kiem Lake and Hanoi's Old Quarter before reaching Hanoi Central Station.



Airport Shuttle Bus:

Vietnam Airlines minibusses depart every 30-40 minutes from Terminal 1. Tickets cost VND 40,000 (approximately \$2) for a one-way trip. This shuttle bus also operates from the city center to the airport, with departures from the Vietnam Airlines booking office on 01, Quang Trung Street.

From airport to city

From Tan Son Nhat Airport to Ho Chi Minh City



It takes around 30 to 45 minutes to travel from Tan Son Nhat Airport to the city center, depending on traffic conditions.

Taxi:

Upon arrival, head to the taxi counter to purchase a taxi coupon. Reliable taxi companies like Mai Linh or Vinasun are recommended. The coupon will assign you to a driver, ensuring a safe and reliable journey.

Grab or other taxi-apps are also possible at the airport.



Bus:

Many backpackers opt for Bus No. 152, which costs 20,000 VND (including a backpack supplement). This bus will take you to the bus stop on Pham Ngu Lao Street, located near the roundabout at Ben Thanh Market. Another option is Bus No. 49, which costs 40,000 VND and has fewer stops, allowing for a quicker arrival in District 1.



Airport Transfer:

If you booked your holiday through Local Vietnam, there will be a pre-booked airport pick-up ready waiting for you.

Communication

SIM Card

We recommend getting a Viettel SIM card, which can be purchased from official stores or at the airport. Remember, SIM cards must be registered with your passport. A 5 GB/30-day package costs around 100,000 VND (approximately \$5 USD).

WiFi

Most hotels, restaurants, and cafés offer free wireless internet, allowing you to stay connected throughout your journey.

Calling

There is reliable mobile network coverage in most parts of Vietnam. Before your trip, check with your provider for options and costs regarding mobile calling in Vietnam.

Useful Apps

Google Translate



Communication & Translating menus and signs

Xe - Currency Converter



Check how much Vietnam Dong is worth in your own currency

Grab



Taxi app similar to Uber

TripAdvisor



Find recommended restaurants

Google Maps



Navigate through cities

Personal Banking App



Keep track of your expenses

Weather App



Stay informed about the weather conditions

Health & Safety



Water

It is important to avoid drinking tap water in Vietnam. Stick to bottled water and be cautious of ice made from potentially contaminated water. Many restaurants source their ice from safe companies.

Food

Enjoy local cuisine while taking necessary precautions. Ensure soup dishes like Pho are served piping hot. Stick to cooked foods and be cautious with raw meat and vegetables. Use your judgment and be careful with fruits, opting for those with inedible skins such as bananas, oranges, and watermelons.

Insects

While malaria is primarily confined to rural areas, dengue fever is more prevalent throughout the country. Protect yourself from mosquitoes by using a bug spray containing DEET. Malaria pills are generally not necessary unless you are venturing off the beaten track.

Vaccinations

While not mandatory, it is recommended to have a DTP vaccination and protection against hepatitis A when traveling to Vietnam. For stays longer than two weeks, a typhoid vaccination is also advisable. Consult your doctor for professional advice tailored to your specific needs.

Animals

Vietnam is home to various animals on the streets, including dogs, cats, and chickens. However, it is important to note that Vietnam is not a rabies-free country, so it is best to stay away from these animals to avoid any risks.

Road Safety

When exploring Vietnam, road safety is crucial. Be cautious when crossing the street, as traffic can be overwhelming. Look out for motorbikes and vehicles, and consider using pedestrian crossings when available. It's advisable to wear a helmet if riding a motorcycle and to adhere to local traffic regulations.

Health & Safety

Toilets

In Vietnam, most toilets are Western-style, similar to those found in Europe and North America. However, public toilets can be scarce, especially in rural areas. Coffee shops are abundant and often allow you to use their restrooms for the cost of a small drink, typically around 1 or 2 dollars.

Scam Awareness in Vietnam

Currency Confusion: Beware of overpaying or receiving incorrect change in stores and markets. Familiarize yourself with the local currency and double-check prices.

Taxi Scams: Avoid paying excessive fares or falling for fake taxis. Stick to reputable companies, insist on using the meter, or consider using ride-hailing apps.

Unpriced Restaurants: Exercise caution at establishments that do not display prices. Inquire about prices before ordering to avoid unexpected charges.

Motorcycle Rental Scams: Document pre-existing damages and take photos when renting a motorcycle to avoid false damage charges upon return.

Reliable Travel Agents: Choose reputable agents to avoid inflated ticket prices or forged tickets.

Unwanted Shoe Cleaning: Be wary of shoe cleaners in Hanoi who may clean your shoes without permission and demand payment.

Paying for Pictures: Use caution when approached by individuals offering to take your picture, as some may demand payment afterward.

Crime

Vietnam is generally safe for travelers, and the rate of crime targeting foreign visitors is relatively low. In fact, Vietnam is often considered safer than many Western countries. While incidents can occur, they often involve petty theft or scams rather than violent crime or harassment.

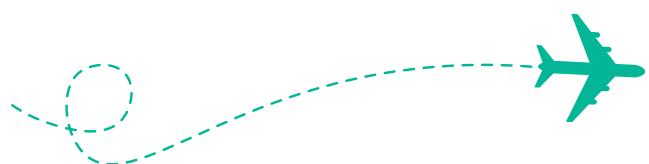
The most common and significant petty thefts in Vietnam involves thieves on motorbikes grabbing items from unsuspecting people.

Emergency numbers

Police: 113

Ambulance: 115

Fire department: 114



Money & Budget

Currency

The official currency is the Vietnamese Dong – đồng (đ) (VND)

1 EUR = 25,000

1 USD = 23,000

1 AUD = 15,000

- July 2023 conversions
- Conversions have been rounded to 1 cent.

Available bills:

VND	USD
1000 đ	\$ 0,04
2000 đ	\$ 0,07
5000 đ	\$ 0,18
10.000 đ	\$ 0,37
20.000 đ	\$ 0,73
50.000 đ	\$ 1,83
100.000 đ	\$ 3,66
200.000 đ	\$ 7,31
500.000 đ	\$ 18.28

Withdraw Money

ATMs are readily available throughout Vietnam, except in smaller villages where access may be limited. However, it's important to be aware that banks often impose maximum withdrawal limits..

- Vietcombank: VND 5,000,000
- Techcombank: VND 5,000,000
- BIDV: VND 2,000,000
- Military Bank: VND 3,000,000
- Agribank: VND 2,000,000



Paying & Tipping

01

Currency

The official currency in Vietnam is the Vietnam Dong (VND). While other currencies are not officially accepted, some travel agencies may be willing to accommodate US Dollar or Euro.

02

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted in major cities at hotels and travel agents. However, smaller establishments and local restaurants may not accept credit cards.

03

Cash

Cash payment is widely used in Vietnam, especially in smaller shops and restaurants. When traveling to remote villages, it's recommended to carry enough cash as access to ATMs may be limited.

04

Tipping

Tipping is not expected in Vietnam but is greatly appreciated. In a country where someone's monthly income may be \$150, a \$1 tip can make a significant impact. While tipping is not mandatory, it's a gesture of appreciation for good service.



Exchange money

Banks in Vietnam, such as Vietcombank, VietinBank, and BIDV, offer currency exchange services. Additionally, gold jewelry shops in cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, often provide competitive exchange rates.

Budget

1 Budget traveler

- Per Day: \$25-\$35
- Per Week (7 days): \$175-\$245

**Accommodation:**

Hostels, guesthouses, and homestays range from \$5-15 per night.

Transportation:

Local buses and trains cost \$1-15.

Activities:

Do it yourself or budget tours available, costing \$20-40 per person.

Food & Drink:

Eating Vietnamese street food for \$10-15 per day.

2 Mid-range traveler

- Per Day: \$50-\$80
- Per Week (7 days): \$350-\$560

Accommodation:

Nice private rooms in hotels range from \$25 to \$50 per night.

Transportation:

Using comfortable buses and trains between cities and taxis within the city costs around \$10 to \$15 per day.

Activities:

Activities average \$30 to \$50 per experience, including guided tours and entrance fees.

Food & Drink:

Meals at local restaurants \$5 to \$10 per meal. Drinks are around \$2 to \$5 each.



Budget

3

Luxury traveler

- Per Day: \$150-\$300
- Per Week (7 days): \$1,050-\$2,100

Accommodation:

From \$100 to \$500 per night, offering private villas, beachfront resorts, and five-star hotels.

Transportation:

Luxury transportation options like private cars, chauffeur services \$100 to \$500 per day.

Activities:

Luxury activities start at \$100 per experience, including private tours and exclusive events.

Food & Drink:

Fine dining experiences range from \$50 to \$100 per meal, with drinks costing \$10 or more.



Money & Budget

What is the price for...

Price for accommodation

Hostel: \$5-\$15 USD/night
Mid-range hotel: \$25-\$50 USD/night
High-end resort: \$150-\$500 USD/night

Price for food and drink

Street food: \$1-\$3 USD/meal
Eating at local restaurant: \$3-\$7 USD/meal
Fine dining restaurant: \$30-\$80 USD/meal
Soft drink at local restaurant: \$0.50-\$1.50 USD
Local beer: \$0.50-\$2 USD
Beer at bar: \$1-\$3 USD/bottle/can
Wine at bar: \$10-\$30 USD/bottle
Cocktails at bar: \$5-\$10 USD/drink
Coffee at café: \$1-\$3 USD/cup

Price for activities & services:

Entrance fee for a temple: \$1-\$3 USD
Massage: \$10-\$20 USD/hour
Group tour: \$20-\$50 USD/person
Private tour: \$50-\$150 USD/person
Spa treatment: \$20-\$50 USD
Manicure/Pedicure: \$5-\$20 USD
Haircut: \$3-\$10 USD
Admission fee for museums: \$1-\$5 USD

Price for transportation

Renting a car with driver: \$50-\$100 USD/day
Bus trip between cities: \$5-\$20 USD
Train travel: \$10-\$50 USD
Motorbike rental: \$5-\$10 USD/day
Taxi per km or mile: \$0.50-\$1 USD/km
Domestic flights: \$30-\$100 USD/person

Miscellaneous

Laundry service: \$1-\$2 USD/kilogram
Souvenir T-shirt: \$5-\$10 USD
Tailored suit or dress: \$50-\$200 USD
Local sim card: \$5-\$10 USD





Holidays

Name	2024	2025	2026	2027
Tet (Tết Nguyên Đán) ★	February 10	January 29	February 17	February 7
Reunification Day ★	April 30	April 30	April 30	April 30
Labour Day	May 1	May 1	May 1	May 1
Phong Sinh	May 11	May 30	May 19	May 9
Summer Solstice (Tết Đoan Ngọ)	June 17	June 6	June 25	June 14
Danang Fireworks Festival	June 1-7	June 1-7	June 1-7	June 1-7
Nha Trang Sea Festival	Not in 2024	June 11-14	Not in 2026	June 11-14
Vietnam National Day	September 2	September 2	September 2	September 2
Mid-Autumn Festival	September 17	October 6	September 25	September 15
Dalat Flower Festival	Not in 2024	December 20-24	Not in 2026	December 20-24
Christmas Day	December 25	December 25	December 25	December 25

★ The 2 biggest holidays in Vietnam

Tips for traveling during Vietnamese holidays

Traveling during Vietnam's Reunification Day Holiday and Tet Holiday offers both unique experiences and some of these challenges:

Visa

Apply for visas well in advance as immigration services are closed during the holidays.

Accommodations

Accommodations are scarce and more expensive, except in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

Restaurants

Many restaurants close during Tet, while some stay open during Reunification Day Holiday.

Tours & Sightseeing

Most tours operate normally, but some attractions may close on the holiday itself.

Domestic Flights

Book flights early as they fill up quickly, and prices rise during the holidays.

Banks & ATMs

Banks are closed, and ATMs may not be refilled, so ensure you have enough cash.

Taxis

Taxis and Grab are available, but expect higher fares during Tet and Reunification Day Holiday.

Buses & Trains

Transportation runs, but book tickets well in advance.

Getting around

Long distance travel

Domestic flights:

Convenient and affordable, with tickets starting at \$30 USD. Vietnam Airlines, Vietjet Air, and Bamboo Airways serve 22 domestic airports. Recommended to avoid long bus trips.



Bus travel:

Extensive network connecting all towns, offering various options from sleeper buses to VIP buses and limousine minibusses. Affordable and flexible in terms of quality and routes.

Train travel:

Slower and more expensive than buses, but provides a safe and unique experience. Night trains are available.



Private car:

Renting a car always includes a driver, offering convenience and flexibility for multi-destination or multi-day trips. While more expensive, it is not as costly as one might expect.

Motorbike:

Popular among backpackers, it is the cheapest way to get around. However, roads in Vietnam are unsafe, so only consider this option if you have a valid motorbike license and experience.

Transportation in cities



Public transportation:

Not popular due to the availability of affordable taxis. The metro system is still in early development, and it can be challenging to navigate public city buses with only English communication and without route knowledge.

Taxis:

Super convenient with door-to-door service and affordable rates. It is advisable to use reliable taxi companies like Mai Linh or Vinasun. Alternatively, you can use taxi apps like Grab to book taxis, check prices, and set destinations.

Motorbike taxis:

Similar to regular taxis, motorbike taxis are available and can be even cheaper and quicker, especially during rush hours in big cities. It is recommended to use motorbike taxis through a taxi app like Grab for safety and convenience.

Walking:

Walking can be challenging in Vietnam as sidewalks are often not well-maintained and used for motorbike parking. Crossing streets in heavy traffic can also be difficult. However, walking is a great way to discover nature and countryside areas where infrastructure is less congested.

Boats & cruises:

Infrastructure for boats and cruises in Vietnam is limited, with ferries being the main mode of transport to islands. Boats are mostly used for leisure activities and sightseeing rather than for short-distance city travel.

Cycling:

Cycling is a popular option for exploring countryside areas in Vietnam. It allows you to enjoy the scenic beauty and immerse yourself in the local culture. However, it may not be as suitable for city travel due to traffic conditions and lack of dedicated cycling lanes.

Booking tickets

Here are some popular options for booking different types of tickets:

Flight tickets:

- [Traveloka](#)
- [Vietjet Air](#)
- [Vietnam Airlines](#)
- [Bamboo Airways](#)

Bus tickets:

- [Vexere](#)
- [12go.asia](#)
- [Baolau](#)

Using taxis

Taxi cost

The cost of taxis in Vietnam is generally based on distance rather than time.

Average cost per kilometer: On average, it ranges between 12,000 to 15,000 Vietnamese Dong (VND) per kilometer, which is roughly 0.50 to 0.65 USD per kilometer.

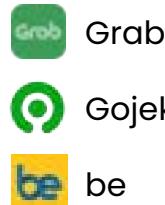
Recommended taxi companies:

- Mai Linh Taxi
- Vinasun Taxi

Taxi apps in Vietnam:

A taxi app is a mobile App that allows you to book and track taxi rides. You just enter your pick up and destination locations and see the time and price upfront.

Recommended apps:



Getting around

How to go get to....

Cities	Airport	Train station	Bus connection	Boat connection
				
Da Nang	✓	✓	✓	
Dalat	✓		✓	
Halong Bay	✓		✓	✓
Hanoi	✓	✓	✓	
Ho Chi Minh City	✓	✓	✓	
Hoi An	✓	✓	✓	
Hue	✓	✓	✓	
Mai Chau			✓	
Ha Giang			✓	
Mekong Delta	✓		✓	✓
Mui Ne		✓	✓	
Nha Trang	✓	✓	✓	
Ninh Binh		✓	✓	
Phong Nha	✓	✓	✓	
Phu Quoc	✓			✓
Quy Nhon	✓	✓	✓	
Sapa		✓	✓	
Con Dao	✓			✓

Weather

Weather per month

Month	North Vietnam		Central Vietnam		South Vietnam	
	Average temperature	Rain (mm)	Average temperature	Rain (mm)	Average temperature	Rain (mm)
January	16°C (60°F)	20mm	22°C (72°F)	40mm	27°C (81°F)	10mm
February	17°C (63°F)	20mm	22°C (72°F)	10mm	27°C (81°F)	0mm
March	20°C (68°F)	30mm	24°C (75°F)	10mm	28°C (82°F)	10mm
April	24°C (75°F)	50mm	27°C (81°F)	20mm	29°C (84°F)	30mm
May	28°C (82°F)	120mm	29°C (84°F)	50mm	29°C (84°F)	120mm
June	30°C (86°F)	200mm	30°C (86°F)	90mm	28°C (82°F)	200mm
July	30°C (86°F)	230mm	30°C (86°F)	90mm	28°C (82°F)	250mm
August	29°C (84°F)	260mm	29°C (84°F)	130mm	28°C (82°F)	300mm
September	28°C (82°F)	230mm	27°C (81°F)	380mm	28°C (82°F)	300mm
October	25°C (77°F)	150mm	25°C (77°F)	530mm	27°C (81°F)	290mm
November	21°C (70°F)	50mm	23°C (73°F)	370mm	27°C (81°F)	120mm
December	17°C (63°F)	20mm	21°C (70°F)	190mm	27°C (81°F)	50mm

: Best travel time in a year

Weather per region



Winter Season

(December - January - February)

Northern Vietnam (Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Sapa):

Cold and dry weather with temperatures ranging from 10°C (50°F) to 20°C (68°F). Some regions may experience occasional fog and drizzle.

Central Vietnam (Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An):

Mild and pleasant temperatures ranging from 18°C (64°F) to 25°C (77°F).

South Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City, Mekong Delta, Phu Quoc):

Warm and dry weather with temperatures ranging from 20°C (68°F) to 30°C (86°F).

Weather per region



Summer Season

(June - July - August)

Northern Vietnam (Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Sapa):

Hot and humid weather with temperatures ranging from 25°C (77°F) to 35°C (95°F). Frequent rain showers and occasional typhoons may occur.

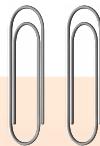
Central Vietnam (Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An):

Hot and dry weather with temperatures ranging from 25°C (77°F) to 35°C (95°F).

South Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City, Mekong Delta, Phu Quoc):

Hot and humid weather with temperatures ranging from 30°C (86°F) to 40°C (104°F). Occasional rain showers and high humidity.

Weather per region



Shoulder Season

(March, April, May, September, October, November)

Northern Vietnam (Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Sapa):

Transition period with mild temperatures and occasional rainfall. Temperatures range from 15°C (59°F) to 25°C (77°F).

Central Vietnam (Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An):

Transition period with mild temperatures. Rain showers and occasional typhoons may occur in September, October and November. March and April warm temperatures and less rain. Temperatures range from 20°C (68°F) to 30°C (86°F).

South Vietnam (Ho Chi Minh City, Mekong Delta, Phu Quoc):

Transition period with moderate temperatures and occasional rainfall. Temperatures range from 25°C (77°F) to 35°C (95°F).

Seasons

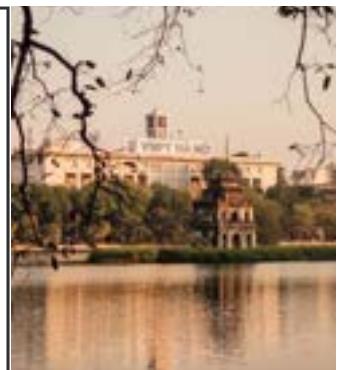
Rainy season:

Traveling during the rainy season in Vietnam means encountering frequent rain showers, but it doesn't rain all day. While there may be flooding in some areas, there is still plenty of sunshine, and it is the warmest period in the country.



Winter season:

Despite being a tropical country, Vietnam experiences a winter season. South Vietnam remains warm throughout the year, but in the northern regions, especially in the mountains and at night, temperatures can drop. Days are usually pleasant for outdoor activities, with a cool but not excessively cold climate.



Harvest season:

The sight of golden yellow rice fields in northern Vietnam during the harvest season is truly breathtaking. The best time to witness this is in early September, although it can be later in the month depending on the weather. May marks the planting of rice, with the fields gradually transforming from water mirrors to lush greenery until they turn yellow as September approaches.



Best season:

Every region has its best season, but the best months all regions somehow align would be January, February, March and April.



Accommodations

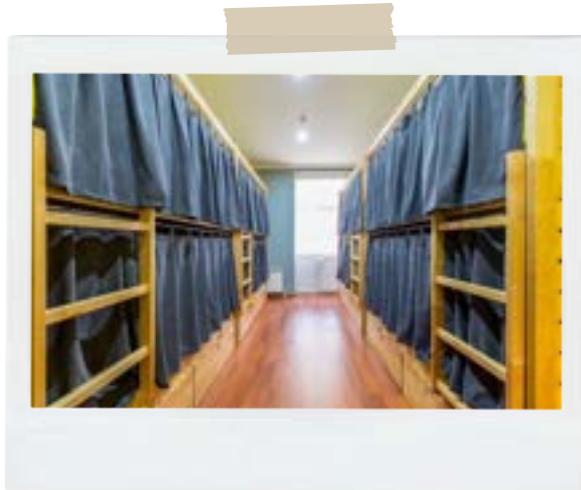
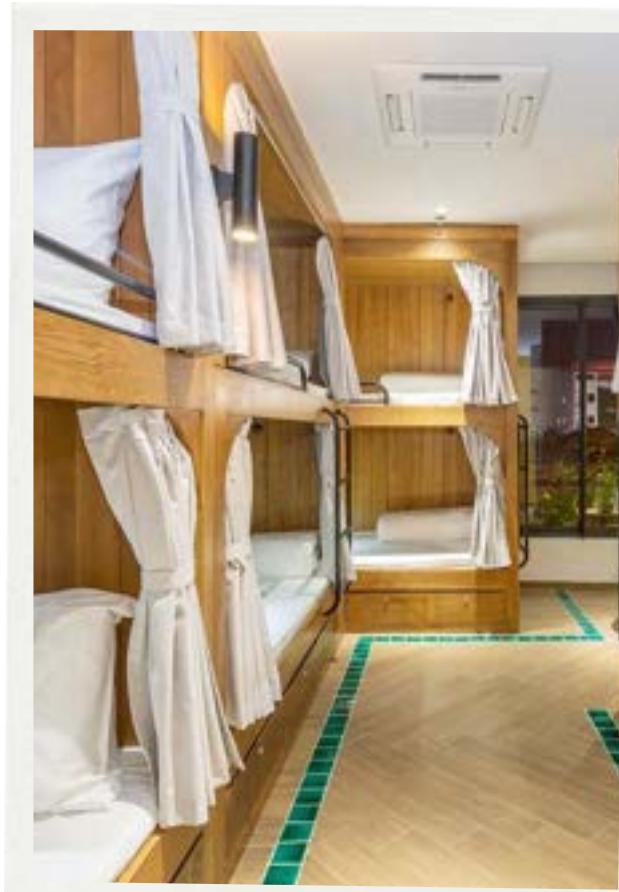
Hotels



Vietnam offers a wide range of hotels, ensuring that even last-minute bookings are unlikely to leave you empty-handed. From budget-friendly options to more luxurious establishments, there's something for every budget. Private rooms can be found starting from as low as \$15 USD per night. It's worth noting that local hotels often feature firm mattresses. In bustling cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, hotels are often constructed on narrow plots of land, resulting in some rooms without windows located in the middle of the building.

Hostels

Hostels in Vietnam primarily cater to international travelers, as they are not commonly used by locals. As a result, hostels are generally less likely to be fully booked during peak Vietnamese holidays. It's important to note that hostels are primarily found in tourist towns and may not be available in off-the-beaten-track areas. For budget accommodation in such areas, it is advisable to consider homestays. The cost of a hostel can be as low as \$4 USD per night for a bed in a dormitory room.



Accommodations



Resorts & Retreats

Vietnam boasts a wide array of resorts, typically located in secluded areas such as private beaches, hillsides, or countryside settings. While resort prices can be higher compared to hotels, they still offer great value for the experience you receive, especially when compared to Western countries.

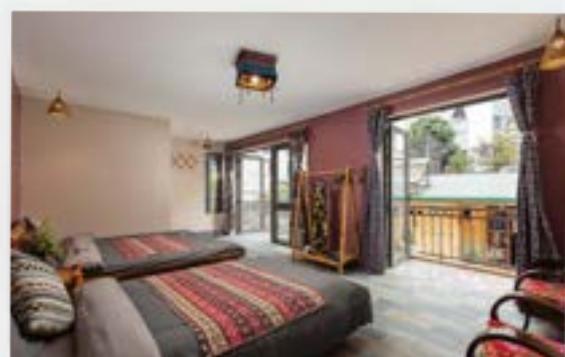


Homestays

Homestays offer a unique and diverse experience in Vietnam, with two distinct types available.

The original homestay allows you to stay in the homes of local residents, often sharing meals with them. This is an exceptional opportunity, particularly in northern regions, where you can immerse yourself in the traditional lifestyle of ethnic minorities and reside in their stilt or clay houses. While luxury amenities may be limited, most homestays provide Western toilets, hot showers, and even WiFi. However, it's important to note that the emphasis here is on the cultural experience rather than a luxurious getaway.

The second type of homestay resembles small hotels, providing greater comfort and convenience. Although lacking the authentic family experience, these homestays offer a more personal touch compared to larger hotels. While you won't have the opportunity to stay with a local family, you can still enjoy a charming and intimate atmosphere.



Tips for booking accommodations

1

Read reviews:

It's important to carefully review feedback from other travelers, preferably on platforms that verify the authenticity of the reviews, ensuring they are not fake.

2

Choose the right location:

Since public transportation in Vietnam can be limited, it's wise to avoid staying too far from the areas you plan to explore. Saving money on a hotel farther away may result in higher taxi expenses.

3

Consider apartment options:

If you're planning a longer stay, consider renting an apartment, house, or villa through platforms like Airbnb, which offer a variety of accommodations to suit different needs.

4

Check amenities:

Depending on the season and region you're visiting, ensure that the accommodation provides suitable amenities. For instance, if you're visiting northern provinces during winter, check if there are heating facilities available to keep you warm. Likewise, in hotter regions, ensure there are measures to keep you cool. Additionally, consider if the accommodation has desired amenities like a pool or restaurant.

5

Review booking policies:

Check the accommodation's booking policies to see if they offer flexibility, such as the ability to change or cancel reservations if needed. This can be helpful in case of unexpected changes to your travel plans.

Packing List



Please note that the quantities of clothing mentioned can be adjusted based on your personal preferences and the duration of your trip.

Additionally, consider the specific nature of your trip, such as spending more time on the beach, visiting Vietnam during rainy hot summer months, or experiencing the chiller dry winter season. Adapt your packing list accordingly to ensure you have the appropriate clothing for the specific conditions you will encounter.

Important documents

- Visa
- Passport
- Credit card(s)
- Debit card
- Cash (possibly in US Dollars)
- Copies of important documents
- Reservations
- Boarding passes

Toiletries

- Toothbrush and toothpaste
- Shampoo and conditioner
- Soap or body wash
- Face cleanser
- Moisturizer
- Sunscreen
- Deodorant
- Razor
- Hairbrush or comb
- Feminine hygiene products (if needed)
- Medications (if applicable)
- Travel-sized toiletries (if desired)

Medical items

- Health Care Card
- Prescription medications
- Basic first aid kit
- Pain relievers (such as paracetamol or ibuprofen)
- Anti-diarrheal medication
- Motion sickness medication (if needed)
- Insect repellent

Medical items



- Hand sanitizer
- Sun cream
- Any personal medical items or supplies specific to your needs

Packing List



Please note that the quantities of clothing mentioned can be adjusted based on your personal preferences and the duration of your trip.

Additionally, consider the specific nature of your trip, such as spending more time on the beach, visiting Vietnam during rainy hot summer months, or experiencing the chiller dry winter season. Adapt your packing list accordingly to ensure you have the appropriate clothing for the specific conditions you will encounter.

Clothes

- 1 pair of light hiking boots or sneakers
- 1 pair of sandals/flip flops
- 1 hat/cap
- 2 swimsuits
- 1 lightweight rain jacket
- 1 microfiber travel towel
- 4 shorts
- 1 pair of long pants/leggings
- 5 pairs of travel socks (including 1 hiking pair)
- 6 pairs of travel underwear
- 2 sports bras
- 1 regular bra
- 1 long sleeve base layer (thin)
- 6 dresses/tank tops/shirts

Electronics & Accessories

- Smartphone
- Laptop or tablet (optional)
- Travel adapter for electronics with specific plugs
- Portable charger/power bank
- Earphones or headphones
- Camera or smartphone with a good camera
- Memory cards or external storage device
- USB cables and charging cords
- Travel-sized lock for securing your belongings
- Waterproof phone case or protective sleeve



Routes

Northern Vietnam in 1 week



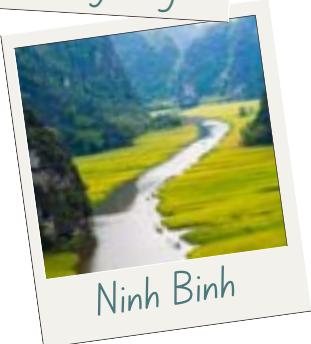
Hoan Kiem Lake



Sapa



Halong Bay



Ninh Binh

Day 1-2:

Explore the vibrant city of [Hanoi](#), visit iconic attractions like Hoan Kiem Lake and the Old Quarter.

Day 3-4:

Journey to the stunning mountain town of [Sapa](#), trek through terraced rice fields, and immerse yourself in the local hill tribe culture.

Day 5:

Cruise through the breathtaking landscapes of [Halong Bay](#), marvel at limestone karsts, and enjoy water activities.

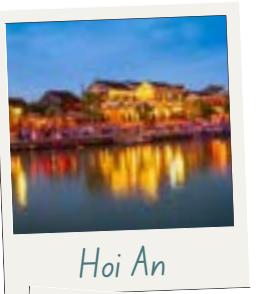
Day 6:

Discover the natural beauty of [Ninh Binh](#), explore Tam Coc or Trang An, and take a boat ride through scenic caves and limestone formations.

Day 7:

Return to [Hanoi](#), explore more of the city, indulge in local cuisine, and prepare for your onward journey.

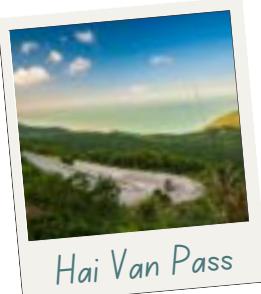
Central Vietnam in 1 week



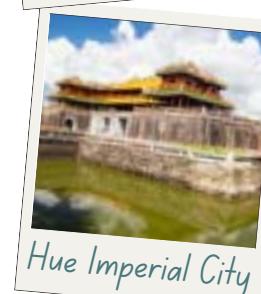
Hoi An



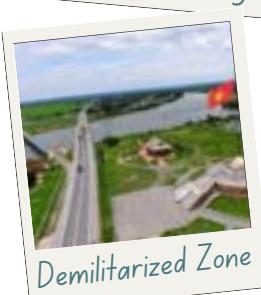
Da Nang



Hai Van Pass



Hue Imperial City



Demilitarized Zone

Day 1-2:

Explore the charming ancient town of [Hoi An](#), wander through the picturesque streets, visit historical sites, and enjoy cycling around the countryside. Take day trips to My Son Sanctuary or Marble Mountains.

Day 3:

Spend a day relaxing on the beautiful beaches of [Da Nang](#), soak up the sun and indulge in water activities.

Day 4:

Embark on a scenic journey from [Da Nang](#) to [Hue](#) via the famous Hai Van Pass, enjoy breathtaking views along the way.

Day 5:

Discover the rich history of [Hue](#) by exploring the Imperial City, visit the royal tombs, and immerse yourself in the cultural heritage of the city.

Day 6:

Take a tour to the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), explore historical sites related to the Vietnam War, and gain insights into the country's past.

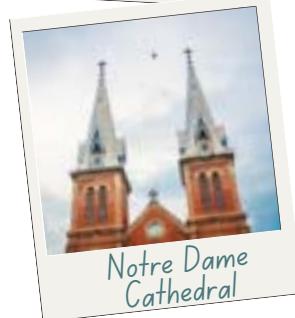
Day 7:

Wrap up your central Vietnam trip in [Hue](#), savor local cuisine, and prepare for your onward journey.

South Vietnam in 1 week



Cu Chi Tunnels



Notre Dame Cathedral



Cai Rang
Floating Market



Phu Quoc

Day 1-2:

Explore the vibrant city of Ho Chi Minh City, take a day tour to the Cu Chi Tunnels to learn about Vietnam's history, go on a thrilling street food tour on a motorbike, and visit the city's highlights such as the Notre Dame Cathedral and the War Remnants Museum.

Day 3-4:

Journey to the Mekong Delta region and stay in Can Tho. Experience the bustling floating markets, cycle through the picturesque countryside, and enjoy a boat tour along the Mekong River.

Day 5-7:

Fly to the tropical paradise of Phu Quoc and unwind on its stunning beaches. Relax, swim, and soak up the sun while enjoying the tranquil atmosphere of this island getaway.

Vietnam highlights in 2 weeks



Day 1-2:

Start your adventure in [Hanoi](#), exploring the city's bustling streets and vibrant culture. Take a street food tour to sample delicious local cuisine.

Day 3-4:

Journey to [Sapa](#) and immerse yourself in the beauty of the terraced rice fields. Embark on a trekking adventure to discover the picturesque landscapes and visit local villages.

Day 5-6:

Continue your journey to [Halong Bay](#) and embark on a relaxing cruise, marveling at the breathtaking limestone karsts and enjoying the serene surroundings.

Day 7-9:

Explore the scenic countryside of [Ninh Binh](#), cycling through lush landscapes and visiting ancient temples and pagodas.

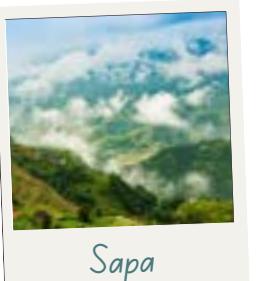
Day 10-12:

Head to [Hoi An](#) and indulge in the charm of this ancient town. Discover its rich history, take a cycling tour to explore the countryside, visit the My Son Sanctuary, and relax on the beautiful beaches.

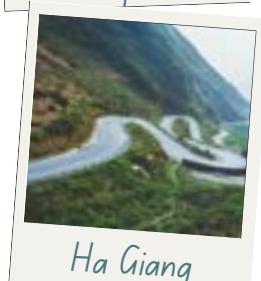
Day 13 - 14:

Conclude your trip in [Ho Chi Minh City](#). Explore the historic Cu Chi Tunnels and take a day trip to the enchanting [Mekong Delta](#), experiencing the local way of life.

Northern Vietnam in 2 weeks



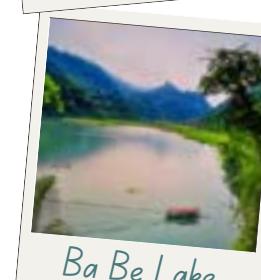
Sapa



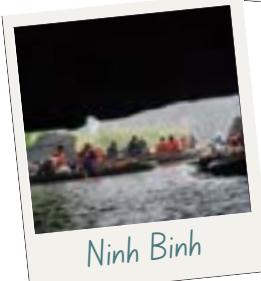
Ha Giang



Ban Gioc Waterfall



Ba Be Lake



Ninh Binh

Day 1-2:

Explore the vibrant city of [Hanoi](#), visit its iconic landmarks, and indulge in a street food tour to savor the local flavors.

Day 3-5:

Travel to [Sapa](#) and embark on a memorable trekking journey through the breathtaking rice terraces and ethnic minority villages.

Day 6-7:

Head to [Ha Giang](#) and embark on the epic Ha Giang Loop, immersing yourself in the stunning mountainous landscapes and encountering the local hill tribes.

Day 8-9:

Visit [Cao Bang](#) to witness the awe-inspiring Ban Gioc Waterfall, one of the most magnificent waterfalls in Vietnam.

Day 10-11:

Explore the tranquil beauty of Ba Be Lake in [Bac Kan](#) by taking a boat tour, admiring the surrounding lush landscapes and serene atmosphere.

Day 12-13:

Relax and unwind on a cruise in the enchanting [Halong Bay](#), marveling at its limestone karsts and enjoying the tranquility of the sea.

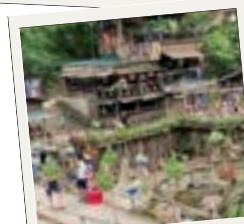
Day 14:

Conclude your journey with a cycling adventure in [Ninh Binh](#), exploring the picturesque countryside and its famous limestone caves and pagodas.

Northern + Central Vietnam in 2 weeks



Hanoi



Sapa



Ha Giang



Ninh Binh



Hoi An

Day 1-2:

Begin your journey in [Hanoi](#), exploring the vibrant city and its rich history. Take a street food tour and visit cultural landmarks like the Old Quarter and Hoan Kiem Lake.

Day 3-4:

Travel to [Sapa](#) and immerse yourself in the stunning landscapes of terraced rice fields. Trek through the scenic countryside, interact with local hill tribes, and experience their unique culture.

Day 5-8:

Continue your adventure to [Ha Giang](#) and embark on the Ha Giang Loop, driving through breathtaking mountains and witnessing awe-inspiring vistas. Explore remote villages and encounter the ethnic communities that call this region home.

Day 9-10:

Head to [Halong Bay](#) and embark on a cruise to marvel at the iconic limestone karsts and picturesque islands. Enjoy activities like kayaking and swimming in the turquoise waters.

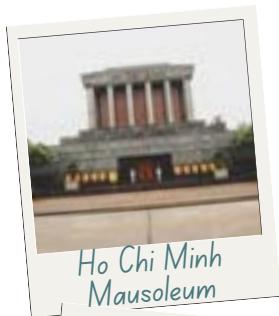
Day 11-12:

Journey to [Ninh Binh](#) and explore its natural wonders. Cycle through the countryside, visit the stunning Trang An or Tam Coc caves, and take in the beauty of the karst landscapes.

Day 13 - 14:

Explore [Hoi An](#), wander through the ancient town, visit historical sites, and relax on the beautiful beaches.

Northern + Central Vietnam in 3 weeks



Day 1-2:

Start your adventure in [Hanoi](#), exploring its bustling streets, visiting cultural sites like the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and Temple of Literature, and indulging in delicious street food.



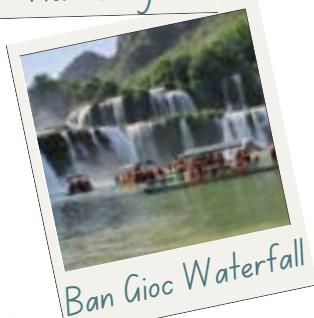
Day 3-5:

Journey to [Sapa](#) and trek through the stunning rice terraces, interacting with local ethnic tribes and immersing yourself in their traditional way of life.



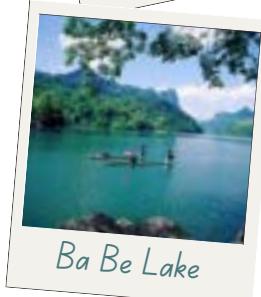
Day 6-8:

Explore the rugged beauty of [Ha Giang](#), embarking on the Ha Giang Loop and marveling at the breathtaking mountain landscapes and remote villages.



Day 9-10:

Visit [Cao Bang](#) and be mesmerized by the majestic Ban Gioc Waterfall, one of the most impressive waterfalls in Vietnam.



Day 11-12:

Discover the tranquil beauty of Ba Be Lake in [Bac Kan](#), surrounded by lush forests and limestone cliffs. Take a boat trip to explore the lake and visit the local ethnic communities.



Halong Bay



Hoa Lu



Hoi An



Hai Van Pass



Hue Imperial City

Day 13-14:

Cruise through the mesmerizing limestone formations of [Halong Bay](#), enjoying activities like kayaking, swimming, and exploring hidden caves.

Day 15-16:

Head to [Ninh Binh](#) and cycle through the scenic countryside, visit the ancient capital of Hoa Lu, and take a boat ride through the stunning Trang An or Tam Coc caves.

Day 17-19:

Arrive in [Hoi An](#) and immerse yourself in its charming old town. Explore historical sites, indulge in local cuisine, relax on the beaches, and take a cycling tour through the surrounding countryside.

Day 20:

Embark on a scenic journey from Hoi An to [Hue](#) via the famous Hai Van Pass, enjoy breathtaking views along the way.

Day 21:

Conclude your journey in [Hue](#), where you can explore the UNESCO-listed Imperial City, visit ancient tombs, and learn about Vietnam's imperial past.

Vietnam highlights in 3 weeks



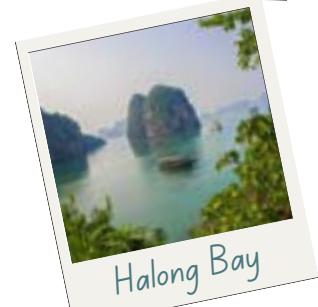
Hanoi



Temple of Literature



Sapa



Halong Bay



Ninh Binh

Day 1-3:

Begin your adventure in **Hanoi**, exploring the vibrant Old Quarter, sampling street food, and visiting cultural sites like the Hoan Kiem Lake and the Temple of Literature.

Day 4-6:

Journey to **Sapa** and trek through the picturesque rice terraces, interacting with local hill tribes and enjoying the stunning mountain scenery.

Day 7-8:

Cruise through the stunning limestone karsts of **Halong Bay**, kayaking, swimming, and relaxing on board a traditional junk boat.

Day 9-10:

Explore the natural beauty of **Ninh Binh**, cycling through scenic landscapes, visiting ancient temples, and taking a boat ride through Trang An or Tam Coc.



Day 11–13:

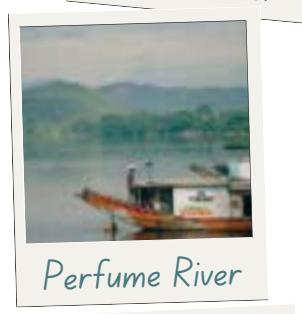
Visit the charming town of Hoi An, strolling through its ancient streets, exploring the UNESCO-listed Old Town, and relaxing on the beautiful beaches.



Hue Citadel

Day 14:

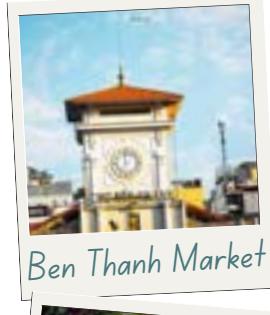
Embark on a thrilling journey along the Hai Van Pass, a scenic coastal road that offers breathtaking views of the ocean and surrounding landscapes.



Perfume River

Day 15-16:

Arrive in **Hue** and discover its imperial past by visiting the historic Hue Citadel, exploring ancient tombs, and taking a boat trip along the Perfume River.



Ben Thanh Market

Day 17-19:

Fly to Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon) and delve into its bustling streets, visiting landmarks like the Cu Chi Tunnels, the War Remnants Museum, and the vibrant Ben Thanh Market.

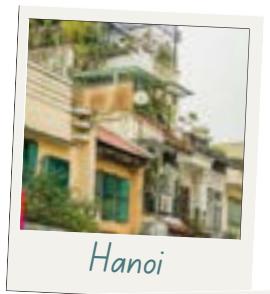


Mekong Delta

Day 20-21:

Explore the enchanting Mekong Delta, cruising along its winding waterways, visiting floating markets, and experiencing the rich culture of the region.

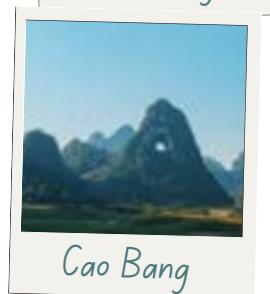
Vietnam highlights in 4 weeks



Hanoi



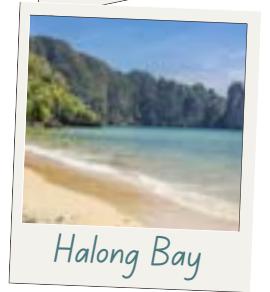
Ha Giang



Cao Bang



Bac Kan



Halong Bay

Day 1-3:

Arrive in [Hanoi](#) and explore the vibrant city, visiting attractions like the Old Quarter, Hoan Kiem Lake, and the Temple of Literature.

Day 4-6:

Travel to [Sapa](#) and embark on a trekking adventure through the stunning rice terraces, interacting with local hill tribes and enjoying the breathtaking mountain scenery.

Day 7-9:

Journey to [Ha Giang](#) and embark on the famous Ha Giang Loop, exploring the majestic landscapes, riding through winding mountain roads, and experiencing the local culture.

Day 10-11:

Continue your exploration in [Cao Bang](#) and visit the stunning Ban Gioc Waterfall, one of the largest waterfalls in Vietnam, and discover the beautiful surrounding countryside.

Day 12-13:

Head to Ba Be Lake in [Bac Kan](#) and enjoy a boat ride on the tranquil lake, surrounded by lush greenery and karst mountains, immersing yourself in the serene natural beauty.

Day 14-16:

Cruise through the stunning limestone formations of [Halong Bay](#), kayaking, swimming, and relaxing on a traditional junk boat, while taking in the breathtaking views.



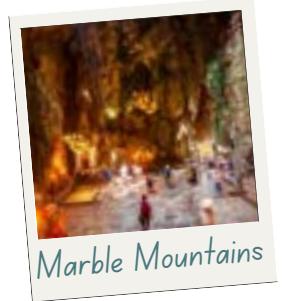
Day 17–18:

Explore the picturesque landscapes of Ninh Binh, cycling through the countryside, visiting ancient temples like Bai Dinh Pagoda, and taking a boat ride through Trang An or Tam Coc.



Day 19–22:

Visit the charming town of Hoi An, stroll through its well-preserved ancient streets, explore the UNESCO-listed Old Town, and relax on the beautiful beaches.



Day 23:

Embark on a thrilling journey along the Hai Van Pass, enjoying scenic coastal views and exploring attractions like Lang Co Beach and the Marble Mountains.



Day 24-25:

Arrive in **Hue** and discover its rich history by visiting the Imperial City, ancient tombs, and taking a boat trip along the Perfume River.



Day 29–30:

Venture into the enchanting Mekong Delta, cruising along its winding waterways, visiting floating markets, and experiencing the unique culture of the region.

Our Personal Ultimate Bucket List

20 Handpicked Experiences by Our Team of Experts

1

Drive the
Ha Giang loop

[Learn more](#)



2

Walk through
ancient town of
Hoi An

[Learn more](#)



3

Take a cruise in
Halong Bay

[Learn more](#)



4

Make a trekking
in Sapa

[Learn more](#)



5

Canyoning in
Dalat

[Learn more](#)



6

Relax on the
beaches of
Phu Quoc

[Learn more](#)



7

Crawl through
the Cu Chi
Tunnels

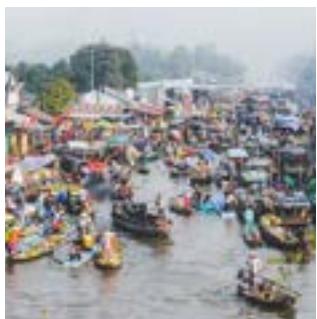
[Learn more](#)



8

Visit a floating
market in the
Mekong Delta

[Learn more](#)



Our Personal



Ultimate Bucket List

9

Explore a cave
in Phong Nha

[Learn more](#)



10

Street food
tour in Hanoi

[Learn more](#)



11

Cycle through
Mai Chau
countryside

[Learn more](#)



12

Go by motorbike
over the Hai Van

Pass

[Learn more](#)



13

Take a boat trip
in Ninh Binh

[Learn more](#)



14

Do a
Vietnamese
cooking course

[Learn more](#)



15

Enjoy a water
puppet show
in Hanoi

[Learn more](#)



16

Visit a local
ethnic northern
market

[Learn more](#)



17

Have a beer
at Bia Hoi
Junction

[Learn more](#)



18

Explore Hue
imperial city

[Learn more](#)



19

Drink a cocktail
on a rooftop bar
in Saigon

[Learn more](#)



20

Diving in
Con Dao

[Learn more](#)



Travel inspiration

Adventure



01.

Drive the Ha Giang Loop on the back
of a motorbike [Learn more](#)



03.

Zipline from waterfalls at canyoning
in Dalat [Learn more](#)



04.

Rock climbing in Halong Bay
[Learn more](#)

| Adventure



05.

Multi-day trekking in Sapa with overnight in an ethnic homestay

[<Learn more>](#)



06.

Jump the waves with kitesurfing in Mui Ne [<Learn more>](#)



07.

Mountain biking in Dalat

[<Learn more>](#)



08.

Explore the underwater world while diving in Con Dao [<Learn more>](#)



09.

Go sandboarding and quad biking on the sand dunes of Mui Ne

[<Learn more>](#)



10.

Conquer Mount Fansipan, the highest peak of Vietnam

[<Learn more>](#)

Beach and Island



01.

Relax on the pristine shores of Phu Quoc Island [Learn more](#)



03.

Immerse yourself in the laid-back vibes of An Bang Beach in Hoi An
[Learn more](#)



04.

Discover the off-the-beaten-path beauty of Quy Nhon [Learn more](#)

Travel Inspiration

I Beaches and Islands



05.

Venture to the secluded beauty of
Bai Tu Long Bay [<Learn more>](#)



06.

Discover the untouched beauty of
Cat Ba Island [<Learn more>](#)



07.

Experience the vibrant nightlife and
stunning coastline of Nha Trang
[<Learn more>](#)



08.

Dive into the crystal-clear waters
surrounding Cham Island
[<Learn more>](#)



09.

Unwind on the breathtaking
beaches of Phan Thiet and Mui Ne
[<Learn more>](#)



10.

Explore the enchanting islands
of Nha Trang Bay
[<Learn more>](#)

Countryside and Natural Wonders



01.
Sapa's Majestic Rice Terraces
[Learn more](#)



02.
Ban Gioc Waterfall: Nature's Spectacular Beauty [Learn more](#)



03.
Ninh Binh's Stunning Karst Scenery
[Learn more](#)



04.
Ha Giang's most stunning mountain scenery [Learn more](#)

Travel Inspiration — — — — —

I Countryside and Natural Wonders



05.

Pu Luong Nature Reserve: Serenity and Biodiversity [Learn more](#)



07.

Con Dao Archipelago: Pristine Beaches and Marine Life [Learn more](#)



09.

Mekong Delta's Floating Markets and Lush Delta Landscapes
[Learn more](#)

10.

Dalat's Plantations, Waterfalls and Forests [Learn more](#)

Food and Culinary



01.

Embark on a Street Food Adventure
in Hanoi's Old Quarter [Learn more](#)



02.

Learn how to cook Vietnamese in a
Cooking Class in Hoi An [Learn more](#)



03.

Taste Ho Chi Minh City's Best Food on
a Motorbike Food Tour [Learn more](#)



04.

Order flavorful Breakfast at Cai Rang
Floating Market [Learn more](#)

Travel Inspiration

| Food and Culinary



05.

Try Rolling Fresh Spring Rolls During a Halong Bay cruise



06.

Immerse Yourself in the Coffee Culture of Vietnam in Dalat

[<Learn more>](#)



07.

Experience the Lively Atmosphere of Bia Hoi with Locals in Hanoi

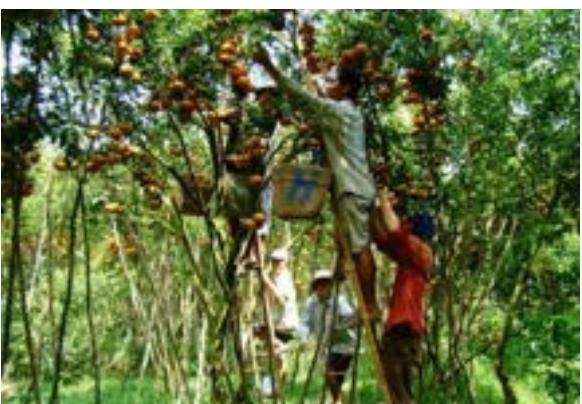
[<Learn more>](#)



08.

Indulge in Saigon's Street Food at Ben Thanh Night Market

[<Learn more>](#)



09.

Pick and Taste Unique Fruits in the Mekong Delta

[<Learn more>](#)



10.

Feast on Hue's Imperial Cuisine

Culture & Authentic Experiences



01.

Stay overnight at a homestay with ethnic minorities [<Learn more>](#)



03.

Visit a vibrant ethnic minority market in northern Vietnam

[<Learn more>](#)

04.

Take a boat trip to the floating markets in the Mekong Delta

[<Learn more>](#)

Travel Inspiration — — — — —

| Culture & Authentic Experiences



05.

Take a easy rider tour through the scenic Central Highlands

[Learn more](#)



06.

Join a water puppet show in Hanoi, a traditional Vietnamese art

[Learn more](#)



07.

Learn about the Vietnam War at the Cu Chi Tunnels [Learn more](#)



08.

Take part in a traditional Vietnamese cooking class [Learn more](#)



09.

Learn traditional Vietnamese crafts at local craft villages [Learn more](#)



10.

Discover Saigon on the back of a motorbike with local driver [Learn more](#)

Most beautiful cities *mini list*



Hoi An

Hanoi



Hue



Dalat



Ho Chi Minh
City



Trekking destinations *mini list*



Sapa

Phong Nha



Pu Luong

Ha Giang



Dalat



Best cycling destinations *mini list*



Mekong Delta

Hoi An



Mai Chau



Ninh Binh



Dalat



Nature destinations *mini list*



Ha Giang

Sapa



Ninh Binh

Halong Bay



Cao Bang

Diving & snorkeling *mini list*



Con Dao

Whale Island



Nha Trang

Phu Quoc



Hoi An

Best rice field destination *mini list*



Sapa

Mu Cang Chai



Hoang Su Phi

Pu Luong



Ninh Binh



Vietnam War sights *mini list*



Cu Chi
Tunnels

War Remnants
Museum



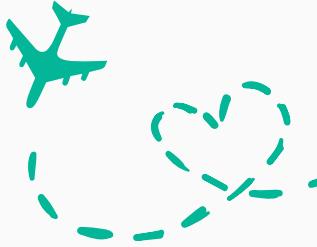
DMZ (Hue)

Con Dao
Prison



Hanoi Hilton

Map of Vietnam



NORTH

- 1. Hanoi 73
- 2. Sapa 80
- 3. Mu Cang Chai 86
- 4. Halong Bay 90
- 5. Ninh Binh 94
- 6. Ha Giang 100
- 7. Mai Chau 106
- 8. Cao Bang 111
- 9. Phong Nha 116

CENTRAL

- 1. Hue 121
- 2. Da Nang 127
- 3. Hoi An 133
- 4. Nha Trang 139
- 5. Dalat 145
- 6. Mui Ne 151

SOUTH

- 1. Ho Chi Minh City 157
- 2. Mekong Delta 163
- 3. Phu Quoc 169
- 4. Con Dao 175

NORTH OF VIETNAM

Hanoi

Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, is a vibrant city known for its museums, pagodas, and lively street culture. The streets of Hanoi are filled with life, bustling with street vendors, motorbikes, and cars, creating a dynamic atmosphere. It offers a wide array of delicious food and serves as a convenient hub for exploring other parts of northern Vietnam.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** You can see most of the major sights in Hanoi in 2 days.
- **Best time to visit:** Best months are October, November, February, March and April, as the weather is most pleasant.
- **Money:** Hanoi has many ATMs. Changing money is often most beneficial at gold and jewelry stores. The rates in these stores are often surprisingly fair.
- **Tourist experience:** You can easily get along with English in the city center. Hanoi is also used to tourists and not that conservative when it comes to clothing. However if you plan to visit temples in the city, make sure you are properly dressed.

How to get there



Flights

Noi Bai International Airport is the main airport in Hanoi, located approximately 30 kilometers from the city center. It offers connections to all other domestic airports in Vietnam.



Bus

Hanoi has several major bus stations, providing convenient access to various destinations in North and Central Vietnam, including Sapa, Ha Giang, Ninh Binh, Da Nang, and Cao Bang.



Train

Hanoi Train Station is centrally located and serves as a hub for train travel. It offers connections to Sapa in the north and Ho Chi Minh City in the south, as well as destinations in between.

Getting around

- **Taxis:** A popular and affordable way to travel, with fares typically less than 1 dollar per kilometer. Reputable taxi companies like VinaSun, Mai Linh, and Hanoi Taxi are recommended. Alternatively, you can use a taxi app like Grab for convenient booking and transparent pricing.
- **Motorbike taxis:** Known as xe om, are another cost-effective option for getting around the city. However, it's important to use a taxi app to ensure safety and avoid overcharging.
- **Walking in Hanoi:** Can be challenging in some areas, particularly the Old Quarter, where sidewalks are often crowded with motorbikes and street vendors. On weekends, certain streets in the Old Quarter are closed to vehicles, providing a pedestrian-friendly environment.
- **Metro system:** Still under construction, with limited operational lines. It may not be the most practical mode of transportation for navigating the city at present.
- **Cyclo:** For a unique experience, consider taking a cyclo ride. While not the most efficient means of transportation, it offers a leisurely and enjoyable way to explore the city's streets.



Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips



- Best local dishes in Hanoi are Pho (Vietnamese noodle soup), Bun Cha (grilled pork with vermicelli noodles), Banh Mi (Vietnamese sandwich), Cha Ca (grilled fish with turmeric and dill), and Nem (spring rolls).
- Try more local restaurants for cheaper and delicious food. Explore the streets of Hanoi and look for places with locals dining, as they often offer authentic and affordable options.
- Drink bia hoi, the cheapest beer in the world, with the locals. One of the most famous places to enjoy bia hoi is at the Bia Hoi Junction in the Old Quarter.
- Join a street food tour, which is the best and safest way to explore and taste the delicious street food of Hanoi. It allows you to sample various dishes while being guided by a knowledgeable local.
- Take a leisurely walk around Hoan Kiem Lake in the evening to see people exercising, dancing, and enjoying the cool air. It's a popular spot for locals and tourists alike to relax and unwind.

Restaurants

Cha Ca Thang Long

Enjoy the famous local dish "Cha Ca" at this renowned restaurant.

Quan An Ngon

Indulge in a variety of Vietnamese delicacies and street food favorites.

Bun Cha Huong Lien

Savor the traditional flavors of "Bun Cha," a favorite of former President Obama.

The Hanoi Social Club

A trendy spot offering diverse international dishes in a vibrant atmosphere.

4P's

A fusion of Vietnamese and Western cuisines at this popular eatery.

Pots 'n Pans

Creative and contemporary Vietnamese cuisine with a modern twist.



Bars

Binh Minh's Jazz Club

A cozy jazz club with live performances and a laid-back ambiance.

Polite & Co

A stylish speakeasy-style bar serving up expertly crafted cocktails.

Né Cocktail Bar

Unwind with signature cocktails and a chic setting at this fashionable bar.

Twilight Sky Bar

Experience the magic of Hanoi's skyline at dusk from this rooftop oasis.

Lighthouse Sky Bar

Enjoy breathtaking city views and refreshing drinks at this rooftop bar.

Staying in Hanoi

Location



The best location to look for accommodation in Hanoi is the Old Quarter. It is a vibrant and lively area with many attractions, such as Hoan Kiem Lake, Dong Xuan Market, and the Temple of Literature, within walking distance. While some areas near bars can be noisy, there are plenty of quieter streets available. Alternatively, you can consider staying a bit outside the Old Quarter for a more peaceful environment.

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

Sofitel Legend Metropole Hanoi: A historic and iconic hotel offering luxurious accommodations and excellent service.

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- La Mejor Hotel & Sky Bar:** Centrally located in the Old Quarter, this hotel provides comfortable rooms and a rooftop terrace with panoramic city views.
- Bespoke Trendy Hotel Hanoi:** A trendy hotel with stylish rooms, a rooftop pool, and a convenient location near Hoan Kiem Lake.
- Hanoi La Storia Hotel:** Situated in a quiet alley in the Old Quarter, this hotel offers modern rooms and a peaceful atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- Hanoi Central Backpackers Hostel:** A budget-friendly hostel with clean and comfortable dormitory rooms, located in the heart of the Old Quarter.
- Little Charm Hanoi Hostel:** A budget-friendly hostel located in the Old Quarter, offering comfortable rooms and a friendly atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



15 highlights in Hanoi



Hoan Kiem Lake



Hoan Kiem Lake



Ba Dinh Square



Street food



Water puppet show



Bia Hoi Hanoi



Long Bien Bridge

1. Explore the Old Quarter on foot

Immerse yourself in the bustling streets filled with motorbikes, vibrant markets, and a mix of ancient temples and French colonial architecture.

2. Embark on a Street food tour

Discover the city's culinary delights with a local guide, sampling authentic street food while learning about Hanoi's vibrant food culture.

3. Join a Water puppet show

Experience the unique art form of water puppetry, where intricately designed puppets perform on a water stage, showcasing traditional Vietnamese stories.

4. Drink Bia Hoi with locals on the street

Join the locals in enjoying the world's cheapest beer while sitting on plastic stools along the lively streets of Hanoi.

5. Visit the Long Bien Bridge & Market

Catch a stunning sunrise at this historic bridge and explore the lively wholesale market bustling with vendors and local products.

6. Walk around Hoan Kiem Lake

Enjoy a leisurely stroll around the scenic lake, especially in the late afternoon, when locals gather for various activities, and visit the Ngoc Son Temple.

7. Visit the Mausoleum on Ba Dinh Square

Pay respects at the final resting place of Ho Chi Minh, combining it with a visit to the iconic One Pillar Pagoda and other nearby attractions.

8. Explore Hanoi train street

Witness the unique sight of a train passing through a narrow residential street, offering an unforgettable and authentic glimpse into local life.

9. Take a cyclo tour of the city

Hop on a cyclo, a traditional Vietnamese bicycle rickshaw, and enjoy a unique perspective while exploring the city's highlights or cruising along Hoan Kiem Lake.



Hanoi train street



Cyclo tour

15 highlights in Hanoi



Hanoi Imperial City



Temple of Literature



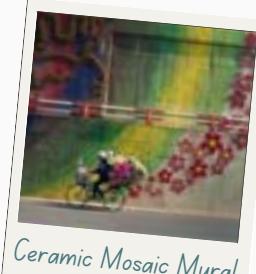
Bat Trang Village



Quang Ba Flower Market



Cycling in Hanoi



Ceramic Mosaic Mural

10. Learn about history at the Imperial City

Discover the rich historical significance of Hanoi by exploring the Imperial City, which served as the political center during past dynasties.

11. See the ancient Temple of Literature

Visit Vietnam's first national university, a well-preserved historical site with beautiful gardens and traditional Vietnamese architecture.

12. Visit traditional villages

Explore Bat Trang for ceramic pottery, Van Phuc for silk weaving, Dong Ho for woodblock printing, and more, to witness traditional craftsmanship in action.

13. Cycling in Hanoi

Venture beyond the city center on a guided cycling tour to experience Hanoi's vibrant neighborhoods and even the peaceful countryside.

14. Hanoi Ceramic Mosaic Mural

Admire the impressive 4-kilometer-long ceramic mural, showcasing intricate artwork and depicting the city's history and culture.

15. Wake up early for the Quang Ba Flower Market

Experience the vibrant atmosphere of the bustling flower market, where locals gather to buy and sell a wide variety of colorful blooms.

Day 2

- Walk to Hanoi Cathedral.
- Visit Hoa Lo Prison (Hanoi Hilton).
- Explore the Temple of Literature.
- Visit Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum.
- Explore the Imperial Citadel.
- Walk across the tracks in Hanoi Train Street.
- Watch a show at the Opera House.

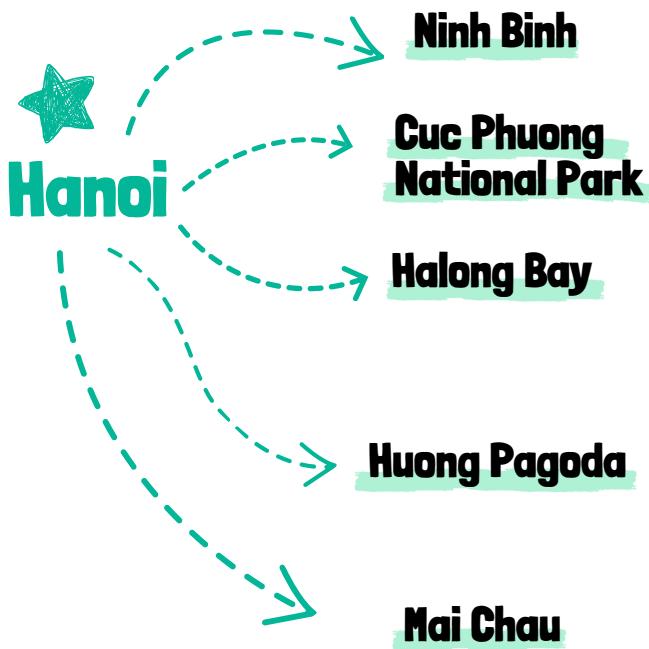
2 days in Hanoi

Day 1

- Explore the Old Quarter, optionally by cyclo.
- Walk around Hoan Kiem Lake.
- Watch a water puppet show.
- Enjoy street food on a food tour.
- Have a beer at Bia Hoi Junction.

Hanoi — — — — —

Best Day trips from Hanoi



Explore Tam Coc, Trang An, and Hoa Lu, known for their stunning landscapes and historical sites.

Discover the rich biodiversity of Vietnam's oldest national park, home to diverse flora and fauna.

Take a breathtaking cruise through the iconic limestone karsts and emerald waters of this UNESCO World Heritage Site (recommended for a 2-day trip).

Journey to this sacred Buddhist site nestled in the Huong Tich Mountains, offering a blend of natural beauty and cultural significance.

Immerse yourself in the scenic beauty and traditional ethnic minority culture of this rural getaway (recommended for a 2-day trip).



NORTH OF VIETNAM

Sapa

apa, located 350 kilometers northwest of Hanoi or around 5 hours driving, is the most famous destination in Vietnam for terraced rice fields and the perfect place for trekking. You also have Fansipan Mountain, the highest peak in the country. You can enjoy a range of accommodations, from unique homestay experiences with ethnic minority communities to luxury mountain resorts.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** You can see most of the major sights in Hanoi in 2 days.
- **Best time to visit:**

July to September	Rainy months, but ideal for witnessing the breathtaking rice fields with September having the golden harvest.
March to May and October to November	Enjoy pleasant weather with moderate temperatures, less rainfall, and optimal conditions for exploring Sapa without extreme cold or heat.

- **Money:** In Sapa town, there are sufficient ATM machines available, and hotels typically accept cards. However, it is advisable to carry enough cash when venturing outside of Sapa and staying at homestays.
- **Tourist experience (Sapa town):** English widely spoken. Outside town: Limited English, more conservative with minorities.



How to get there



Train

Sleeper trains are recommended, including more comfortable tourist trains. The journey takes around 8 to 9 hours. Get off at Lao Cai station and take a taxi to Sapa.



Private car

Although more expensive, hiring a private car offers flexibility in terms of schedule and stops along the way.



Bus

There are both day and night buses available, ranging from budget to luxury. It is the cheapest and fastest option, taking approximately 5 hours from Hanoi via the new highway.



Getting around

- Taxi:** Suitable for short trips within the town.
- Trekking:** The best way to experience the beauty of the rice fields and surrounding landscapes.
- Private car or motorbike:** Ideal for those who prefer not to trek but still want to explore the rice fields and visit ethnic minority villages.



Tips

Restaurants & Nightlife

When exploring the local cuisine, be sure to try traditional dishes like "Thang Co" (a hearty stew made with horse meat), "Com Lam" (bamboo sticky rice), and "Banh Cuon" (steamed rice rolls) filled with savory ingredients.



Sapa

Restaurants

Moment Romantic Restaurant: Charming spot for romantic dining with diverse menu including Western dishes.

Little Vietnam Restaurant: Cozy eatery serving authentic Vietnamese cuisine.

Anise Sapa Restaurant: Fusion of Vietnamese and European cuisines in a stylish setting.

Good Morning View Restaurant: Scenic dining with stunning views and Vietnamese-Western dishes.

Sapa Essence Restaurant: Blend of local and international flavors in a welcoming ambiance.



Bars

Sapa is not known for its nightlife, so don't expect a vibrant scene with many bars or clubs.

Relax Bar: Unwind and enjoy drinks in a laid-back setting.

The H'mong Sisters: Experience local culture and live music at this unique venue.

Staying in Sapa



Location

Cau May – Muong Hoa Street	Center of Sapa	Outside town
Here you will find hostels, hotels and resorts. This area is usually more expensive than the other areas as the view is very nice.	Many options of quality hotels, from affordable to expensive luxury hotels.	Homestays of ethnic groups and also lodges, resorts and small hotels that have little to no facilities around, but offer a more local experience.

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

Topas Eco Lodge: An eco-friendly luxury lodge surrounded by breathtaking natural scenery.

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- Sapa Horizon Hotel:** Comfortable rooms with scenic views, located near popular attractions.
- Eco Palms House Sapa:** A charming eco-friendly accommodation nestled amidst lush greenery.
- Sapa Clay House - Mountain Retreat:** Rustic yet cozy rooms with a focus on sustainability.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- Go Sapa Hostel:** Affordable dormitory-style rooms with friendly staff.
- Sapa Odyssey Hostel:** A budget-friendly hostel with clean rooms and a friendly atmosphere, perfect for backpackers and budget travelers.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Sapa

1. Trekking through the countryside

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Sapa's landscapes, including ethnic villages, rice fields, bamboo forests, and mountains.

2. View the terraced rice fields

Witness the awe-inspiring terraced rice fields that have made Sapa renowned for their stunning natural beauty.

3. Visit minority villages

Experience the rich cultural diversity by exploring local minority villages, where you can encounter vibrant traditions, colorful clothing, and traditional homes.

4. Stay overnight in an ethnic homestay

Gain a unique insight into local life and culture by spending a night in a basic but fascinating ethnic homestay, especially when combined with multi-day trekking adventures.

5. Visit a local market

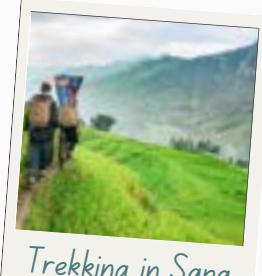
Discover the bustling markets, such as Bac Ha Market (Sunday), Coc Ly Market (Tuesday), Can Cau market (Saturday), Sin Cheng Market (Wednesday) where ethnic groups gather to trade.

6. Go to the top of Fansipan mountain

Reach the summit of Vietnam's highest peak, either by taking a cable car or embarking on a thrilling two-day trekking journey.

7. Drive over Tram Ton Pass

Experience breathtaking views as you traverse Tram Ton Pass, the highest mountain pass in Vietnam.



Trekking in Sapa



Terraced rice fields



Minority villages



Ethnic homestay



Local Market



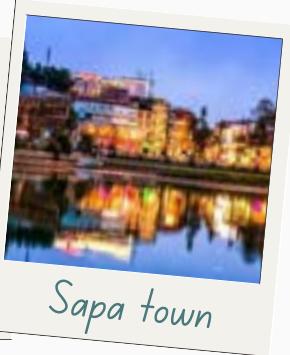
Tram Ton Pass



Fansipan mount



10 highlights in Sapa



Waterfall



(Motor)bike tour

8. Visit local waterfalls

Marvel at the natural beauty of Love Waterfall and Silver Waterfall, two picturesque cascades in the Sapa region.

9. Enjoy Sapa by (motor)bike tour

Explore Sapa's scenic wonders, including rice fields, mountains, and villages, with the convenience and freedom of a bike tour.

10. Explore Sapa town

Discover the charm of Sapa town by visiting its iconic landmarks, such as the Stone Church, Sapa local market, and Ham Rong Mountain.

2 days in Sapa



Day 1

- Visit the local Sapa market
- Drive over the Tram Ton pass and visit the Silver Waterfall
- Back in Sapa, take the train to the Fansipan cable car.
- Take the funicular up and enjoy the view



Day 2

- Take a trekking through the rice fields
- When you have more time, make a 2-day trek,
- including a stay in a homestay





NORTH OF VIETNAM

Mu Cang Chai

Mu Cang Chai boasts some of the most breathtaking terraced rice fields in Southeast Asia. It's best visited during the rice seasons when the fields come alive with vibrant colors. Outside of the right season, there may be limited activities, but the region remains authentically captivating with its local ethnic villages and picturesque mountain landscapes.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** You need a minimum 2 day trekking here.
- **Best time to visit:**

May	Rice planting season with beautiful mirror-like fields
June to August	Rice fields in different stages of growth
September	Harvest season with golden and yellow fields (can extend to early October)
October, November, March, April	Pleasant weather, no rice fields, but ideal for outdoor activities

- **Money:** Limited ATM availability, found only in one town and not reliable. Most homestays do not accept card payments. It is recommended to carry enough Vietnamese Dong (VND) in cash.
- **Tourist experience:** A highly authentic and local experience. Respect the local minority culture by seeking permission before taking photos, dressing appropriately, and avoiding stepping on rice fields which are essential to the livelihood of the people. English proficiency is limited or absent in this area.

How to get there



Bus



Train



Tour

Night buses from Hanoi and comfortable limousine vans by day are most recommended.

No direct train to Mu Cang Chai. The nearest station is Yen Bai Town on the Hanoi-Sapa route, but you'll still need a taxi for a considerable distance.

Highly recommended. Tours include private cars and sightseeing in Mu Cang Chai, which can be challenging to explore on your own.

Getting around

- **Driving a motorbike:** Challenging terrain, suitable for experienced drivers only, but offers great exploration opportunities.
- **Easy Rider (passenger on a motorbike):** Safer option with knowledgeable guides who know the area well.
- **Car:** Comfortable option for hot or rainy weather, but some areas may have limited accessibility.
- **Trekking:** Ideal for exploring the region, especially when combined with car limitations. Multi-day treks with homestay stays are highly recommended.

Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips

- Nightlife is non-existent, mainly centered around drinking rice wine and beer with the locals.
- Restaurant options are scarce, mainly consisting of local establishments.
- Homestays are highly recommended for dining. Overnight stays provide the opportunity to have a family dinner with the host family.



Mu Cang Chai

Staying in Mu Cang Chai

- **Main town:** Also known as Mu Cang Chai, it offers a few basic hotels for accommodation.
- **Countryside:** It is highly recommended to stay in the countryside amidst the rice fields. There are options available ranging from authentic local homestays to more comfortable lodges and retreats.

Recommended accommodations

Local Homestays

Indigenous Homestay: Experience the local culture and hospitality at this authentic homestay.

[Booking.com link](#)

Mu Cang Homestay: Stay with a local family and immerse yourself in the traditional way of life.

[Booking.com link](#)

Hello Mu Cang Chai Homestay: Enjoy a warm welcome and comfortable accommodations in this local homestay.

[Booking.com link](#)

Mid-Range to High-End Lodges/Retreats

• **Mu Cang Chai Eco Lodge:** Experience sustainable luxury amidst the stunning natural beauty.

[Booking.com link](#)



Mu Cang Chai

5 highlights in Mu Cang Chai

1. Trekking through rice fields & villages

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Mu Cang Chai's terraced rice fields, including the picturesque landscapes of Che Cu Nha, La Pan Tan, and Sang Nhu (Horseshoe Hill).



Fields & villages

2. Homestay experience

Experience the warm hospitality of the local ethnic groups by staying in traditional homestays, providing an authentic insight into their culture and way of life.



Homestay

3. Ethnic groups

Encounter the vibrant and unique cultures of the local ethnic groups in Mu Cang Chai, characterized by their colorful attire, traditional practices, and vibrant markets.



Ethnic groups

4. Paragliding over the rice fields

Soar above the golden rice fields during the harvest season and enjoy a thrilling paragliding experience with breathtaking views of the surrounding nature.



Paragliding

5. Explore nature by motorbike

Embark on an adventurous journey by motorbike to the natural wonders, including the Khau Pha Pass and the stunning Pu Nhu Waterfall, with the option to join an experienced "easy rider" guide.



Motorbike

2 days in Mu Cang Chai

Day 1

- Take a one day trek through the rice fields.
- Along the way, visit villages of local ethnic minorities and learn more about their culture.
- In the evening you will spend the night in a local homestay.

Day 2

- Visit some of Mu Cang Chai's famous viewpoints by car or motorbike, such as Horseshoe Hill, Che Cu Nha and La Pan Tan.



NORTH OF VIETNAM

Halong Bay

Halong Bay, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and one of the world's new seven wonders of nature, is a breathtaking destination with thousands of islands, stunning rock formations, hidden caves, and serene lagoons. From budget to luxury cruises, offering day trips and overnight stays. For a less crowded experience, consider exploring alternative bays like Lan Ha Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 1-3 days:** A day trip can provide valuable insights, but keep in mind the 2 times 2.5-hour transfer between Hanoi. Consider a minimum of a 2-day cruise or 3 days if combined with Cat Ba Island.
- **Best time to visit:**

Spring (March, April) and autumn (September, October)	the best weather with cool temperatures.
Summer (May to early September)	Sunny and warm, perfect for swimming, but there may be occasional light rain and the possibility of typhoons.
September	cold weather, particularly in January and February, with foggy days. Not ideal for swimming.

- **Money:** The majority of activities and meals are included in the cruise package. Drinks, however, are typically paid for at the end of the cruise, and many cruises accept card payments.
- **Tourist experience:** During peak seasons, Halong Bay can be crowded, so it's advisable to consider alternative bays such as Lan Ha Bay and Bai Tu Long Bay. All cruises in the area have English-speaking staff, ensuring a smooth experience for tourists.

Halong Bay

How to get there

- **Transfers between Hanoi and Halong Bay** are typically arranged by cruises and take approximately 2.5 hours.
- **Limousine vans** can be booked from both Hanoi and Ninh Binh for transportation to Halong Bay.



Getting around

- **Overnight cruise:** The best way to experience the bay.
- **Day cruises:** Provide good insights, but consider the 5-hour round trip between Hanoi. Alternatively, combine with staying on Cat Ba Island for more time to explore.
- **Scenic flight:** An amazing option for those with limited time, offering a breathtaking view of the bay.
- **Self-exploration** is near impossible. Only way is to go to Cat Ba Island and go around the island and rent kayaks yourself.



Restaurants & Nightlife

- Cat Ba Island offers a few bars, but the nightlife is limited.
- Some cruise boats offer night-time activities like night fishing, sunset cocktails, or karaoke.
- Most overnight boats have onboard restaurants with set menus.
- Cat Ba Island provides more dining options, including local seafood restaurants and Western cuisine.



Halong Bay

Staying in Halong Bay

- **Halong Bay:** Offers a wide range of cruise options from budget to luxury. Sights can be crowded during peak seasons.
- **Lan Ha Bay:** Fewer options compared to Halong Bay but still offers several cruises. Generally less crowded.
- **Bai Tu Long Bay:** Limited cruise options, but the least crowded part of the bay.
- **Cat Ba Island:** Ideal for those who prefer not to take a cruise. Offers hotels, homestays, and resorts on the island.



10 highlights in Halong Bay



Cruise



Various bays



Flight over the bay



Kayaking

1. Cruise through Halong Bay

Experience the beauty of Halong Bay on a cruise, with options ranging from budget to luxury, offering amazing scenery and a variety of activities.

2. Visit Lan Ha Bay or Bai Tu Long Bay

Discover the equally stunning landscapes of Lan Ha Bay or Bai Tu Long Bay, which are less crowded than Halong Bay, offering the same captivating scenery.

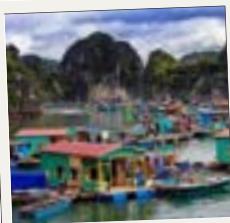
3. Scenic flight over the bay

Take a breathtaking scenic flight over Halong Bay to marvel at its stunning views from above.

4. Explore hidden spots by kayaking

Venture into hidden bays, lagoons, and caves by kayaking, providing an exciting way to explore the bay's hidden gems.

10 highlights in Halong Bay



Fishing farms

5. Visit floating fishing farms

Witness the local way of life as you visit floating fishing farms, where locals cultivate fish and even pearls.



Cat Ba National Park

6. Relaxing on beaches

Unwind and enjoy the tranquility of secluded beaches scattered throughout the islands of Halong Bay.



Relaxing

7. Explore Cat Ba National Park

Trek through the lush jungles of Cat Ba National Park, offering fantastic viewpoints of the island and the bay.



Scenic viewpoints

8. Walk to one of the many caves

Discover the hidden caves nestled within the bay's karst formations, some featuring unique lighting and even offering the option of dining inside the cave.



Explore caves

9. Enjoy scenic viewpoints

Take in the grandeur of Halong Bay from scenic viewpoints on Ti Top Island, Cat Ba Island, and other vantage points, providing a perspective of the bay's vastness.



Rock climbing

10. Go rock climbing

Engage in the thrilling activity of rock climbing, ascending to the top for stunning views while enjoying an unforgettable experience.



NORTH OF VIETNAM

Ninh Binh

Ninh Binh, characterized by karst rocks and mountains amidst rice fields, offers a picturesque landscape. Explore hidden temples, encounter water buffalos, goats, and charming villages. Ideal for cycling and rowing boat trips. It's the perfect place to stay for a few days, unwind, and visit the captivating sights in the area.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** Ninh Binh offers numerous sights to explore, enough to fill a 3-day itinerary. However, it is also an excellent place to unwind and relax in a lodge or homestay amidst the tranquil rice fields.
- **Best time to visit:**

October to November and March to May	Pleasant weather with no extreme heat or cold and minimal rainfall. Best time to visit.
June to September	Hot weather with more chances of rain. However, the countryside is lush green and nature is vibrant.
December to February	Less rainfall, but colder temperatures and the countryside may appear more subdued.

- **Money:** Hotels and homestays generally accept card payments. However, ATMs are mainly available in larger towns and the main city, so it's advisable to carry some cash for boat tickets or dining at local restaurants.
- **Tourist experience:** Some sights can become crowded during mid-morning and early afternoon due to day trips from Hanoi. To escape the crowds, consider staying in the countryside. Despite being a tourist region, Ninh Binh retains its charm and offers a relaxing atmosphere. Many locals speak English and are accustomed to tourists.

Ninh Binh

How to get there

- From Hanoi:** Many vans and luxury limousine buses available, with the trip taking just 1.5 hours. Luxury limousine buses are recommended.
- Tours:** Organize stress-free trips with day tours or multi-day tours. Choose private or small group options.
- From other towns:** Ninh Binh has a train station and good bus connections to Cat Ba, Phong Nha, Da Nang (Hoi An), and Hue.
- Airport:** The best airport is Hanoi's Noi Bai Airport. Limousine buses operate between the airport and Ninh Binh.



Getting around



Bicycle: Enjoy the flat countryside and peaceful atmosphere. Most sights are close together, and many accommodations provide free bicycles.



Scooter/Motorbike: Explore further with less effort and cover more ground in a day.



Taxi/Private Car: Provides comfort, especially on rainy days. Renting a car with driver for the day is a better option than a metered taxi for traveling to specific areas.

Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips

The famous local dish in Ninh Binh is goat meat.



Ninh Binh

Restaurants

- **Trung Tuyet:** Famous for its delicious local cuisine, Trung Tuyet offers a diverse menu with specialty goat meat dishes.
- **Bamboo Bar and Restaurant:** Charming venue serving a mix of local and international dishes in a cozy atmosphere.
- **Chookie's Hideaway:** Hidden gem with a delightful menu of Vietnamese and Western cuisine, offering a relaxing ambiance.
- **Family Restaurant:** Welcoming spot to enjoy a variety of Vietnamese dishes and local specialties.



Bars

- **Tam Coc** has cozy bars and accommodations with bars that stay open until midnight.
- **The countryside** has limited nightlife options.



Staying in Ninh Binh



Location



- **Ninh Binh Town:** Not recommended for accommodation. Far from sights and lacks atmosphere.
- **Tam Coc:** Small town with restaurants and a pleasant atmosphere. One of the most popular places to find accommodation in the region.
- **Trang An:** Located in the remote countryside amidst rice fields. No nearby facilities, but highly recommended for those seeking tranquility and peaceful surroundings.



Ninh Binh

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Tam Coc Garden Resort:** A charming resort surrounded by lush gardens, offering comfortable rooms and a tranquil ambiance.
- **Emeralda Resort Ninh Binh:** Luxury resort nestled in a lush setting, offering spacious rooms and top-notch amenities.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Ninh Binh Hidden Charm Hotel & Resort:** Charming hotel with comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a **tranquil garden**.
- **Lalita Tam Coc Resort & Spa:** A relaxing resort with well-appointed rooms, spa facilities, and scenic views of the surrounding landscapes.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Tam Coc Sunshine Homestay:** Warm Vietnamese hospitality at this cozy homestay. Enjoy comfortable place and friendly atmosphere.
- **Tam Coc Green Garden Resort:** Affordable resort surrounded by nature, offering simple rooms and a peaceful atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

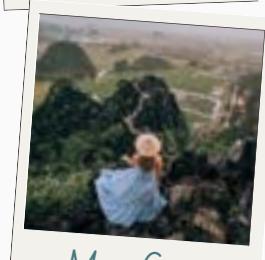
[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Ninh Binh



Thung Nham



Mua Cave



Cuc Phuong



Hoa Lu



Bai Dinh Pagoda



Boat trip



Bich Dong

1. Take a boat trip on Tam Coc river

Experience the beauty of Ninh Binh as you glide through scenic rice fields on a local boat along the Tam Coc river.

2. Enjoy a boat trip in Trang An

Immerse yourself in the stunning landscape of Ninh Binh as you navigate through towering cliffs and discover hidden temples during a boat trip in Trang An.

3. Enjoy the viewpoint at Mua Cave

Capture breathtaking views of Tam Coc's rice fields and winding rivers from the top of Mua Cave, offering the most stunning viewpoint in Ninh Binh.

4. Trek through Cuc Phuong National Park

Embark on a trekking adventure through Cuc Phuong National Park, where you can explore lush jungles and encounter diverse wildlife.

5. Cycle through the countryside of Ninh Binh

Discover the peaceful and picturesque countryside of Ninh Binh on a cycling tour, where you'll encounter buffalos, goats, small rivers, and impressive rocky mountains.

6. Spot wildlife at Van Long Nature Reserve

Take a serene boat tour at Van Long Nature Reserve and spot a variety of birds and rare monkeys in their natural habitat.

7. Visit the ancient capital Hoa Lu

Step back in time and explore the historic site of Hoa Lu, the ancient capital of Vietnam, with its fascinating temples and rich cultural heritage.

8. Explore Bai Dinh Pagoda complex

Marvel at the grandeur of the Bai Dinh Pagoda complex, one of the largest in Vietnam, featuring intricate architecture and serene surroundings.

9. Capture Instagrammable photos at Bich Dong Pagoda

Discover the enchanting Bich Dong Pagoda, nestled amidst a lotus pond, with its old bridge, gate, and hidden temples located within caves.

10. Birdwatching at Thung Nham Bird Garden

Immerse yourself in the beauty of Thung Nham Bird Garden as you observe a variety of bird species and enjoy the tranquility of the surrounding nature.

Ninh Binh

2 days in Ninh Binh

Day 1

- Visit Mua Cave viewpoint
- Cycle to the next destination
- Enjoy a boat trip in Tam Coc
- Cycle to the next point
- Explore Bich Dong Pagoda

Day 2

- Take a boat trip in Trang An
- Cycle to the next location
- Visit Hoa Lu ancient capital
- Return to your accommodation
- Explore Van Long Nature Reserve in the late afternoon





NORTH OF VIETNAM

Ha Giang

Ha Giang, a remote and spectacular area in the northernmost point of Vietnam, offers breathtaking landscapes of limestone pinnacles and granite outcrops among verdant rice terraces. A paradise for adventure seekers, it offers winding roads, towering mountains, and rich cultural experiences with local ethnic minorities. Ideal for trekking and photography, Ha Giang invites exploration of its untouched beauty.

Local tips

- Stay here for 3 - 5 days:** Minimum number of days to do the Ha Giang Loop is 3 days. Spend more time to go off the beaten track or activities like trekking.
- Best time to visit:**

October to November and February to May	Enjoy the best weather with mild temperatures, avoiding extreme cold and hot conditions, and minimal rainfall.
December and January	The coldest months with occasional foggy days, but generally dry.
June to September	The hottest months with a higher chance of rain. However, this period is ideal for witnessing the stunning terraced rice fields in Hoang Su Phi.

- Money:** ATMs are available in larger towns like Ha Giang City, Dong Van, and Meo Vac. However, many local homestays and restaurants only accept cash payments. It is advisable to carry enough cash with you to ensure smooth transactions.
- Tourist experience:** Ha Giang is gaining popularity, but it is still relatively undeveloped, so expect limited comfort and luxury in accommodations. English proficiency is not widespread. The region is rich in ethnic minority cultures, so it is important to dress respectfully and seek permission before taking photos.

Ha Giang

How to get there

Ha Giang is only accessible by road, with no train or flight options available.

- **Sleeper Bus:** Both normal and VIP options are available, with night drives saving time during the day. The journey from Hanoi takes approximately 6 hours.



- **Limousine Buses:** Provide great comfort and operate during the day, offering a pleasant drive to Ha Giang.

Getting around



Driving Motorbike: Offers a sense of freedom and adventure, but only recommended for those with a valid International Driving Permit (IDP) and experience.



Easy Rider (Passenger on a Motorbike): Safer option with a local guide who can take you to various places and arrange everything for you.



Car (with Driver): Provides the most comfortable transportation, especially during hot and rainy summers or cold winters.

Restaurants & Nightlife



- Nightlife can be found in certain homestays popular among backpackers, offering opportunities for drinking and karaoke. Be mindful of booking a "party homestay" if you prefer a quieter experience.
- The majority of restaurants are local Vietnamese establishments, but Dong Van and Ha Giang City have a few surprisingly good options serving Western cuisine.
- Homestays often provide breakfast and dinner options, with dinner typically being a family-style meal shared with the host family and other guests.

Ha Giang Loop Itinerary

To start the loop, begin in Ha Giang City. Local Vietnam can arrange tours with a car and driver or on the back of a motorcycle. If you prefer to drive yourself, you can rent a motorbike in Ha Giang City and follow the example itinerary below.

3 days & 2 nights

Day 1: Ha Giang City – Quan Ba Pass – Tham Ma Pass – Sung La Valley – Hmong Kings Palace – Dong Van

Day 2: Dong Van – Lung Cu Flag Tower – Ma Pi Leng Pass – Meo Vac

Day 3: Meo Vac – Mau Due – Ha Giang City

4 days & 3 nights

Day 1: Ha Giang City – Quan Ba Pass – Tham Ma Pass – Sung La Valley – Hmong Kings Palace – Dong Van

Day 2: Dong Van – Lung Cu Flag Tower – Ma Pi Leng Pass – Meo Vac

Day 3: Meo Vac – Mau Due – Du Gia

Day 4: Du Gia – Ha Giang City

5 days & 4 nights

Day 1: Ha Giang City – Quan Ba Pass – Lung Khuy Cave – Lung Tam Village – Yen Minh

Day 2: Yen Minh – Tham Ma Pass – Sung La Valley – Hmong Kings Palace – Lung Cu – Dong Van

Day 3: Dong Van – Trekking – Ma Pi Leng Pass – Meo Vac

Day 4: Meo Vac – Mau Due – Du Gia

Day 5: Du Gia – Ha Giang City

Ha Giang

Staying in Ha Giang

Type of accommodation



- **Homestays:** Provide a local and authentic experience, although some may cater more to backpacker groups.
- **Hotels:** Offer greater comfort compared to homestays but may lack the local connection and atmosphere.
- **Lodges & Retreats:** Offer a balance between local charm and comfort, but are generally the more expensive option.

Recommended accommodations

Ha Giang City

- **Ha Giang Historic House:** Experience traditional architecture and warm hospitality in this historic house.
- **The Palm Ha Giang Ecolodge:** Stay in an eco-friendly lodge surrounded by beautiful landscapes. [Booking.com link](#)
- **Phoenix Hotel Hà Giang:** A comfortable hotel offering modern amenities and a convenient location.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Yen Minh

- **Homestay BongBang:** Enjoy a local homestay experience with comfortable accommodations and friendly hosts.

[Booking.com link](#)

Dong Van

- **Nha Co Lao Xa Homestay Hmong:** Experience the Hmong culture with a stay in this traditional homestay.
- **Hoang Ngoc Hotel:** A comfortable hotel with well-appointed rooms and friendly service.
- **Nha Nghi Quang Trung:** A guesthouse offering clean and affordable rooms in a convenient location.
- **Ancient Town 29 Pho Co:** Stay in a traditional townhouse and experience the charm of Dong Van.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Recommended accommodations

Meo Vac

- **Little Yen's Homestay:** Enjoy a cozy homestay experience with friendly hosts and stunning mountain views.
- **Little Yen's Homestay:** Enjoy a cozy homestay experience with friendly hosts and stunning mountain views.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Du Gia

- **Du Gia Panorama:** Experience the beauty of Du Gia with a stay in this picturesque accommodation.
- **Du Gia Village Homestay:** Immerse yourself in the local village life with a stay in this homestay.

[Booking.com link](#)

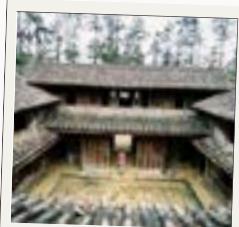
[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Ha Giang



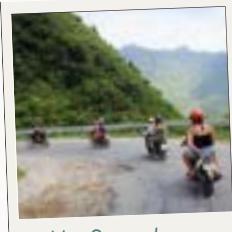
Lung Cu Flag tower



Historical buildings

1. Drive the Ha Giang loop on the back of a motorbike

Immerse yourself in the province's beauty and culture by embarking on a motorbike journey through the Ha Giang loop.



Ha Giang Loop

2. Enjoy stunning roads & mountain passes

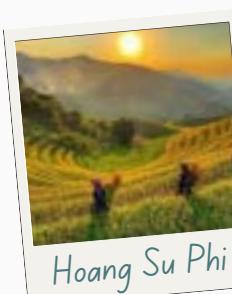
Experience the thrill of traversing the most breathtaking roads and mountain passes in Vietnam, offering awe-inspiring landscapes.



Stunning road

3. Visit Hoang Su Phi's epic terraced rice fields

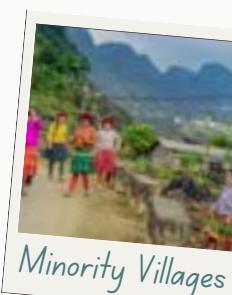
Venture off the beaten track to witness the mesmerizing beauty of Hoang Su Phi's terraced rice fields, considered among the most stunning in Vietnam.



Hoang Su Phi

4. Visit ethnic minority markets

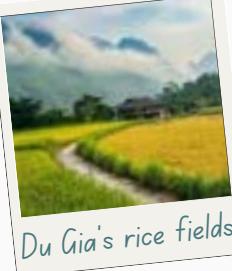
Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of Meo Vac Market and Dong Van Market, held on Sundays, where you can witness the colorful local produce and livestock trade.



Minority Villages

5. Explore local minority villages

Encounter the traditional way of life in the local minority villages, where time seems to have stood still, providing a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage.



Du Gia's rice fields

6. Make a trekking through the mountains

Step away from vehicles and embrace the mountains by embarking on a trek, allowing you to explore the scenic beauty and encounter remote villages.

7. Visit historical buildings

Discover the historical charm of Dong Van Old Quarter, ancient ethnic houses, the Hmong King Palace, and remnants from the French colonial era.

8. Walk to the top of Lung Cu flag tower

Reach the northernmost point of Vietnam at the Lung Cu flag tower and enjoy panoramic views of both Vietnam and China.

9. Enjoy an authentic homestay experience

Immerse yourself in the local culture and hospitality by staying with a host family, providing an authentic and enriching experience.

10. Relax between the rice fields of Du Gia

Unwind amidst the serene beauty of Du Gia's rice fields, surrounded by the picturesque stilt houses of the Thai minority.



NORTH OF VIETNAM

Mai Chau

Mai Chau, a breathtaking valley adorned with rice fields, captivates travelers with its picturesque beauty and traditional Thai minority houses on stilts. Offering a serene ambiance, it is a perfect destination for cycling through the countryside. With authentic homestays and lodges, Mai Chau provides an immersive experience, while a trip to Pu Luong Nature Reserve unveils more natural wonders.

Local tips

- Stay here for 2 - 3 days:** There are not many sights in Mai Chau, but it is great to soak up the authentic villages and stunning countryside. Combine with a day or multi day trip to Pu Luong.
- Best time to visit**

November to May	Ideal time with little rain and blue skies. Note that December to January can be cold in the evenings, with temperatures dropping to around 10 degrees Celsius.
June to September	Rainy season, but the valley transforms into a stunning green landscape during this time.

- Money:** In Mai Chau, the accommodations are located within the villages, and there are no ATM machines available. While most places accept card payments, it is advisable to carry enough cash as some local restaurants and homestays may not accept cards.
- Tourist experience:** Compared to Sapa, Mai Chau sees fewer visitors, only on weekends when it can be slightly busier with local travelers from Hanoi. The villages in Mai Chau are accustomed to tourism, making them less conservative and more English-proficient. However, when venturing off the beaten path, it's important to respect the traditional ethnic communities.

Mai Chau

How to get there

Mai Chau is a district within Hoa Binh province. The accommodations are situated in local villages rather than a major town. Therefore, most transfers from Hanoi to this area are available via tourist vans and comfortable limousine vans.



Getting around

- Cycling:** The flat and peaceful valley of Mai Chau is perfect to discover by bicycle. Many accommodations have them free to rent. Most roads connecting villages are almost not used by cars.
- Electric cart:** Some accommodations have electric carts to explore the countryside. Most of them include a driver to get around.
- Trekking:** Mai Chau is not a real trekking destination, although the roads between the villages are very peaceful for walks. For real trekking you can make a day trip or multi day trip to Pu Luong Nature Reserve.
- Motorbike:** If you want to venture further, explore lakes, waterfalls and countryside and go off the beaten track you can rent a motorbike or easy rider (on the back of the bike).
- Car:** A car is for some travelers a more comfortable option to make further trips.

Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips

- There are a few restaurants in the villages, and most accommodations have their own restaurants.
- Mai Chau does not have a nightlife scene.
- Some accommodations offer shows featuring ethnic minority dances and music.



Restaurants

- 3 Sisters Restaurant (Quan 3 Chi Em):** A popular restaurant serving Vietnamese and international dishes in a cozy atmosphere.
- Hop Thuy Mai Chau:** A local restaurant offering traditional Vietnamese cuisine and local specialties.
- Sunset Bar:** A bar located in a scenic spot, perfect for enjoying sunset views and refreshing beverages



Staying in Mai Chau

Type of accommodation

- Lac and Pom Coong:** These are the two most popular villages for tourists to stay in Mai Chau. Most accommodations are homestays, with a few hotels and luxury resorts available. The villages are adjacent to each other and offer shops and some restaurants.
- Hoa Binh Lake:** Situated approximately 15 km from the Mai Chau valley, the large lake offers a few resorts and homestays with beautiful lake views. However, these accommodations are farther from the villages and amenities.
- Off the beaten path:** There are a few homestays and stunning resorts located further away from the main villages. These accommodations offer breathtaking landscapes and a more secluded experience.

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- Mai Chau Ecolodge:** A luxurious retreat nestled in the stunning Mai Chau Valley with comfortable rooms and breathtaking views.
- Maichau HideAway:** Located on Hoa Binh Lake, this luxury resort offers a tranquil escape with beautiful lake views and spacious rooms.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Mid range

- Mai Chau Valley Retreat:** A mid-range retreat, offering comfortable rooms, a peaceful ambiance, and friendly service.
- Mai Chau Sky Resort:** Set amidst picturesque landscapes, this resort provides cozy rooms, a swimming pool, and a restaurant.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- Mai Chau Countryside Homestay:** A budget-friendly homestay with simple yet comfortable accommodations and warm hospitality.
- Meadow Mai Chau Homestay:** A traditional stilt house and authentic village life with friendly hosts, local meals, and the serene surroundings.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

10 highlights in Mai Chau



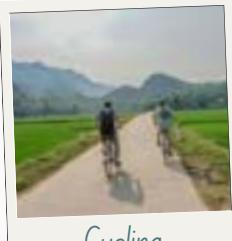
Thung Khe pass



Hoa Binh lake

1. Cycling through rice fields

Immerse yourself in the picturesque valley of Mai Chau as you cycle through the flat landscape, passing by ethnic villages and stunning rice fields.



Cycling

2. Homestay experience

Experience the authenticity of Mai Chau by staying with a local ethnic group, gaining insights into their traditional way of life and culture.



Ethnic villages

3. Visit ethnic villages

Discover the vibrant local culture and traditional crafts of the ethnic villages in Mai Chau, interacting with friendly locals and learning about their customs.



Go Lao waterfall

4. Take a dip at the Go Lao waterfall

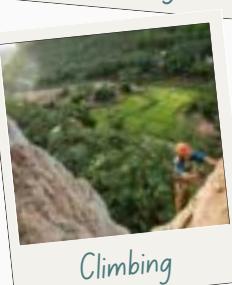
Refresh yourself at the beautiful Go Lao waterfall, located in the jungle near the lake, offering a serene spot to cool off.



Pu Luong

5. Explore Pu Luong Nature Reserve

Venture into the breathtaking Pu Luong Nature Reserve, known for its stunning terraced rice fields and off-the-beaten-track scenery, worth considering an overnight stay.



Climbing

6. Drive over the Thung Khe pass

Traverse the scenic Thung Khe pass, which offers a panoramic viewpoint of the mesmerizing Mai Chau Valley, showcasing the beauty of the surrounding landscapes.

7. Make a boat ride over Hoa Binh lake

Embark on a tranquil boat ride on the expansive Hoa Binh lake, enjoying the peaceful atmosphere and the possibility of visiting a cave.

8. Go rock climbing

Challenge yourself with exhilarating rock climbing adventures available in the area, surrounded by the scenic beauty of Mai Chau.

9. Discover the hidden caves

Explore the hidden caves nestled within the mountains of Mai Chau, offering a unique and adventurous experience amidst the natural beauty of the region.

10. Explore the valley off the beaten track

Venture beyond the main valley of Mai Chau and explore the enchanting waterfalls, charming villages, and stunning rice fields in the broader Hoa Binh province, uncovering hidden gems of the area.

Mai Chau

2 days in Mai Chau

Day 1

- Rent a bicycle and explore the picturesque Mai Chau valley.
- Cycle through peaceful villages, admire the lush rice paddies, and observe the local way of life.
- Witness the breathtaking Mai Chau sunset.
- In the evening, enjoy a traditional show showcasing the local culture.



Day 2

- Embark on a day trip to Pu Luong Nature Reserve.
- Join an organized trekking tour, exploring the terraced rice fields and visiting local villages.
- Immerse yourself in the natural beauty and cultural richness of the area.



Mai Chau is already not as popular as Sapa or Ninh Binh, but you can even go more off the beaten track here if you don't mind traveling a bit.





NORTH OF VIETNAM

Cao Bang

Cao Bang is world-famous for its spectacular Ban Gioc Waterfalls, the region's iconic landmark. Despite this fame, the province's hidden valleys, bizarre mountain passes and traditional ethnic villages remain largely undiscovered by travellers. These untouched areas offer a unique glimpse of stunning scenery and a deep-rooted culture waiting to be discovered.

Local tips

- Stay here for 2 – 3 days:** While many visitors come to see the Ban Gioc Waterfall, which can be done in a day, it is recommended to spend an additional 2 days exploring the breathtaking mountains and countryside of the region.
- Best time to visit**

Ban Gioc Waterfall	The best time to visit is during the rainy season from May to September when the waterfall is at its most impressive due to increased water flow.
Cao Bang	The ideal months to explore Cao Bang are October, November, and February to May. During this time, the weather is pleasant with minimal rainfall and avoids the extremes of hot summer and cold winter.

- Money:** ATMs are available in the main city of Cao Bang; however, when exploring the countryside, it is advisable to carry sufficient cash.
- Tourist experience:** Apart from the popular Ban Gioc Waterfall area, the rest of the province receives limited tourism. English proficiency is low, so it's helpful to have basic Vietnamese phrases. When visiting traditional ethnic minority villages, it's important to be respectful of local customs and traditions.

Cao Bang — — — — —

How to get there

- Cao Bang does not have its own train station or airport.
- Travelers must first reach the main town, Cao Bang City, from Hanoi before heading to destinations such as Ban Gioc Waterfall or other parts of the province.
- Buses from Hanoi to Cao Bang City typically take around 6 hours.
- Both sleeper buses at night and comfortable limousine buses during the day are available for this transfer.



Getting around

- **Public Bus:** Local buses are available to Ban Gioc Waterfall, but they make frequent stops, resulting in longer travel times. This option also causes you to miss out on visiting other sights.
- **Private Car:** The most comfortable option is to hire a private car with a driver. It's important to note that drivers are not guides and may have limited English language skills.
- **Motorbike:** Renting a motorbike offers a thrilling and adventurous experience, but it is recommended for experienced riders only.
- **Tour:** Joining a motorbike or car tour is highly recommended for exploring Cao Bang, especially if you want to see more than just Ban Gioc Waterfall. Local guides can take you to stunning areas and arrange all the necessary details for your trip.

Restaurants & Nightlife

- In Cao Bang, you will find mostly local restaurants with limited options for Western cuisine.
- It is common to have dinner and breakfast at homestays and lodges, where you can enjoy authentic local meals.
- The nightlife scene in Cao Bang is relatively quiet, with limited options for evening entertainment.



Cao Bang

Staying in Cao Bang

Type of accommodation

- Cao Bang Town:** This is the first place you'll arrive when coming by bus from Hanoi. It serves as a useful starting point to explore the region. However, the town itself is not particularly remarkable, so it is advisable to stay here only when necessary.
- Countryside:** Cao Bang boasts a breathtaking countryside, offering you a chance to experience the local way of life. There are small-scale accommodations scattered throughout the area, but the most recommended areas to stay are Bao Lac and the vicinity of Ban Gioc Waterfall.



Recommended accommodations

Cao Bang City

- Jeanne Hotel:** Located in Cao Bang City, Jeanne Hotel offers comfortable rooms and convenient access to the city's attractions.
- Max Boutique Hotel:** A boutique hotel in Cao Bang City offering modern rooms and a range of amenities for a comfortable stay. [Booking.com link](#)
- Lan's Home:** A homestay in Cao Bang City offering cozy accommodations and friendly hospitality.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Near Ban Gioc Waterfall

- Lan Homestay:** Located near Ban Gioc Waterfall, it provides a peaceful retreat with comfortable rooms and a friendly host.

[Booking.com link](#)

Bao Lac

- Khuoi Khon homestay:** Experience the local culture and scenic views of Bao Lac with comfortable rooms and warm hospitality.

10 highlights in Cao Bang

1. Visit the mighty Ban Gioc waterfall

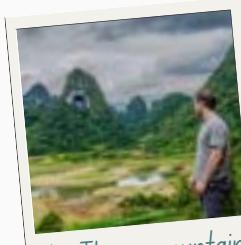
Experience the grandeur of Ban Gioc waterfall, an awe-inspiring natural wonder located on the border between Vietnam and China.



Phong Nam valley

2. Explore Phong Nam valley

Discover the hidden gem of Phong Nam valley, a tranquil oasis off the beaten path, offering breathtaking mountain vistas, traditional villages, and lush rice fields.



Nui Thung mountain

3. Discover Nui Thung mountain

Uncover the beauty of Nui Thung mountain, known as the Angel Eye Mountain, featuring a unique hole at its peak and surrounded by a picturesque hidden valley.



Me Pja Pass

4. Conquer the Me Pja Pass

Challenge yourself to conquer the Me Pja Pass, a thrilling mountain pass with 14 hairpin turns, offering exhilarating views and a memorable driving experience.



Climbing

5. Drive around the Thang Hen Lakes

Enjoy a scenic drive around the serene Thang Hen Lakes, where you can admire the peaceful waters reflecting the surrounding mountains and lush greenery.



Minority culture



Pac Po Relic

6. Visit local villages

Immerse yourself in the rich culture and traditions of the local ethnic minority communities, explore their traditional villages, and interact with welcoming locals.

7. Go around Phia Oac National Park

Experience the beauty of Phia Oac National Park, a pristine natural reserve known for its dense forests, diverse wildlife, and the rare opportunity to witness snow during winter.

8. Drive through the mountains of west Cao Bang

Embark on an adventurous drive through the rugged and breathtaking mountainous landscapes of western Cao Bang, reminiscent of the stunning scenery found in Ha Giang.

9. Learn more about the local minority culture

Engage with the fascinating local minority cultures of Cao Bang, learn about their unique traditions, handicrafts, and way of life, and gain a deeper understanding of their rich heritage.

10. Make a visit to Pac Po Relic

Explore Pac Po Relic, an important historical site where President Ho Chi Minh took shelter during the revolution, and discover the significant role it played in Vietnam's struggle for independence.

Cao Bang — — — —

2 days in Cao Bang

Day 1

- Journey from Cao Bang City to Ban Gioc Waterfalls, visiting local villages along the way.
- Marvel at the impressive Ban Gioc Waterfalls and explore the Ban Gioc Pagoda.
- Venture into the Nguom Ngao Cave.
- Stay overnight in the area near Ban Gioc Waterfalls.



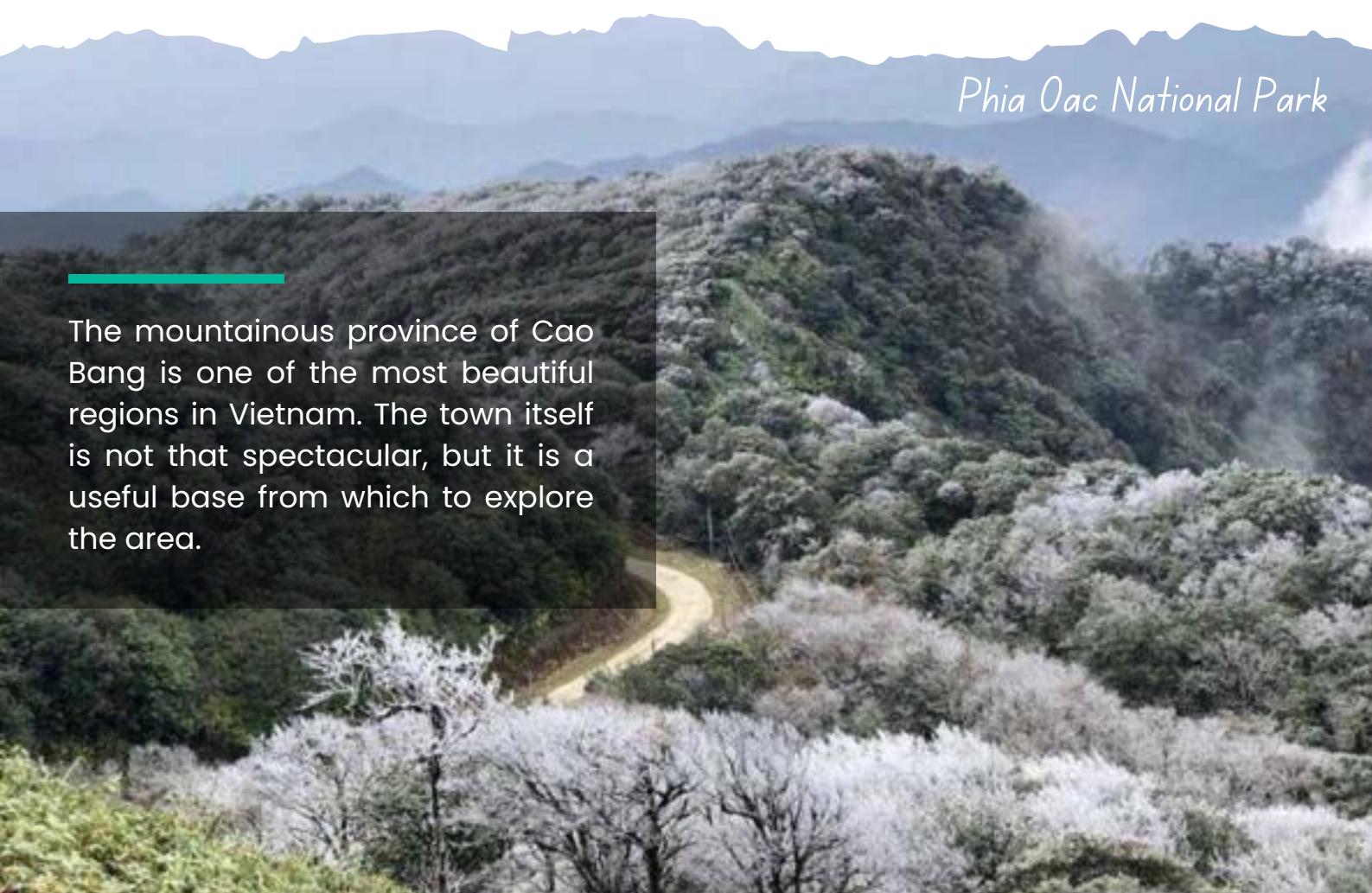
Day 2

- Explore the scenic Phong Nam Valley and hike up to the viewpoint for breathtaking vistas.
- En route back to Cao Bang City, visit Nui Thung mountain and Thang Hen lake.



Phia Oac National Park

The mountainous province of Cao Bang is one of the most beautiful regions in Vietnam. The town itself is not that spectacular, but it is a useful base from which to explore the area.





NORTH OF VIETNAM

Phong Nha

Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park is Vietnam's largest national park, renowned for its stunning natural beauty and impressive caves. Explore the real jungle, witness the world's largest caves, and embark on a range of activities from leisurely cave visits to thrilling multi-day caving expeditions with camping, jungle hikes, and kayaking adventures.

Local tips

- Stay here for 1 - 3 days:** While it is possible to explore two caves and drive around the national park in a day, for those seeking adventure, it is recommended to allocate more time for jungle hikes and caving expeditions.
- Best time to visit**

June to August	Considered the best time to travel, as the weather is hot during these months.
December to February	These months can be considerably colder, so be prepared for cooler temperatures.
Flood Season (mid-September to mid-November)	During this period, there may be periodic flooding, which can affect tour availability. It is advisable to check the weather forecast before traveling to Phong Nha.

- Money:** There is an ATM available in Son Trach and most accommodations accept card payments; however, it is recommended to carry enough Vietnamese dong with you as a precautionary measure.
- Tourist experience:** Phong Nha Ke Bang National Park is tourist-oriented, with many English speakers and a less traditional atmosphere in the main town.

Phong Nha

How to get there

To Dong Hoi:

- Dong Hoi is the closest town to Phong Nha and is easily accessible.
- Train Station:** There are train connections to northern Ninh Binh, Hanoi, and southern Hue and Da Nang.
- Airport:** Flights connect with Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.
- Bus Network:** The town is well-connected by buses that travel between the northern and central regions, including routes to Hanoi, Ninh Binh, Hoi An, Hue, and Da Nang.

From Dong Hoi to Phong Nha:

- Taxi or Private Car: Approximately \$35 and takes about 45 minutes.
- Bus: Bus B4 provides transportation from the center of Dong Hoi city to Phong Nha Ke Bang. The travel distance is approximately 54 km, and the journey takes about 1 hour.

Direct Transportation to Phong Nha: Some buses from Hanoi, Ninh Binh, and Da Nang may offer direct connections to Phong Nha, but it is advisable to check the specific routes and schedules carefully.

Getting around



Motorbike: You can rent a motorbike and explore the park yourself and visit some of the accessible caves



Car: Rent a car with a driver to bring you around or choose a tour that includes sightseeing by car.



Tour: If you want to see more than the easy to visit caves, not only the best but the only way to explore the park is by tour. From kayaking over the river, to trekking to the jungle to caving expeditions.

Restaurants & Nightlife



- Phong Nha Veggie Box:** A vegetarian restaurant offering a variety of healthy and delicious dishes.
- Bamboo Chopsticks:** A restaurant serving Vietnamese cuisine, including local specialties and international dishes.
- Phong Nha Coffee Station:** A cozy cafe where you can enjoy a cup of coffee and light snacks.
- East Hill:** A great spot to have a drink while enjoying the sunset over the scenic rice fields.

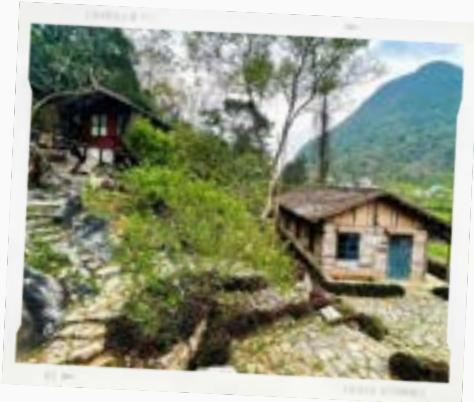
Bars

- King Kong Bar Phong Nha:** A lively bar where you can socialize and enjoy drinks in the evening.

Phong Nha

Staying in Phong Nha

- **Dong Hoi:** The largest town in the area, but not recommended for a stay. It is nearly an hour's drive from Phong Nha, lacks atmosphere, and has limited activities.
- **Son Trach (Phong Nha Town):** The gateway to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, nestled between towering karst mountains and the Son River. This area offers a range of accommodation options, including hostels, 2-3 star hotels, budget accommodations, and cozy family-run homestays that provide a more personalized experience.



Location

Recommended accommodations

Luxury / midrange

- **Victory Road Villas:** Modern and luxurious rooms in comfortable villas surrounded by lush greenery, providing a peaceful retreat.
- **Phong Nha Lake House Resort:** Stunning lake views and take advantage of free kayak usage. The resort offers beautiful rooms for a relaxing stay.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange / Budget

- **Jungle Boss Homestay:** Alongside organizing jungle and caving tours, this homestay features a swimming pool and nice rooms.
- **Phong Nha Hillside View Bungalow:** Stay in charming bungalow-style rooms, relax by the swimming pool, and enjoy the lovely green garden.
- **Phong Nha Memory Homestay:** Located right by the river, this homestay offers friendly staff and nice rooms for a comfortable stay.
- **Son Doong Riverside:** With friendly staff and affordable rates, this accommodation provides nice views and a budget-friendly option.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Phong Nha

10 highlights in Phong Nha

1. Easy cave explorations

Explore Phong Nha and Paradise Cave, renowned for their impressive chambers and stunning formations.

2. Caving expeditions

Embark on thrilling adventures through unlit caves, where you can swim, abseil, and climb with a helmet and flashlight.

3. Jungle trekking

Immerse yourself in the lush jungles on guided multi-day cave tours or day trips through the scenic landscapes.

4. Kayaking

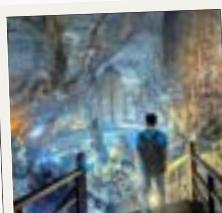
Paddle and swim in the rivers and lakes of Suoi Nuoc Mooc and Dark Cave on exciting kayaking excursions.

5. Camping

Experience the wilderness by camping inside caves or amidst the serene beauty of the jungle.

6. Drive around the park and countryside

Discover the natural wonders of Phong Nha as you drive along scenic roads through the picturesque park and countryside.



Cave explorations



Caving expeditions



Jungle trekking



Kayaking



Camping



Drive around



Boat trips

7. Boat trips

Take a boat trip to Phong Nha Cave and enjoy a leisurely two-hour journey along the river, surrounded by beautiful countryside and lush jungle.

8. Minority villages

Visit traditional Bru Van Kieu ethnic minority villages and witness their unique way of life in the jungle.

9. Botanic Gardens

Not an actual garden, but explore the real jungle, go on a self guided trekking, visit waterfalls, and swim in natural pools.

10. Enjoy breathtaking views

Relax and take in the stunning scenery, whether it's a river view with jungle and mountains or rice fields against a mountain backdrop.



Botanic Gardens



Minority villages

Phong Nha

2 days in Phong Nha

Day 1

- Option 1: Explore 2 of the following caves: Paradise Cave for its stunning beauty, Phong Nha Cave with a scenic boat ride, or Dark Cave for ziplining, kayaking, and a muddy adventure with helmet torches.
- Option 2: Join a 2 day 1 night cave expedition

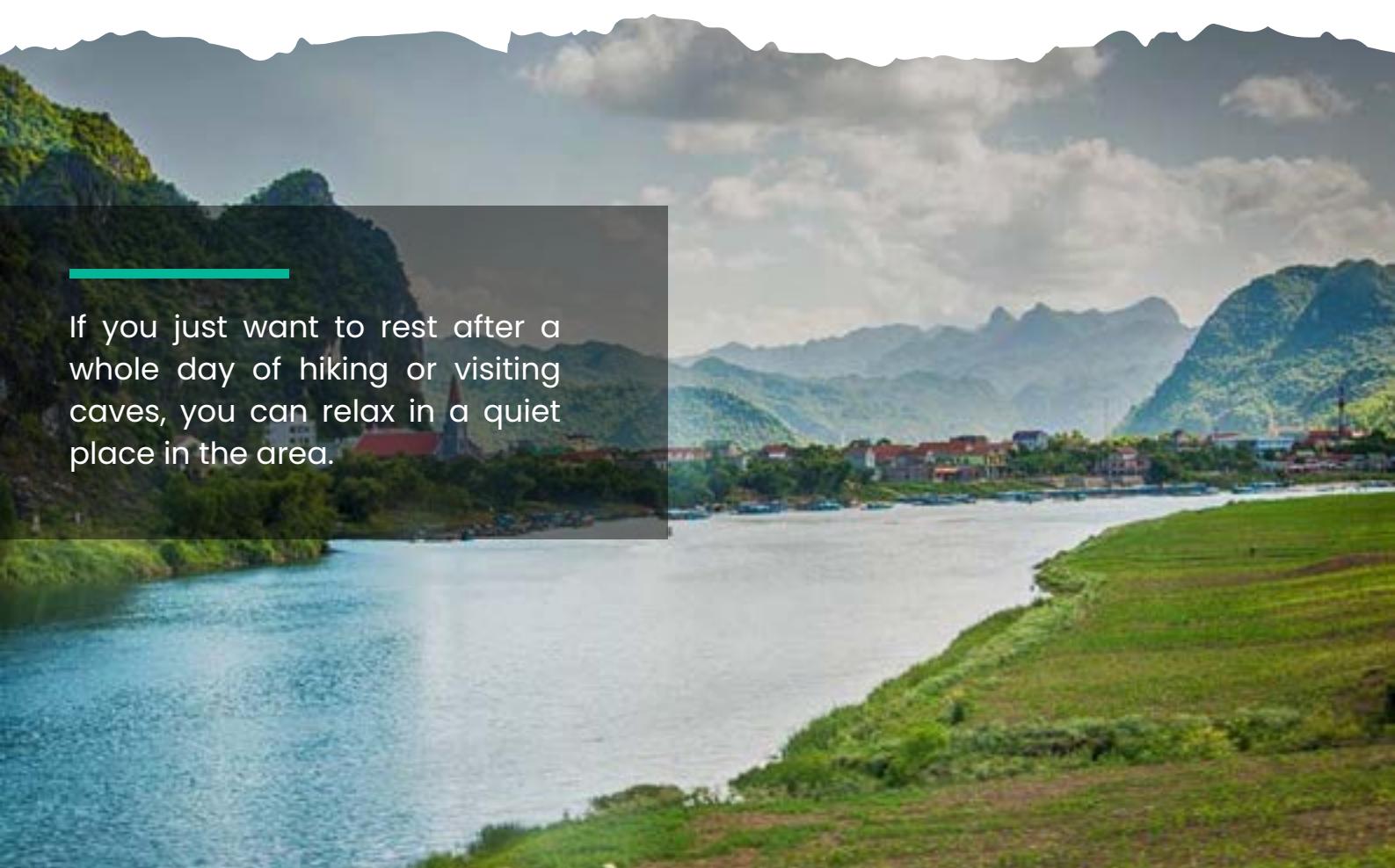


Day 2

- Option 1: Visit the Botanical Gardens or experience the Mooc eco-route.
- Option 2: Embark on a full day jungle trekking tour for an immersive adventure in the lush wilderness.



If you just want to rest after a whole day of hiking or visiting caves, you can relax in a quiet place in the area.





CENTRAL VIETNAM

Hue

Hue, the ancient capital of Vietnam, offers a rich historical experience with its Imperial City, ancient tombs, and temples. It was also a significant site of conflict during the Vietnam War, with the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone) in close proximity. Explore the city's cultural heritage and delve into its wartime history.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 1 - 2 days:** No need to stay too long in Hue for 1-2 days. Most sights can be visited in a day, but consider an extra day for a day trip to the DMZ or Bach Ma National Park.
- **Best time to visit**

January to April	Mild temperatures around 20 to 25 degrees Celsius and minimal rainfall.
Dry season	March to August, with less rain, but summer months can be hot.

- **Money:** In Hue, there are numerous ATMs available, and most accommodations accept card payments. It is advisable to carry cash for street food and local restaurants.
- **Tourist experience:** Hue is accustomed to tourists, but the locals take great pride in their ancient royal history and adhere to traditional customs. It is important to dress appropriately when visiting temples and tombs.

How to get there



Flights

Hue has its own airport with connections to Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.



Train

Located centrally in Vietnam, Hue has train connections to major cities such as Hanoi, Dong Hoi (Phong Nha), Ninh Binh, Da Nang, Nha Trang, and Ho Chi Minh City.



Bus

Hue is well-connected by bus, with many routes traveling between the north, central, and southern regions of Vietnam.

Getting around

- Taxis:** Taxis in Hue, such as the green Mai Linh or yellow Taxi Vang, are widely available and use meters for fare calculation.
- Cyclos:** Cyclos, bicycle taxis, are a popular mode of transportation in Hue. Negotiate a reasonable price with the driver before starting the ride.
- Cycling:** Renting a bicycle is a great option for exploring downtown Hue and its surroundings. Many hostels and bike shops offer daily rental rates.



Tips

- Hue Night Walking Street:** In the city center and a great area to find street food, restaurants, bars and pubs.
- Hue Imperial Palace:** Illuminated at night, is a must-see, along with other captivating temples in the city.

Restaurants & Nightlife



Restaurants

Les Jardins de La Carambole

A charming restaurant offering French and Vietnamese cuisine with a beautiful garden setting.

Nook Eatery

A cozy eatery known for its delicious Vietnamese dishes and relaxed atmosphere.

Cafe on Thu Wheels

A popular cafe serving a variety of drinks and tasty snacks, located in a vintage Volkswagen van.

Ancient Hue Garden Houses

Enjoy traditional Vietnamese cuisine in a peaceful garden setting at this restaurant.

COZY Restaurant & cafe

A trendy spot offering a mix of Vietnamese and international dishes, with a cozy and stylish interior.



Bars

DMZ Bar

A popular bar with live music, known for its vibrant atmosphere and drinks.

Why Not? Bar

A laid-back bar where you can enjoy drinks and meet fellow travelers in a relaxed setting.

Secret Lounge Hue

A hidden gem for cocktails and drinks, offering a cozy and intimate ambiance.

Staying in Hue

Location



- City Center:** The most convenient area to stay, close to the Imperial City, with a wide range of hotels, restaurants, and shops.
- Lang Co Beach:** A scenic beach area, perfect for beach lovers and the starting point of the Hai Van Pass.
- Countryside:** For a rural experience, there are affordable lodges and resorts in the authentic countryside of Hue.

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Azerai La Residence:** Elegant colonial-style hotel with a riverside location, luxurious amenities, and stunning views.
- **Pilgrimage Village Boutique Resort & Spa:** Tranquil resort nestled in lush greenery, featuring traditional Vietnamese architecture and a spa.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Eldora Hotel:** Modern hotel with comfortable rooms, a rooftop pool, and a convenient location in the city center.
- **Moonlight Hotel Hue:** Stylish hotel offering spacious rooms, a rooftop terrace, indoor pool and friendly service.
- **Hue Serene Palace Hotel:** Cozy boutique hotel with well-appointed rooms, a central location, and a welcoming atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Freedom Hostel Hue:** Budget-friendly hostel with clean rooms, a social atmosphere, and helpful staff.
- **Chi Homestay #4:** A cozy and welcoming homestay located in a quiet neighborhood. Local hospitality, comfortable rooms, and peaceful.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Hue

1. Walk around Hue Imperial Citadel

Immerse yourself in the grandeur of the Hue Imperial Citadel, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and the former capital of the Nguyen Dynasty.



Hue Imperial Citadel

2. Relax on Lang Co Beach

Indulge in the beauty of Lang Co Beach, known for its pristine sands and crystal-clear waters, situated near the famous Hai Van Pass.



Lang Co Beach

3. Explore the many tombs and temples

Discover the rich history of Hue by visiting iconic sites such as Thien Mu Pagoda, Minh Mang Tomb, Khai Dinh Tomb, and Tu Duc Tomb.



Tombs and temples

4. Drive over the spectacular Hai Van Pass

Experience the breathtaking scenery of the Hai Van Pass, renowned for its stunning coastal views, best enjoyed by an Easy Rider motorbike tour.



Hai Van Pass

5. Make a trekking through Bach Ma National Park

Embark on a trek through Bach Ma National Park, offering panoramic viewpoints, lush jungles, and enchanting waterfalls.



Bach Ma National Park

6. Visit the local Dong Ba Market

Immerse yourself in the local atmosphere of Dong Ba Market, one of the oldest markets in Central Vietnam.

7. Enjoy a dragon boat trip on the Perfume River

Cruise along the Perfume River on a traditional dragon boat, discovering temples and experiencing the scenic beauty and river life.

8. Explore Hue by bicycle

Discover the charms of Hue at a leisurely pace by exploring the city on a bicycle, providing an alternative and eco-friendly mode of transportation.

9. Learn about the Vietnam War in the DMZ

Gain insight into the Vietnam War by visiting significant historical sites in the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), including Hien Luong Bridge, Khe Sanh Combat Base, and Vinh Moc Tunnels.

10. Visit Hue's abandoned water park

Explore the intriguing abandoned water park in Hue, an offbeat attraction that offers a unique and slightly eerie experience.



Boat trip



DMZ

2 days in Hue

Day 1

- Start the morning with a visit to Hue Citadel and the Imperial City, exploring the rich history and architecture.
- Enjoy a scenic dragon boat trip along the Perfume River to Thien Mu Pagoda.
- Discover the beautiful tombs of Tu Duc and Khai Dinh, showcasing the royal heritage of Hue.
- In the evening visit the Hue Night Walking Street

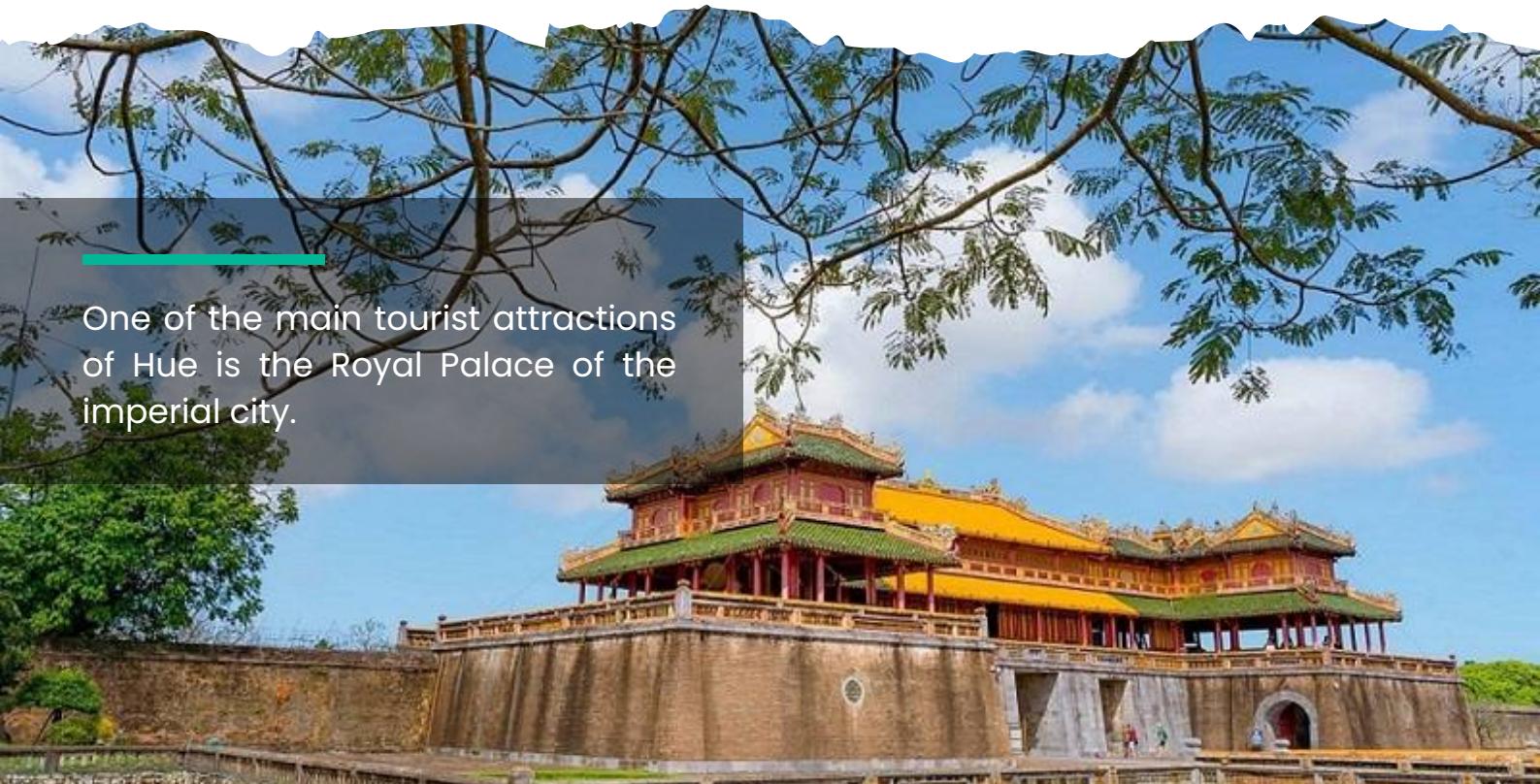


Day 2

- Option 1: Embark on a day trip to the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), exploring historical sites like the Vinh Moc Tunnels and Khe Sanh Combat Base.
- Option 2: Venture to Bach Ma National Park for a day of hiking and immersing in the lush natural surroundings.
- Option 3: Take a picturesque drive over the Hai Van Pass and enjoy the stunning views before visiting the serene Lang Co Beach.



One of the main tourist attractions of Hue is the Royal Palace of the imperial city.



CENTRAL VIETNAM

Da Nang

D

a Nang is a modern city located between the charming town of Hoi An and the historical city of Hue. While it may not have many tourist sights, it boasts a beautiful beach and offers a vibrant urban atmosphere with a range of dining, shopping, and entertainment options.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 1 - 3 days:** Stay in Da Nang for a few days if you want to experience a modern city with a beautiful beach and the nearby Son Tra Peninsula. However, if you prefer a more charming and historic atmosphere, it is recommended to stay in nearby Hoi An instead.
- **Best time to visit**

Dry season	April to August, with pleasant weather and less rainfall.
Monsoon season	September to February, with higher chances of rain.
Hottest months	June to August, with temperatures reaching around 35°C.
Coolest months	November to January, with average temperatures around 18°C.

- **Money:** ATMs are widely available in Da Nang, and card payments are generally accepted at most accommodations and restaurants, although some local establishments may prefer cash.
- **Tourist experience:** Da Nang offers a modern and cosmopolitan tourist experience. With a large expat community, English is widely spoken, and the city has a contemporary atmosphere, making it less traditional compared to other Vietnamese towns.

Da Nang

How to get there



Flights

Da Nang International Airport offers domestic and international flights to destinations such as Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Phu Quoc, and other popular cities.



Train

Da Nang Railway Station connects to major cities like Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Hue, and Nha Trang.



Bus

There are bus connections from Da Nang to nearby cities and towns including Hue, Hoi An, Nha Trang, Phong Nha, Ninh Binh and Dalat, making it convenient to explore the central region of Vietnam.

Getting around

- Grab/Taxi:** Grab taxis are widely available and more cost-effective than regular taxis. If using a regular taxi, choose reputable brands like Mai Linh Taxi, Vinasun Taxi, or Tien Sa Taxi.
- Motorbike rental:** Renting a motorbike allows for flexibility and fun exploration. Average rental price is around 130,000 VND (\$6) per day. Make sure to have a valid license with an International Driving Permit.
- Private car/tour:** For day trips to attractions outside Da Nang such as My Son, Bach Ma National Park, Hai Van Pass, or Marble Mountains, hiring a private car or joining a guided tour is recommended.
- Walking:** If staying in the beach area, many restaurants and the beach itself are within walking distance, making it convenient to explore on foot.



Restaurants & Nightlife



Tips

- Don't miss trying Mi Quang, a delicious regional noodle soup.
- The beach area offers a variety of beach bars and restaurants for a relaxing evening.

Restaurants

Bep Cuon Da Nang: Known for its tasty Vietnamese rice paper rolls.

Thien Ly Danang-style: Offers a wide range of local specialties and seafood dishes.

Banh xeo Ba Duong: Famous for its crispy Vietnamese pancakes.

Burger Bros: Serves mouthwatering burgers with a variety of toppings.

My Casa: Offers a fusion of Vietnamese and Western cuisines.



Bars

Sky 36: A rooftop bar with stunning panoramic views of the city and coastline.

New Phuong Dong Nightclub: A popular spot for dancing and live music.

New Golden Pine Pub: A cozy pub with a wide selection of drinks.

Oq Lounge Pub: Known for its relaxing atmosphere and live music performances.

Bamboo Bar 2: A beachfront bar perfect for enjoying drinks and sunset views.

Staying in Da Nang

Location

On the beach

The beach area offers a wide range of hotels and resorts, with easy access to the beach, restaurants, bars, and coffee shops. It's a vibrant and convenient location.

Han River

This area is known for its restaurants, bars, and lively nightlife. Some hotels along the Han River offer great views during the Da Nang International Fireworks Festival. However, it requires a taxi ride to reach the beach.

Hoi An

Many tourists prefer to stay in Hoi An for its charming atmosphere and abundant activities. Da Nang can be easily reached from Hoi An within a 45-minute drive, making it convenient for a day trip.



Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **InterContinental Danang:** On a private bay, this award-winning resort offers luxurious villas, stunning ocean views, and world-class facilities.
- **Naman Retreat:** A beachfront resort with spa services, and wellness programs. Relax in elegant villas and enjoy direct access to the beach.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **HAIAN Beach Hotel & Spa:** Located near My Khe Beach, this stylish hotel offers comfortable rooms, a rooftop pool, and a spa.
- **Avora Hotel:** Situated in the heart of Da Nang, this modern hotel features well-appointed rooms, a rooftop pool, and a convenient location.
- **Monarque Hotel Danang:** Modern rooms and a rooftop pool, this hotel provides a comfortable stay close to the beach.

[Booking.com link](#)

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Budget

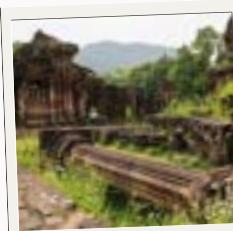
- **Kon-Tiki DaNang Hostel:** Ideal for backpackers and budget travelers, with clean and cozy dorm rooms, a kitchen, and a friendly atmosphere.
- **The Memory:** Affordable private and dormitory rooms, this hotel provides a comfortable stay with a social atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Da Nang



My Son



Hoi An



Hai Van Pass

1. Drive over the Hai Van Pass

Experience breathtaking coastal views on one of the most scenic drives in Vietnam by Easy Rider or military jeep.

2. Monkey spotting at Son Tra Peninsula

Encounter playful monkeys and enjoy panoramic views of Da Nang and the stunning coastline from this beautiful nature reserve.

3. Exploring the caves of the Marble Mountains

Discover hidden grottoes and Buddhist shrines within these limestone hills near Da Nang.

4. Relax on the beaches

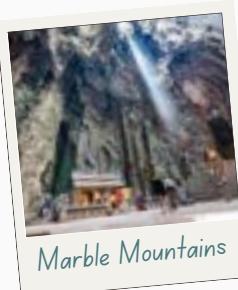
Unwind on the pristine shores of Da Nang's renowned beaches, such as My Khe and Non Nuoc.

5. See the Golden Bridge at Ba Na Hills

Marvel at the stunning architecture of the Golden Bridge, perched high in the mountains.

6. Watch the Dragon Bridge spit fire

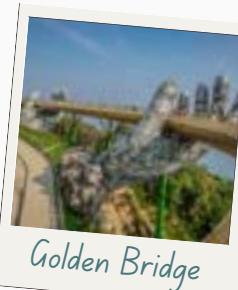
Witness an impressive spectacle as the Dragon Bridge breathes fire and water on weekend nights.



Marble Mountains

7. Speedboat trip to Cham Island

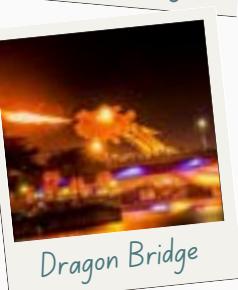
Take a thrilling speedboat ride to the beautiful Cham Islands for snorkeling, diving, beaches and island exploration.



Golden Bridge

8. Learn about Cham culture at the Cham Museum

Immerse yourself in the rich history and art of the ancient Cham civilization.



Dragon Bridge

9. Explore the My Son temple complex

Discover the ancient ruins of the UNESCO-listed My Son Sanctuary, a testament to the Cham Empire.

10. Make a day trip to Hoi An

Visit the charming ancient town of Hoi An, known for its well-preserved architecture, lantern-lit streets, and vibrant markets.

2 days in Da Nang

Day 1

- Explore the Marble Mountains and its caves in the morning
- Relax and enjoy the beach during the day
- Visit Son Tra Peninsula in the late afternoon for stunning sunset views



Day 2

- Option 1: Take a day trip to the charming town of Hoi An
- Option 2: Embark on a scenic drive over the famous Hai Van Pass
- Option 3: Visit the enchanting Ba Na Hills for the Golden Bridge
- Option 4: Explore the lush nature of Bach Ma National Park on a day trip the lush wilderness.



Da Nang is the fourth largest city in Vietnam, halfway between the capital Hanoi in the north and Ho Chi Minh city in the south.





CENTRAL VIETNAM

Hoi An

Hoi An, renowned as the most beautiful town in Vietnam, is a captivating ancient trading town adorned with exquisitely preserved houses. While touristy, it is an absolute must-visit destination. Hoi An offers a plethora of attractions, from exploring the picturesque countryside and stunning beaches to visiting islands and temples.

Local tips

- Stay here for 2 – 4 days:** While you can explore Hoi An Old Town in a day, it is one of the best places in Vietnam to stay longer. There are many things to do, with fun activities, cultural sites, culinary, authentic countryside and a stunning beach. Besides that, it is also a great place to plan your relaxing days here while traveling through Vietnam.

- Best time to visit**

February to April	Enjoy pleasant temperatures and low humidity in Hoi An.
June to August	Experience the warmest temperatures, reaching up to 38°C.
September to January	Expect rainy weather during Hoi An's rainy season, with October and November being the wettest months.
November to January	Experience cooler temperatures ranging from 19 to 24°C in Hoi An.

- Money:** In the ancient city area, ATMs are limited, but card payments are widely accepted at most hotels and restaurants.
- Tourist experience:** Hoi An is a popular tourist destination, but it has maintained its charm and is a must-visit place. English is widely spoken. While not very traditional, it is important to dress appropriately when visiting temples.

Hoi An

How to get there



Flights

Da Nang airport, a 45-minute drive from Hoi An, offers excellent connections to major destinations in Vietnam.



Train

The train station in Da Nang, located nearby, connects Hoi An to various cities in North, Central, and South Vietnam.



Bus

Hoi An has numerous bus connections with nearby cities, and for more options, travelers can also use the neighboring city of Da Nang as a transit point.

Getting around

- Walking:** Hoi An's compact size allows for easy exploration on foot within the old town. Motorized vehicles are restricted during specific hours.
- Cycling:** Renting a bicycle provides flexibility and affordability for reaching beaches and exploring the countryside.
- Cyclos:** Enjoy a traditional cyclo ride for a fun way to tour the old town. Prices are typically around 100,000 dong per hour.
- Scooter/Motorcycle:** Confident riders can opt for scooter or motorcycle rentals to venture to nearby beaches, countryside, and landmarks like Hai Van Pass.
- Tours/Taxi/Private Car:** For wider area exploration and trips to attractions like My Son and Marble Mountains, consider joining a tour or hiring a taxi or private car.



Restaurants & Nightlife



Tips

- Walking around the old town at night is very nice, with lanterns lighting up the street.
- Visit the night market in the old town for souvenirs, street food, and a nice atmosphere.

Hoi An

Restaurants

Restaurant & Cafe Tuan: Authentic Vietnamese cuisine with a cozy atmosphere.

The Temple Restaurant: Fusion of Vietnamese and Western flavors, offering a fine dining experience.

FireFly Restaurant & Bar: Riverside dining with a menu featuring Vietnamese and international dishes.

Red Bean Restaurant: Modern Vietnamese cuisine using local ingredients in a stylish setting.

Secret Garden Hoi An: Hidden gem serving Vietnamese specialties in a tranquil garden setting.



Bars

Dive Bar: Lively bar with a wide selection of drinks and live music.

The Shamrock Irish Pub: Authentic Irish pub experience with a range of beers and live sports screenings.

Guitar Hawaii Hoi An Live Music Bar: Enjoy live music performances and a relaxed atmosphere.

The Deck Hoi An: Rooftop bar offering panoramic views of Hoi An with a selection of cocktails and beverages.

Staying in Hoi An

Location

The Old Town

Hoi An's iconic sights, including the Japanese bridge and lantern-filled streets, but limited accommodation options.

Countryside of Hoi An (Cam Chau and Cam Thanh)

Many accommodations, 10-minute bike ride to the Old Town, and 15-minute bike ride to Cua Dai Beach.

Beach (An Bang Beach)

Ideal for beach lovers, with easy access to the Old Town and beautiful accommodations.



Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Anantara Hoi An Resort:** Located along the Thu Bon River, this luxurious resort offers elegant rooms, a spa, and direct access to the beach.
- **Four Seasons Resort The Nam Hai:** Situated on a tranquil beach, this luxury resort features spacious villas with private pools, a spa, and multiple dining options.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **La Residencia Hotel & Spa:** Located near An Bang Beach, this mid-range hotel offers comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a spa.
- **Allegro Hoi An - A Little Luxury Hotel & Spa:** Situated in the city center, this mid-range hotel features stylish rooms, a rooftop pool, and a spa.
- **Belle Maison Hadana Hoi An Resort & Spa:** Located in the Cam Chau neighborhood, this mid-range resort offers comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a spa.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Hoi An Luna Villa Home Stay:** Situated near the city center, this budget-friendly homestay offers cozy rooms, bicycle rental, and a communal kitchen.
- **Hoian Central Hotel:** Located in the heart of Hoi An, this budget hotel offers comfortable rooms, a restaurant, and a tour desk.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Hoi An

1. Walk through the old city

Immerse yourself in the charm of Hoi An's old city, adorned with iconic landmarks such as the Japanese Bridge, Chinese temples, and well-preserved ancient houses.

2. Cycling through the countryside

Escape the bustling old town and venture into the serene countryside of Hoi An, where you can cycle amidst peaceful rice fields and experience the rural beauty.

3. Take a cooking class

Discover the culinary delights of Vietnam by taking a cooking class in Hoi An, renowned as one of the best places to learn the art of Vietnamese cuisine.

4. Relax on An Bang Beach

Unwind on the picturesque An Bang Beach, one of the top beaches in Central Vietnam, known for its tranquility, beauty, and a selection of laid-back restaurants.

5. Take a boat trip over the Thu Bon River

Enjoy a peaceful boat trip along the scenic Thu Bon River, offering delightful views of the countryside and a glimpse into the riverine way of life.



Walking around



Cycling



Cooking class



An Bang Beach



Taking boat trip

6. Tailor-make your own clothes

Experience Hoi An's renowned tailoring services and have custom-made clothes created to your specifications, ranging from casual wear to elegant dresses and suits.

7. Visit the local markets

Explore the bustling Central Market for an authentic local experience, and wander through the enchanting Night Market with its illuminated lanterns, perfect for finding souvenirs and soaking up the ambiance.

8. Visit different craft villages

Discover Hoi An's traditional craftsmanship by visiting various craft villages, including the Carpentry Village, Lantern Village, Pottery Village, and Bronze Casting Village.

9. Drive from Hoi An to Hue over the Hai Van Pass

Embark on a thrilling journey on the back of a motorbike or via an Easy Rider tour, traveling along the breathtaking Hai Van Pass, known for its stunning coastal vistas.

10. Make day trips

Explore the nearby attractions from Hoi An, such as the ancient ruins of the My Son temple complex, the idyllic Cham Island for beaches and snorkeling, or the Marble Mountains with caves and pagodas.



Tailor-made cloth



Craft villages

2 days in Hoi An

Day 1

- Explore Hoi An's old town and visit its iconic sights.
- Take a boat trip along the waterways to experience the local life.
- In the evening, witness the enchanting lantern-lit streets and visit the Night Market.



Day 2

- Rent a bike to explore the countryside and visit craft villages.
- Cycle to Bay Mau Coconut Forest for a unique bamboo basket boat ride.
- Continue to the beach for some relaxing time by the sea.
- Take a Vietnamese cooking class in the evening.



Hoi An is also known for the most atmospheric city in Vietnam, or perhaps even in the whole of Southeast Asia.





CENTRAL VIETNAM

Nha Trang

N

ha Trang is a renowned beach city with stunning beaches and picturesque islands.. While it offers beach activities and a few cultural sights, there is limited diversity in terms of attractions. The area is ideal for those seeking a relaxing beach getaway.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 1 - 2 days:** Nha Trang is not considered the most authentic destination, but if you're looking for beach time, you can spend a day or two here as part of your Vietnam itinerary.
- **Best time to visit**

February to May	Ideal for a visit with pleasant weather.
April to August	Best for diving with excellent visibility.
September to December	Rainy season, so plan accordingly.

- **Money:** ATMs are readily available throughout Nha Trang, and card payments are widely accepted.
- **Tourist experience:** Nha Trang is a popular tourist destination with a significant tourist infrastructure. English is widely spoken, but the town may not offer a traditional cultural experience.

Nha Trang

How to get there



Flights



Train



Bus

Nha Trang is served by Cam Ranh Airport, a 45 minute drive, which has international and domestic flights connecting to major cities in Vietnam.

Nha Trang train station offers connections to Ho Chi Minh City, Quy Nhon, Da Nang, and Hue.

There are numerous bus routes connecting Nha Trang to cities such as Ho Chi Minh City, Dalat, Mui Ne, Hoi An, Da Nang, and Hue.

Getting around

- Taxi:** It is recommended to take a metered taxi from a reputable company like Mai Linh.
- Cycling:** Nha Trang's flat terrain makes it easy to explore by bicycle, which can be rented from hotels for around 30,000 VND per day.
- Cyclo:** A fun way to explore the city and its surroundings.
- Motorbike:** Renting a motorbike allows for flexible exploration of Nha Trang's countryside. Costs range from 60,000 to 100,000 VND per day.
- Private car/tour:** Ideal for visiting beaches, waterfalls, and countryside areas outside of Nha Trang.



Restaurants & Nightlife



Tips

Don't miss the opportunity to visit beach bars and enjoy the stunning sunset views.

Nha Trang

Restaurants

Feast Buffet Restaurant: Offering a wide variety of delicious dishes.

LIVIN: A trendy restaurant with a diverse menu and live music.

Altitude Rooftop Bar: Enjoy panoramic views of Nha Trang while sipping on cocktails.

Ngon Gallery Nha Trang: A popular spot for Vietnamese cuisine with a modern twist.

La Cala - Gusto Italiano: Indulge in authentic Italian dishes in a charming setting.



Bars

Lousiane Brewhouse: Known for its craft beer and vibrant atmosphere.

Sailing Club: A beachfront bar with great cocktails and live music.

Skylight Nha Trang: A rooftop bar offering breathtaking views and a lively nightlife scene.

Killed Kenny Bar: A cozy and friendly bar with a wide selection of drinks.

Staying in Nha Trang

Location

Nha Trang Beach

The main beach area with a wide range of accommodation options, restaurants, and bars. Ideal for beach lovers and those seeking a vibrant atmosphere.

Resorts on Islands and Bays off Nha Trang

Experience a more secluded and luxurious stay by choosing one of the resorts located on islands and bays surrounding Nha Trang. Perfect for a tranquil and upscale getaway.



Nha Trang

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Vinpearl Resort & Spa Nha Trang Bay:** A prestigious beachfront resort offering luxurious amenities, private beach access, and stunning views of Nha Trang Bay.
- **Six Senses Ninh Van Bay:** A secluded and eco-friendly resort nestled in a picturesque bay, featuring private villas with stunning ocean views and a range of wellness and dining options.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Green World Hotel Nha Trang:** A contemporary hotel with well-appointed rooms, a rooftop pool, and a central location.
- **Mia Resort Nha Trang:** A boutique beachfront resort featuring stylish villas, a stunning infinity pool, and a serene atmosphere.
- **Whale Island Resort:** Located on a secluded island, this eco-friendly resort offers rustic bungalows, crystal-clear waters, and a peaceful ambiance.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

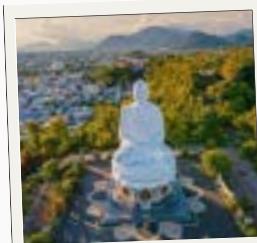
- **Mojzo Inn:** A budget-friendly option in the heart of Nha Trang, offering clean and comfortable rooms, a rooftop bar, and a friendly atmosphere.
- **Alana Nha Trang Beach Hotel:** A budget-friendly hotel located near the beach with comfortable rooms.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Nha Trang



Long Son Pagoda



Po Nagar



Diving and snorkeling



Relax on beaches



Cooking class



Van Phong Bay



Ba Ho waterfall

1. Explore the underwater world with diving and snorkeling

Over 12,000 hectares of reef known as Hon Mun Marine Park. Most of the diving and snorkeling is done here and the shallow water is the best place for beginners.

2. Relax on the beaches

Nha Trang has a beautiful six kilometer coastline with a wide variety of dining and accommodation options along the white sandy beaches.

3. Go island hopping

You can visit a number of islands by boat, including snorkeling and a BBQ lunch. From private speedboats and luxury cruises to budget day tour.

4. Discover the secluded Van Phong Bay

One of the most beautiful bays in central Vietnam with its pristine natural beauty.

5. Swimming and cliff jumping at Ba Ho waterfall

Nha Trang is known for its waterfalls and Ba Ho and Fairy Spring waterfalls are popular options. These offer you the perfect opportunity to get out.

6. Visit the Long Son Pagoda & White Buddha

Long Son Pagoda is a multi-level Buddhist temple that sits gracefully on a hill. It is also where you can see the large white Buddha image.

7. Shopping at Cho Dam market

This is the most popular market in the city in a huge imposing four-storey concrete structure, with clothing, accessories, electronics and household items.

8. Learn about the Cham history at Po Nagar

These are some of the best preserved buildings of Cham architecture in Vietnam, similar to the My Son near Hoi An.

9. Hon Khoi Salt Fields

These salt fields are some of the most unique sights in Nha Trang, where women harvest natural salt from shallow fields between the months of January and June.

10. Nha Trang Cathedral

Despite being built with simple blocks of cement, the cathedral looks surprisingly elegant. Mass is held several times a day.

2 days in Nha Trang

Day 1

- Begin your day by witnessing the beautiful sunrise on the beach.
- Explore the bustling Dam Market and visit the Nha Trang Church.
- In the afternoon, immerse yourself in history by visiting the Po Nagar Cham Towers. Later, indulge in a relaxing time on the beach.
- As the evening sets in, treat yourself to a delightful drink while enjoying the beach ambiance

Day 2

- Option 1: Embark on an exciting island hopping tour. Discover different islands, relish a delicious BBQ on the boat, and dive into the mesmerizing underwater world through snorkeling.
- Option 2: If you're an avid diver, opt for a thrilling diving excursion. Explore the depths of the sea and witness the wonders of marine life.



Nha Trang is the most popular beach destination in Vietnam.



CENTRAL VIETNAM

Dalat

D

Dalat, known as the "City of Eternal Spring," is a charming highland retreat in Vietnam. Surrounded by waterfalls, forests, hills, and lakes, it offers a scenic countryside with strawberry farms and tea hills. With its spring-like cool weather and diverse landscapes, Dalat is an adventure destination ideal for activities such as canyoning, trekking, and mountain biking.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2 – 3:** There are plenty of activities to keep you busy in Dalat, making it worth staying for a few days. If you're not into adventure sports, you can still explore waterfalls and other sights in just two days.
- **Best time to visit**

Spring (January-March)	Trees and flowers in bloom, temperature between 20 and 28 degrees.
Summer (April-June)	Foggy and warm weather, temperature between 24 and 31 degrees.
Autumn (July-September)	Rainy season, temperature between 24 and 31 degrees.
Winter (October-December)	Flowers on the hills, temperature between 20 and 26 degrees.

- **Money:** ATM machines are readily available in the city, although less common in the countryside. Card payments are widely accepted at most establishments, with the exception of some local restaurants.
- **Tourist experience:** Dalat is a very popular tourist destination, attracting international visitors but mostly local tourists.

How to get there



Flights

Lien Khuong Airport is the closest airport, with flights connecting to major cities including Ho Chi Minh City. It's about a 40-minute drive from the city center.



Bus

Dalat has good bus connections, including sleeper buses and limousine vans, to various destinations such as Ho Chi Minh City, Mui Ne, and Nha Trang. It's a convenient and affordable way to reach the city and explore the central highlands.

Getting around

- Easy Rider:** Join a guided tour on the back of a motorbike with a local guide. This popular option allows you to explore the countryside, forests, villages, and waterfalls while enjoying the expertise of a knowledgeable guide.
- Drive a Motorbike:** If you're an experienced rider, you can rent a motorbike and explore the area at your own pace.
- Private Car:** Opting for a private car provides a comfortable and convenient way to navigate the city and explore the surrounding areas.
- Tours:** Joining a guided tour is often the best way to explore Dalat, especially for activities like trekking, biking, and canyoning. These tours provide expert guides, equipment and itineraries.



Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips

- Dalat Night Market:** Explore the vibrant streets of the city center between 5 PM and 10 PM, where you'll find a variety of stalls selling local snacks, second-hand clothes, and souvenirs.
- BBQ:** Don't miss the opportunity to try the local BBQ dishes in Dalat, known for their unique flavors and preparations.
- Coffeeshops:** Dalat is famous for its coffeeshops, offering a range of experiences. Some are creatively decorated, while others are situated in nature areas with stunning views. Take your time to relax and savor the city's renowned coffee culture.

Restaurants

Chu Quan BBQ Grill: Enjoy delicious BBQ dishes in a cozy atmosphere.

Gourmet Burger: Satisfy your burger cravings with a variety of gourmet options.

One More Cafe: A popular spot for coffee and light bites, with a charming ambiance.

Dalat Train Cafe: Experience a unique dining experience inside a converted train carriage.

Chefs Dalat: Sample a fusion of local and international flavors in a stylish setting.

Artist Alley Restaurant: Delight in a mix of Vietnamese and Western cuisine, surrounded by local art.



Bars

100 Roof Bar – Maze Bar: Climb through the maze-like bar for a rooftop view and vibrant atmosphere.

6th Floor Bar: Enjoy creative cocktails and live music on the 6th floor of a building.

Heyla Cocktail & Acoustic: Relax with a cocktail and live acoustic music in a laid-back setting.

Beepub: Unwind with a variety of beers, pool tables, and a casual atmosphere.

Staying in Dalat

Location



Center: Stay near Dalat night market for convenient access to shopping, dining, and transportation options. Enjoy beautiful views and immerse yourself in the bustling atmosphere of the city.

Outside Dalat City: Experience a calm and quiet atmosphere outside the city center. This option offers a more peaceful environment, lower prices, and beautiful scenery to enjoy. Keep in mind that it may take more time to travel to the market and other city highlights.

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Ana Mandara Villas Dalat Resort & Spa:** A luxurious resort set in a French colonial-style villa with beautiful gardens and views of the surrounding mountains.
- **Dalat Palace Heritage Hotel:** A historic hotel featuring elegant rooms and a stunning setting overlooking Xuan Huong Lake.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Terracotta Hotel & Resort Dalat:** A charming resort with comfortable rooms, swimming pool, and peaceful garden setting.
- **TTC Hotel Premium Ngoc Lan:** Located near Xuan Huong Lake, this hotel offers cozy rooms with lake views and a rooftop bar.
- **Feliz Dalat Homestay:** a cozy and affordable accommodation option in Dalat, offering comfortable rooms and a homely atmosphere.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Mr Peace Backpacker's House:** A budget-friendly hostel with dormitory and private rooms, offering a friendly atmosphere and organized tours.
- **Ngoc Phat Dalat Hotel:** A budget hotel offering simple yet comfortable rooms, located near the city center.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Dalat

1. Abseiling from waterfalls with canyoning

Experience the adrenaline rush of canyoning in Dalat, descending waterfalls, cliff jumping, ziplining, and swimming in rivers.

2. Explore the many waterfalls around the city

Discover the natural beauty of Pongour Waterfall, Elephant Waterfall, and Prenn Waterfall, each offering its unique charm.

3. Go mountain biking through the hills

Embark on an exhilarating mountain biking adventure through Dalat's scenic hills, forests, and lakes.

4. Make a trekking through the forest

Traverse hanging bridges, lush forests, and plantations on a trekking excursion, or venture to Bidoup Nui Ba National Park for a more immersive experience, combining it with camping.

5. Explore on the back of a motorbike with an Easy Rider Tour

Embrace the spirit of the Easy Riders and discover Dalat and the Central Highlands on the back of a motorbike, an iconic and immersive way to explore the region.



Canyoning in Dalat



Explore waterfall



Mountain biking



Forest trekking



Easy Rider Tour

6. Enjoy a drink at a coffee shop with a view

Unwind at picturesque coffee shops offering stunning views of the surrounding forests and hills, while savoring fresh coffee and tea sourced from nearby plantations.

7. Go around the scenic Tuyen Lam Lake

Take in the romantic beauty of Tuyen Lam Lake, surrounded by lush forests and hills, and consider visiting Truc Lam Pagoda and taking a ride on the Dalat Cable Car.

8. Visit the Dalat Night Market

Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of Dalat's bustling night market, where you can indulge in street food delights and browse through a variety of souvenirs.

9. Visit some of the many coffee and tea plantations

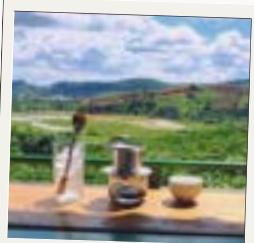
Discover the rich flavors of Dalat's coffee and tea by visiting the local plantations, learning about the cultivation process, and enjoying tastings.

10. Get lost in Dalat's Crazy House

Explore the whimsical architecture and artistic design of Dalat's Crazy House, a unique and unconventional attraction that sparks curiosity and imagination.



Night Market



Drink a coffee

2 days in Dalat

Day 1

- Explore Dalat and its surrounding area by hiring an Easy Rider guide, renting a motorbike, or hiring a private car.
- Visit the Datonla waterfall and enjoy a thrilling ride on the roller coaster down.
- Drive around Tuyen Lam Lake and enjoy the scenic views.
- Visit the Elephant waterfall and admire its impressive cascade.
- Explore the unique and quirky Crazy House Dalat.
- In the evening, walk across Dalat Night Market and experience the lively atmosphere.

Day 2

- Option 1: Canyoning - Rappelling, sliding, and jumping down waterfalls
- Option 2: Mountain biking - Discover countryside and scenic trails
- Option 3: Hiking - trek through the forests and mountains



Dalat is clearly one of the highlights of Vietnam, especially if you like adrenaline.

CENTRAL VIETNAM

Mui Ne

M

ui Ne, a former fishing village turned popular beach town, is located near Phan Thiet. With its beautiful beaches, minimal rainfall, and iconic red and white sand dunes, it offers a laid-back atmosphere. It is a perfect destination for those seeking relaxation and a few days of beachside bliss while traveling between North and South Vietnam.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2 - 3 days:** You can explore Mui Ne's main sights in a day, but it is an ideal place to stay for a few days and enjoy its beautiful beaches.
- **Best time to visit**

Best time to visit	November to March is the dry season, with warm weather and no rain
Rainy season	April to October, with increased rainfall during this period.

- **Money:** There are many ATMs along the main Mui Ne strip and most accommodations and restaurants accept card payments.
- **Tourist experience:** Mui Ne is a tourist beach town, not traditional and English is widely spoken.

Mui Ne

How to get there



Train

Mui Ne does not have a train station, but the closest is at Phan Thiet. There are trains to and from Ho Chi Minh City and to Nha Trang. The red local bus runs from Phan Thiet train station to Ham Tien (the tourist strip) and Mui Ne. Otherwise, metered taxis are available.



Bus

Bus tickets to Mui Ne can be purchased in the tourist district of Ho Chi Minh City. There are day and night buses. The duration of the trip is 5-7 hours, depending on how much traffic there is on the road. There are also buses to and from Nha Trang (5 hours) and Dalat (6 hours). If you don't want to travel by bus or train, you can take a private car to Mui Ne.

Getting around

- Motorbike or Scooter:** Renting a motorbike or scooter is the most convenient way to get around Mui Ne. Prices range from 80,000 to 150,000 dong per day. However, exercise caution while driving as traffic rules may not be strictly followed.
- Bicycles:** Some hotels offer bicycles for free or for rent, allowing you to explore Mui Ne at a leisurely pace.
- Taxis:** Taxis are available for longer distances. They can be found outside larger resorts or can be called by your hotel without any extra charge.
- Jeep or Bus Tours:** Joining jeep or bus tours is a cost-effective option for visiting popular sights, especially if you don't want to rent a motorbike.



Restaurants & Nightlife

Tips

- Try the fresh seafood dishes in Mui Ne, as it is known for its delicious seafood.
- Don't miss the opportunity to enjoy the beautiful sunsets along the beach.



Mui Ne

Restaurants

Surfing Bird's WOK: Specializes in fresh seafood and offers a variety of dishes.

Sindbad: Known for its delicious seafood and Vietnamese cuisine.

Choi Oi: Offers a mix of Vietnamese and international dishes in a cozy setting.

Modjo Bar & Restaurant: Serves a range of international dishes with a beachfront view.

Lachelin Restaurant: Offers a fusion of Asian and European cuisine in a relaxed atmosphere.

El Latino: A popular spot for Mexican and Latin American flavors.



Bars

Joe's Café: A lively beachfront bar with live music and a vibrant atmosphere.

Jibe's Beach Club: A beach bar known for its relaxed vibe and refreshing drinks.

Ratinger Löwe: A German-style pub offering a wide selection of beers and a cozy atmosphere.

Dragon Beach Bar: Offers a beachside setting, cocktails, and live entertainment.

Nirvana Beach Club: A beachfront bar and lounge with a laid-back atmosphere and stunning views.

Staying in Mui Ne

Location

Mui Ne Beach: This area stretches for 15 kilometers, offering sandy beaches perfect for various water sports. The northern part is a charming fishing village, while the southern part is home to hotels, shops, and souvenir shops. It's a popular choice for beachfront accommodations and easy access to amenities.



Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Sailing Club Resort Mui Ne:** Upscale resort with stylish bungalows, modern amenities, a private beach, and a relaxing spa.
- **Anantara Mui Ne Resort:** A luxurious beachfront resort offering elegant rooms, private pools, and a range of amenities.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Poshanu Resort:** Located on a quiet beach, this resort offers comfortable rooms, a swimming pool, and a beachfront restaurant.
- **The Cliff Resort & Residences:** Set on a hillside overlooking the ocean, this resort features modern rooms, a swimming pool, and a spa.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Mui Ne Hills Backpackers:** Affordable dorm rooms and private bungalows, with lively atmosphere, a swimming pool, and a bar.
- **Minh Nhan Guesthouse:** This guesthouse provides budget rooms with basic amenities, a communal kitchen, and a garden.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Mui Ne



Relax on beach



Sand dunes



Wind surfing



Fairy stream



Mui Ne Harbor

1. Relax on the beaches

There are 10 kilometers of sandy beaches and more if you continue along the coast. Find a stretch of beach to yourself where you can sunbathe and swim.



Local fish market

2. Sliding down the sand dunes

The white and red sand dunes are a small piece of desert in Vietnam. You can drive a quad here or slide down with a sled.



Cham tower

3. Go wind or kite surfing

One of the top places in Asia to do it. There are many kitesurfing schools in Mui Ne for all levels at competitive prices.



Ke Ga lighthouse

4. Walk down the Fairy Stream

Walk through the crystal clear, ankle deep water. The mixed sand colors make for Instagram-worthy photos and there is a small waterfall at the end.



Ta Cu mountain

5. Watch fishing boats at Mui Ne harbor

On the north side of the bay you will find a beautiful view over the bay which is full of colorful fishing boats.



Sunrise & sunset

6. Visit the the local fish market

Mui Ne's chaotic morning market offers a fascinating glimpse into the lives of local Vietnamese fishermen. Every morning they get their catch to shore.

7. Visit the Cham tower

The remains of the Champa Empire. The temple dates back to the ninth century and is located on a hill between Mui Ne and Phan Thiet.

8. Drive down the coast to Ke Ga lighthouse

Thirty kilometers south of Mui Ne along the coast is an area known for the lighthouse on a small island.

9. Ta Cu Mountain and the Reclining Buddha

Ta Cu Mountain is made up of lush rainforests, rare flora and fauna, limestone caves and ornate Buddhist structures.

10. Watch the sunrise and sunset

Choose to sit on the beach, watch from the fishing village, or atop one of the white or red sand dunes for incredible skies.

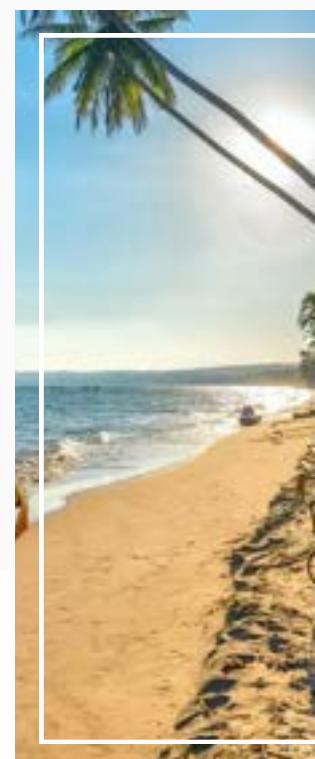
2 days in Mui Ne

Day 1

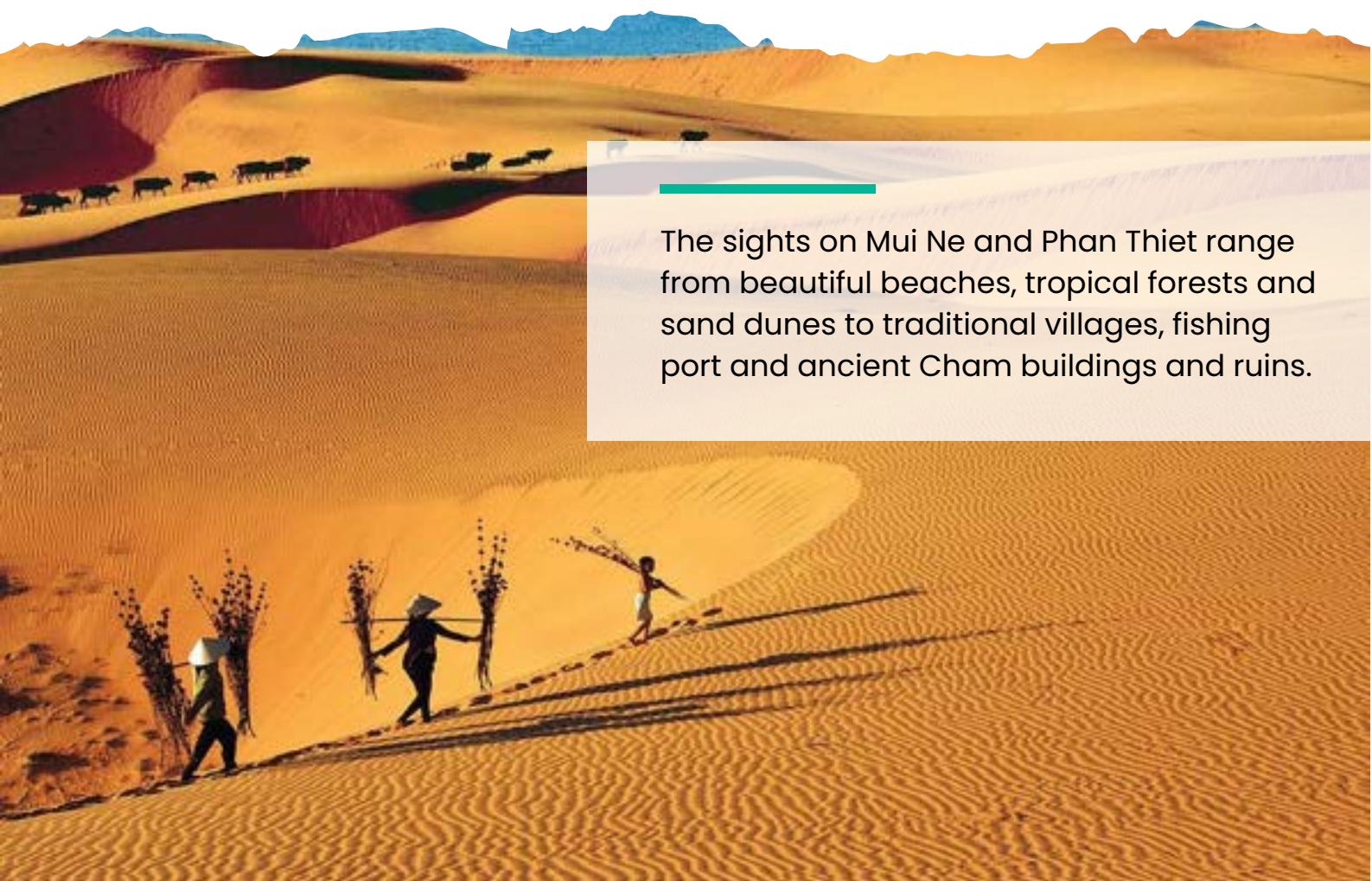
- Visit Mui Ne harbor and the local fish market in the morning.
- Explore the white sand dunes and find a beach to relax.
- Take a walk along the Fairy Stream.
- Witness the beautiful sunset at the red dunes.
- Enjoy a refreshing drink by the beach.

Day 2

- Option 1: Take a kitesurfing or windsurfing course and spend the afternoon enjoying the beach.
- Option 2: Visit Po Shanu Cham Towers, The Prince's Castle, and Ta Cu Mountain. Drive through Phan Thiet town.
- Option 3: Spend the entire day relaxing on the beach.



The sights on Mui Ne and Phan Thiet range from beautiful beaches, tropical forests and sand dunes to traditional villages, fishing port and ancient Cham buildings and ruins.



SOUTH OF VIETNAM

Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City, formerly known as Saigon, is a modern and bustling metropolis in Viet Nam. It is a city of contrasts, with a blend of Western influences and Vietnamese traditions. The cityscape is characterized by tall skyscrapers standing alongside historic French colonial buildings. With its vibrant energy, Ho Chi Minh City offers a vibrant nightlife and rich cultural experiences.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** If you're not a fan of large cities, one day is sufficient to see the main sights in Ho Chi Minh City. However, if you enjoy exploring vibrant cities and taking day trips, you may want to allocate more time for your stay.
- **Best time to visit:**

Dry season	The best time to visit Ho Chi Minh City is during the dry season, which typically lasts from November to April. The weather is generally sunny and rainfall is minimal during this time.
Rainy season	The rainy season in Ho Chi Minh City lasts from May to October, with June to September seeing the most rainfall. It's still possible to visit during this time, but be prepared for wet weather.

- **Money:** Banks and ATMs are widely available. For currency exchange, the preferred option is money changers and gold traders at Ben Thanh Market. Card payments are widely accepted in most places, though small local restaurants and street food vendors may prefer cash.
- **Tourist experience:** Ho Chi Minh City offers a more westernized experience compared to other cities in Vietnam. It is less traditional and English is commonly spoken in tourist areas.

Ho Chi Minh City

How to get there



Flights

Tan Son Nhat Airport has extensive international and domestic flight connections, including popular destinations like Phu Quoc, Hanoi, Nha Trang, Dalat, and Da Nang.



Bus

As the starting point of the reunification express, you can easily travel by train to coastal cities up to Hanoi in the north.



Train

There is a comprehensive network of buses connecting Ho Chi Minh City with destinations in southern and central Vietnam, including the Mekong Delta, Dalat, Nha Trang, Mui Ne, and even Da Nang and beyond.

Getting around

- Taxis:** Metered taxis are readily available, with recommended companies like Mai Linh Taxi and Vinasun Taxi. Alternatively, you can use the Grab app to order taxis with upfront prices.
- Walking:** Many attractions in the city center are within walking distance of each other, making it a great way to explore.
- Metro:** Although still under construction, Ho Chi Minh City is developing a metro system that will provide another transportation option in the future.



Restaurants & Nightlife



Tips

- Experience the best nightlife in Vietnam; visit classy sky bars for cocktails and lively backpacker pubs on Bui Vien Street.
- Enjoy a memorable dinner cruise on the Saigon River.
- Dive into the vibrant street food scene with a motorbike street food tour.

Ho Chi Minh City

Restaurants

Poke Saigon Ly Tu Trong: Fresh and delicious poke bowls in a vibrant setting.

Bep Me In: Cozy restaurant serving tasty Vietnamese dishes with a modern twist.

Cyclo Resto: Experience traditional Vietnamese cuisine in a unique cyclo-themed ambiance.

Noir. Dining In The Dark: A fascinating dining experience in complete darkness, heightening your senses.

Pizza 4P's Ben Thanh: Popular spot for mouthwatering pizzas with a blend of Vietnamese and Italian flavors.



Bars

Chill Skybar: Sophisticated rooftop bar offering stunning city views and signature cocktails.

Apocalypse Now Bar: Iconic and lively bar with a great selection of drinks and live music.

Pub Crawl Saigon: Join the exciting nightlife scene with guided pub crawls in the city.

The Blinders Cocktail Bar: Trendy cocktail bar with innovative and creative drink options.

Staying in Ho Chi Minh City

Location

District 1: Stay in District 1 for convenient access to attractions, restaurants, and nightlife. Day tours usually offer pick-up service from this central area.



Ho Chi Minh City — — — — —

Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Hotel Majestic Saigon:** Historic luxury hotel with French colonial charm, located along the Saigon River.
- **Park Hyatt Saigon:** Upscale hotel offering elegant rooms and suites, set in a prime location in District 1.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Liberty Central Saigon Citypoint:** Modern hotel with rooftop pool, conveniently located near Ben Thanh Market.
- **Au Lac Charner Hotel:** Chic boutique hotel with a rooftop terrace, close to popular landmarks.
- **Fusion Suites Saigon:** Stylish hotel offering spacious suites with kitchenettes, ideal for families or longer stays.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Vy Khanh Guesthouse:** Friendly hostel with dormitory beds and a communal kitchen, located near Bui Vien Walking Street.
- **Amango Dorm:** Cozy dormitory-style accommodation with a lively atmosphere, located near the vibrant Bui Vien Walking Street.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



Ho Chi Minh City

10 highlights in Ho Chi Minh

1. Crawl through the Cu Chi Tunnels

Explore the intricate underground network used by Viet Cong soldiers during the Vietnam War, gaining insights into the history and resilience of the Vietnamese people.



Cu Chi Tunnels

2. Visit the War Remnants Museum

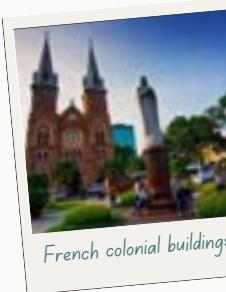
Gain a deeper understanding of the Vietnam War through powerful exhibitions and artifacts that highlight its impact on the country and its people.



War Remnants Museum

3. Discover the city's French colonial buildings

Marvel at the architectural beauty of Saigon Central Post Office, Saigon Notre Dame Cathedral, the Opera House, and the People's Committee Building, remnants of the city's colonial past.



French colonial buildings

4. Enjoy a street food tour on the back of a motorbike

Embark on a culinary adventure with a local guide, exploring the city's vibrant streets while savoring a variety of delicious Vietnamese street food.



Food tour

5. Explore Saigon's vibrant nightlife

Experience the energetic nightlife scene of Ho Chi Minh City, from lively backpacker pubs on Bui Vien Street to upscale sky bars offering stunning city views.



Vibrant nightlife

6. Explore the Reunification Palace

Step back in time and tour the historic Reunification Palace, once the presidential residence during the Vietnam War, and witness its preserved 1960s decor.

7. Enjoy a skyline view from Bitexco Financial Tower

Take in breathtaking panoramic views of the city from the observation deck of the iconic Bitexco Financial Tower, one of the tallest skyscrapers in Ho Chi Minh City.

8. Mix with the locals at Nguyen Hue Walking Street

Immerse yourself in the vibrant atmosphere of Nguyen Hue Walking Street, lined with shops, cafes, and the Cafe Apartment Building, providing a glimpse into local life.

9. Go shopping at the local markets

Explore the bustling Ben Thanh Market for souvenirs, or venture to Bin Thanh Market in Chinatown and Tan Dinh Market in District 3 for an authentic local shopping experience.

10. See the city from the Saigon River

Enjoy a different perspective of Ho Chi Minh City by taking a dinner cruise or speedboat tour along the Saigon River, offering picturesque views and opportunities to visit nearby attractions such as the Mekong Delta or Cu Chi Tunnels.



Reunification Palace



Bitexco tower

Ho Chi Minh City — — — — —

2 days in Ho Chi Minh City

Day 1

- Explore landmarks like Ben Thanh Market, Reunification Palace, War Remnants Museum, Post Office, and Notre Dame Cathedral on your own or with a tour.
- In the evening, enjoy a food tour on a motorcycle.

Day 2

- Visit Cu Chi Tunnels in the morning for a half-day trip.
- In the afternoon, explore markets and temples in Chinatown.
- End the day with a river cruise and dinner, followed by cocktails at a rooftop bar.



Ho Chi Minh City is the business and financial center of Vietnam, with a prominent history that goes back hundreds of years



SOUTH OF VIETNAM

Mekong Delta

The Mekong Delta is a fertile region in southern Vietnam known for its lush landscapes, abundant fruit orchards, and vast rice paddies. River life is an integral part of the delta's charm, with floating markets showcasing the local culture. It's an ideal day trip from Saigon or a rewarding multi-day exploration.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 1-2 days:** You can visit the Mekong Delta in just one day, but to truly experience its charm and floating markets, it's best to stay for a minimum of two days.
- **Best time to visit:**
 - Pleasant weather year-round; interesting local life even during the rains.
 - To avoid rain, visit between December and March.
 - May to August: the rainy summer, but very green and perfect fruit season
- **Money:** ATMs are available in cities, not in the countryside. Bring sufficient cash for local restaurants.

Getting around

- **Boat tours:** Explore floating markets and river life, best experienced on boats along rivers and smaller channels.
- **Cycling:** Flat and peaceful countryside roads make Mekong Delta ideal for cycling, one of the best places in Vietnam.
- **Taxis / Private car:** Convenient for sightseeing across a large area.
- **Motorbike:** Cheaper and more adventurous option for exploring the region.



What place to choose?

The Mekong Delta is not a city or a province but rather an entire region in southern Vietnam. Below are tips what is best to visit:

Best day trips destinations

**Ben Tre:**

Experience authentic Mekong life with fewer tourists.

**My Tho:**

Offers budget-friendly options and a taste of the typical Mekong experience (most touristic).

Best multiple day trip destinations

**Can Tho:**

Explore the vibrant floating markets.

**Ben Tre:**

Enjoy peaceful river life and a less touristy atmosphere.

**An Giang:**

Discover beautiful rice fields and an off-the-beaten-track experience.

Mekong Delta is home to unique ecosystems and various unique communities.

My Tho

My Tho is the most popular day trip destination from Saigon, offering a glimpse of local life in the Mekong Delta, but it can be quite touristy.

How to get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Tour: Best for a one-day trip, but check the itinerary and group size for a more personalized experience.Bus: Plenty of bus options available with varying schedules and quality, taking approximately 1.5 to 2 hours depending on traffic.
Best things to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Boat trip to explore islands and experience local life on the river.Cycling to explore the peaceful countryside and its picturesque landscapes.Visit Vinh Trang Pagoda, a beautiful Buddhist temple with unique architectural features.Explore Cai Be floating market, even though it may not be as big as it once was, still offers an authentic market experience.Relax on Tan Thanh Beach, a serene spot to unwind and enjoy the coastal charm.
Recommended accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">The Island Lodge: A charming eco-friendly lodge with cozy rooms and a serene garden setting, located close to the river. Booking.com linkMekong Riverside Boutique Resort & Spa: A tranquil riverside resort offering comfortable rooms and an outdoor pool. Booking.com link



Boat trip



Cycling



Vinh Trang Pagoda



Cai Be floating market



Tan Thanh Beach

Ben Tre

Ben Tre offers a peaceful escape into the Mekong Delta, known as the coconut capital, providing an authentic experience of the region's local life.

How to get there

- Tour:** Choose from day tours or multi-day tours that offer hassle-free options with boat trips and cycling activities included.
- Bus:** The recommended option is a limousine bus, taking approximately 3 to 3.5 hours. Some buses may even drop you off at your accommodation if it's not too far.

Best things to do

- Enjoy a boat trip to explore the serene waterways and picturesque landscapes of Ben Tre.
- Embark on a cycling adventure to discover the peaceful countryside and lush orchards.
- Experience the local way of life by visiting fruit orchards and coconut candy workshops.
- Visit Vam Ho Bird Sanctuary, a haven for birdwatching and nature enthusiasts.
- Enhance your experience by staying in a homestay, immersing yourself in the warm hospitality of the locals.

Recommended accommodation

- Ben Tre Riverside Resort:** A lovely resort nestled along the river, offering comfortable rooms and a beautiful garden setting. [Booking.com link](#)
- Mekong Rustic Ben Tre:** Experience the charm of a rustic homestay with comfortable bungalows amidst coconut gardens and friendly hosts. [Booking.com link](#)



Boat trip



Cycling



Vinh Trang Pagoda



Vam Ho Bird Sanctuary



Meet local people

Can Tho

The largest city in the Mekong Delta, serves as the gateway to the mesmerizing floating markets. For a more authentic experience, consider staying just outside the city.

How to get there

- Tour:** Opt for multi-day tours that include visits to the floating markets and provide a hassle-free connection with Saigon. Day trips don't reach the floating markets on time.
- Bus:** Numerous buses connect Saigon and Can Tho, with a travel time of approximately 3.5 hours. If staying outside the city, you may need an additional taxi ride to reach your destination.

Best things to do

- Immerse in the vibrant atmosphere of the famous floating markets, such as Cai Rang and Phong Dien.
- Enjoy a boat trip through the enchanting smaller channels, revealing the picturesque beauty of the Mekong Delta.
- Witness the mesmerizing Bang Lang Stork Garden, where thousands of storks gather.
- Embark on a cycling adventure to explore the serene countryside and charming villages.
- Get an insight into local life by visiting factories and traditional craft villages.

Recommended accommodation

- Mekong Rustic Can Tho Homestay:** Authentic Mekong Delta life in a charming homestay with comfortable rooms and friendly hosts. [Booking.com link](#)
- Victoria Can Tho Resort:** A beautiful riverside resort with elegant rooms, lush gardens, and a lovely swimming pool. [Booking.com link](#)



Float Market



Boat trip



Bang Lang Stork Garden



Cycling



Craft village

An Giang

A hidden gem bordering Cambodia, offering an authentic experience with minimal tourists. Explore its fascinating floating markets, stunning rice fields, and immerse yourself in the local culture.

How to get there	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bus: Take a 6.5-hour bus ride to Chau Doc, the main town in An Giang. If staying in the countryside, additional taxis may be required for transportation.Private car: Opt for a more convenient door-to-door option, especially if booking a multi-day tour to explore the region easily.
Best things to do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Discover the Chau Doc floating village and the unique Cham Village, rich in cultural heritage.Visit the vibrant Long Xuyen floating market and experience local trading traditions.Climb Sam Mountain for panoramic views and religious sites.Explore the peaceful Tra Su Forest with its lush greenery and diverse wildlife.Enjoy the mesmerizing beauty of the Ta Pa rice fields, an unforgettable landscape.
Recommended accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chau Doc Homestay: Experience the authentic rural life of the Mekong Delta in this charming homestay. Booking.com linkVictoria Chau Doc Hotel: A lovely hotel with stunning river views and a relaxing pool area. Conveniently located in Chau Doc city. Booking.com link



Chau Doc village



Long Xuyen market



Climb Sam Mountain



Tra Su Forest



Ta Pa rice fields



SOUTH OF VIETNAM

Phu Quoc

P

hu Quoc is Vietnam's largest island, akin in size to Phuket in Thailand. It boasts beautiful crystal-clear waters, stunning sunsets, and lush tropical landscapes. While the northern part remains untouched as a UNESCO-listed national park, the southern coastline offers a blend of luxury resorts, trendy bars, and charming cafes for an unforgettable island getaway.

Local tips

- Stay here for 2-4 days:** The length of your stay in Phu Quoc depends on your preference for beach relaxation, as there are limited activities to do on the island.
- Best time to visit:**

High season (November to March)	Pleasant weather, clear skies, average temperature of 30°C.
Shoulder season (April to June)	Hotter months, mostly sunny, but more change at ran.
Low season (July to September)	Rainy season, heavy rains.

- Money:** Banks and ATMs available in larger towns like Duong Dong, but limited in smaller villages. Bring cash for very local restaurants, but most accommodations, bars, and restaurants accept card payments.
- Tourist experience:** Phu Quoc is a popular island destination with English widely spoken. It's an open and friendly place, where you can dress comfortably without being conservative. Beachwear is relaxed and accepted.

How to get there



Flights

Phu Quoc International Airport (PQC) offers daily flights from Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hanoi, and international destinations.



Ferry

Weather permitting, ferries from Ha Tien (1.5 hours) and Rach Gia (2.5 hours) operate a few times a day. The Superdong fast ferry is the preferred choice for most travelers, offering efficiency and comfort.

Getting around

- Taxis:** Readily available at the airport, resorts, and popular spots. You can also rent a car with a driver for island sightseeing.
- Motorbikes/Scooters:** Ideal for exploring Phu Quoc at your own pace. Daily rates range from VND 120,000 to VND 250,000.
- Bike Rental:** Most hotels and resorts offer bike rentals for about US\$1 per day, perfect for short trips within Duong Dong and Long Beach.



Restaurants & Nightlife



Tips

- Specialty:** Enjoy the island's delicious seafood, a must-try delicacy.
- Sunset Delight:** Watch breathtaking sunsets on the beach while sipping refreshing cocktails.

Phu Quoc

Restaurants

Mango Bay Restaurant: Offers delicious seafood and other dishes with a beachfront view.

The Home Pizza: A cozy spot for tasty pizzas and Italian cuisine.

Saigonese Eatery: Authentic Vietnamese dishes in a friendly atmosphere.

Winston's Burgers & Beer: Serves mouthwatering burgers and craft beers.

The Spice House at Cassia Cottage: Offers a fusion of Asian and Western flavors.

Crab House Restaurant: A popular choice for fresh seafood dishes.



Bars

La Veranda Beach Bar: Enjoy sunset views with cocktails by the beach.

Eden Beach Bar: Relaxing beach bar with a wide range of drinks.

The Cheeky Traveller English Pub: A lively pub with a great selection of beverages.

INK 360: Rooftop bar offering panoramic views and creative cocktails.

Bittersweet: Cozy bar with a variety of cocktail drinks and live music options.

Staying in Phu Quoc

Duong Dong: The vibrant heart of the island, offering easy access to entertainment, shopping, dining, and sightseeing.

Ong Lang: A popular backpackers village with a lovely local beach, providing numerous options for budget hotels and guest houses.

An Thoi: The main port of Phu Quoc, featuring an old fishing village and a luxurious 6-star Marriot hotel.

Location

Cua Can: A tranquil and untouched fishing village, offering a glimpse of authentic local life away from tourism and industrialization.

Vung Bau: Nestled along the coast and part of the national park, with beautiful resorts and a wild, natural environment ideal for nature lovers.

Ganh Dau: Predominantly national park territory, partly owned by Vingroup, featuring a variety of facilities like amusement parks, resorts, a casino, a golf course, a hospital, and a zoo.

Recommended accommodations

High end

- **Salinda Resort Phu Quoc Island:** A 5-star resort offering elegant rooms, lush gardens, and direct access to the pristine beach.
- **JW Marriott Phu Quoc Emerald Bay Resort & Spa:** A 5-star beachfront resort with exquisite design and, top-notch facilities

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **Mango Bay Resort:** A charming eco-resort set amidst lush gardens and coconut trees, offering beachfront bungalows.
- **Cassia Cottage:** A cozy beachfront resort with lovely cottages and a peaceful ambiance, with beach, pool, and on-site restaurant.
- **La Veranda Resort Phu Quoc - MGallery:** A beautiful colonial-style resort with elegant rooms, a private beach, swimming pool & spa.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Langchia Village Phu Quoc Resort:** A budget option with charming bungalows in a peaceful setting and easy access to the beach.
- **Cocopalm Beach Resort:** A budget-friendly resort with comfortable rooms and a swimming pool, just a short walk from the beach.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)



10 highlights in Phu Quoc



Enjoy the beaches



Island hopping



Learn the island history



Fishing villages



Suoi Tranh waterfall



diving or snorkeling



Enjoy the sunset



Local plantations



Night market



Cable car

1. Enjoy the beaches

Unwind on the stunning sandy shores, take refreshing swims in the clear waters, and bask under the warm tropical sun.

2. Go Island hopping by speedboat

Embark on an exciting adventure, exploring nearby islands, visiting hidden coves, and discovering pristine beaches.

3. Learn about Phu Quoc's history at the Prison

Gain insight into the island's past at the historic Coconut Prison, a poignant reminder of its history.

4. Discover local fishing villages

Immerse yourself in authentic island life as you visit charming fishing villages and engage with friendly fishermen.

5. Visit the Suoi Tranh waterfall

Trek through lush natural surroundings to witness the captivating beauty of the Suoi Tranh waterfall.

6. Explore underwater while diving or snorkeling

Dive into the vibrant coral reefs, encountering an array of marine wonders while snorkeling or diving.

7. Enjoy the sunset on the beach with a cocktail

Witness breathtaking sunsets over the horizon while savoring delicious cocktails on the beach.

8. Visit local plantations and factories

Delve into the island's economy by visiting pepper, fish sauce, and pearl production plantations and factories.

9. Shopping at Phu Quoc night market

Stroll through the bustling Phu Quoc night market, where you can shop for local handicrafts, souvenirs, and sample delectable street food.

10. Go on the Phu Quoc cable car

Take in awe-inspiring views of the island and the Gulf of Thailand as you glide on the Phu Quoc cable car.

2 days in Phu Quoc

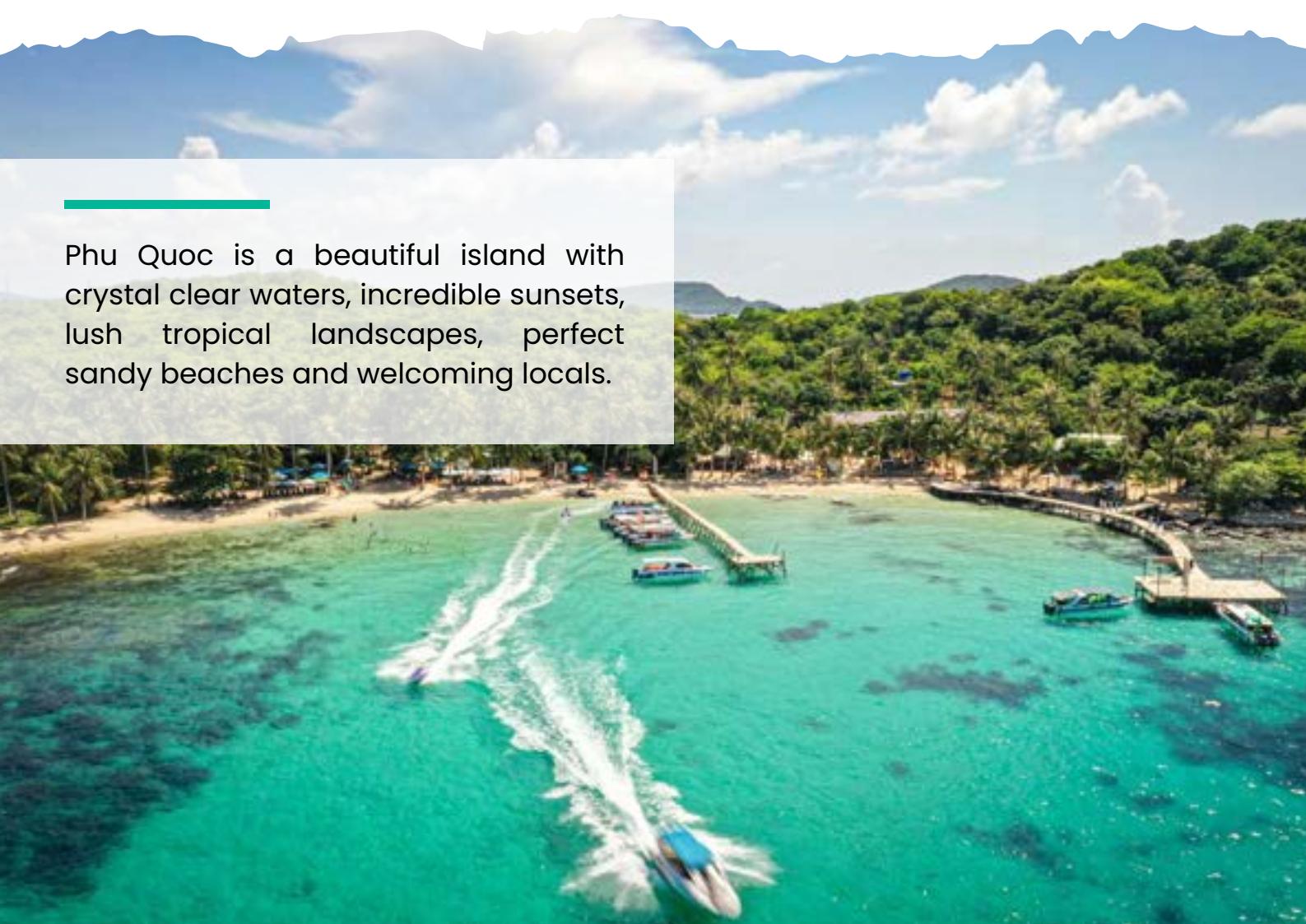
Day 1

- Explore the island by motorbike or with a car and driver.
- Discover the Vietnamese Revolution history at Phu Quoc Prison Museum.
- Stroll along the picturesque Sao Beach.
- Visit a local pepper plantation.
- Enjoy the serene Suoi Tranh waterfall.
- Witness the breathtaking sunset at Long Beach with a cocktail.

Day 2

- Option 1: Take a day trip to the An Thoi Islands. Go island hopping, snorkeling, and explore the underwater world.
- Option 2: Choose a diving excursion to discover the vibrant marine life.
- Option 3: Relax and unwind on the beach, soaking in the island's tranquility.

Phu Quoc is a beautiful island with crystal clear waters, incredible sunsets, lush tropical landscapes, perfect sandy beaches and welcoming locals.





SOUTH OF VIETNAM

Con Dao

C

on Dao, a serene archipelago off the southern coast of Vietnam, presents a blend of breathtaking natural beauty and a poignant historical past. The main island, Con Son, is the largest and most developed, offering a tranquil escape with lush national parks, pristine beaches, and a rich history.

Local tips

- **Stay here for 2-3 days:** Con Dao is a small island, but you can stay here for a few days if you combine activities with beach days.
- **Best time to visit:**

High Season (November to February)	Pleasant weather with cooler temperatures and less rainfall.
Shoulder Season (March to April)	Warmer weather, suitable for beach activities and outdoor exploration.
Low Season (May to September)	Monsoon season, expect higher humidity and rain, but fewer tourists.

- **Money:** ATMs are available, especially around the main town area. While cards are accepted at most hotels and resorts, carrying some cash is advisable for smaller local transactions.
- **Tourist experience:** Con Dao offers a more intimate and less crowded experience compared to Phu Quoc. It's known for its serene environment and historical significance. English is widely spoken in tourist areas. The dress code is casual and relaxed.

How to get there



Flights

Con Dao Airport offers flights from Ho Chi Minh City, Can Tho, and Da Nang.



Speed Ferry

Services from Vung Tau, Soc Trang and Can Tho.



QUICK TIPS

You can go from Ho Chi Minh City via the Mekong Delta, including visiting the floating markets, to Con Dao by speed ferry from Can Tho.

Getting around

- Taxis:** Available at the airport and main tourist spots, suitable for short trips.
- Motorbike & Bicycle Rental:** Renting options widely available, ideal for exploring the island at your own pace.
- Trekking:** Popular for exploring the National Park and coastal trails.
- Electric Carts:** Offered by some resorts for environmentally friendly local travel.
- Boat:** Essential for island hopping and visiting remote beaches or snorkeling sites.



Restaurants & Nightlife

Restaurants

Thu Ba Restaurant: Fresh seafood and local specialties in a relaxed, beachfront setting.

Giaminh Bistro: Cozy bistro offering a mix of Vietnamese and international cuisine

Infiniti Cafe and Resto: Casual café with diverse menu options and scenic views.

Bep chay Madame Ha: Delightful vegetarian dishes inspired by traditional Vietnamese flavors.



Bars

Bar200 Con Dao: A lively spot with a wide range of drinks and a friendly atmosphere.

Beach House Con Dao: Beachside bar perfect for sunset cocktails and relaxed vibes.

Restaurants

Mango Bay Restaurant: Offers delicious seafood and other dishes with a beachfront view.

The Home Pizza: A cozy spot for tasty pizzas and Italian cuisine.

Saigonese Eatery: Authentic Vietnamese dishes in a friendly atmosphere.

Winston's Burgers & Beer: Serves mouthwatering burgers and craft beers.

The Spice House at Cassia Cottage: Offers a fusion of Asian and Western flavors.

Crab House Restaurant: A popular choice for fresh seafood dishes.



Bars

La Veranda Beach Bar: Enjoy sunset views with cocktails by the beach.

Eden Beach Bar: Relaxing beach bar with a wide range of drinks.

The Cheeky Traveller English Pub: A lively pub with a great selection of beverages.

INK 360: Rooftop bar offering panoramic views and creative cocktails.

Bittersweet: Cozy bar with a variety of cocktail drinks and live music options.

Staying in Con Dao

Duong Dong: The vibrant heart of the island, offering easy access to entertainment, shopping, dining, and sightseeing.

Ong Lang: A popular backpackers village with a lovely local beach, providing numerous options for budget hotels and guest houses.

An Thoi: The main port of Phu Quoc, featuring an old fishing village and a luxurious 6-star Marriot hotel.

Location

Cua Can: A tranquil and untouched fishing village, offering a glimpse of authentic local life away from tourism and industrialization.

Vung Bau: Nestled along the coast and part of the national park, with beautiful resorts and a wild, natural environment ideal for nature lovers.

Ganh Dau: Predominantly national park territory, partly owned by Vingroup, featuring a variety of facilities like amusement parks, resorts, a casino, a golf course, a hospital, and a zoo.

Staying in Con Dao

Con Son is the main island of the Con Dao archipelago. Con Dao city and Con Son Bay are where you will find the most places of interest. You should also look for a hotel here. If your budget is higher, other parts of the island are calm and quiet, with expensive resorts.

Location



Recommended accommodations

Luxury

- **Poulo Condor Boutique Resort & Spa:** Colonial-style luxury with stunning sea views and a tranquil spa.
- **Six Senses Con Dao:** Most luxury resort on the island, eco-friendly and offering private villas, ocean views, and a world-class spa.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Midrange

- **The Mystery Con Dao:** Modern comforts with a touch of local charm, close to beaches and historical sites.
- **Tan Son Nhat Con Dao Resort:** Beachfront location with spacious rooms and excellent amenities.
- **Tuan Ninh Hotel II:** Central location, comfortable rooms, and easy access to Con Dao highlights.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

Budget

- **Hotel De Condor:** Affordable, cozy, with essential amenities, near major attractions.
- **Little Home Homestay:** Small, family-run homestay offering a home-like experience in a convenient location.

[Booking.com link](#)

[Booking.com link](#)

10 highlights in Con Dao



National Park



Diving



Watching turtles



Relaxing on beaches



Visiting the prisons

1. Hiking through the National Park

Venture into Con Dao's National Park to explore its diverse flora and fauna. Ascend Thanh Gia Mountain for breathtaking panoramic views.



Wildlife and Nature

2. Diving

Best from February to July, dive in Con Dao's waters to explore vibrant coral reefs and marine life. Popular dive sites are Hon Tai and Hon Mo.



Island Hopping

3. Watching turtles

From May to October, observe sea turtles nesting, especially on Bay Canh Island. Join night tours for a responsible viewing experience.



Con Dao Museum

4. Relaxing on the beaches

Relax at Dam Trau, An Hai, and Lo Voi beaches, known for their serene beauty, clear waters, and soft sands.



Local market

5. Visiting the prisons

Visit the infamous Phu Hai Prison and Con Dao Prison, where prisoners were held during the French colonial era and the Vietnam War.



Hang Duong cemetery

6. Wildlife and Nature Exploration

Spot rare species and birds in the national park and coastal areas. The dry season is generally better for wildlife viewing due to clearer trails.

7. Island Hopping

Explore remote islets like Bay Canh and Hon Cau for snorkeling and pristine natural beauty. Best enjoyed from March to September.

8. Con Dao Museum

Delve into the island's history, with artifacts and exhibits detailing its past, from indigenous culture to its role during the war.

9. The local market

Visit the vibrant Con Dao Market to sample local foods, buy handicrafts, and interact with locals. It's a bustling spot year-round.

10. Hang Duong cemetery

Pay respects at this historic site, the final resting place of Vietnamese revolutionaries. It's a place for reflection on the island's history.

2 days in Con Dao

Day 1

- Option 1: Diving excursion. For diving, there are 35 dive/snorkel sites to choose from.
- Option 2: Go for a trekking through the national park. Some rainforest walks you can do on your own. You can also get free hiking maps from your hotel.

Day 2

- Sunrise at Ca Map Cape.
- Breakfast and shopping at Con Dao Market
- Learn about the culture and history of Con Dao. Visit the Con Dao Prison, Con Dao Museum, Ham Duong War Cemetery, Nui Mot Pagoda, and An Son Shrine.
- Relax on the beach

Con Dao is a beautiful island with white beaches, coral reefs, beautiful bays and dense forests.

Mini guides to more destinations



Moc Chau



Situated in North Vietnam, near Mai Chau, Moc Chau is renowned for its breathtaking tea hills and stunning landscape, featuring mountains and forests.

Best things to do

1. Wander through the picturesque tea plantations.
2. Experience the feeling of being above the clouds at Ta Xua.
3. Take in the scenic beauty from the top of Pha Luong.
4. Immerse yourself in the local culture by visiting ethnic minority villages.
5. Explore the enchanting waterfalls and lush forests.

Travel tips

- One day is enough to enjoy the tea hills, but plan a longer stay to explore the mountains and villages.
- Visit between February and March to witness the blossoms of peach and plum trees.
- Opt for a motorbike or hire a car with a driver to efficiently explore this vast province.



Mini guides to more destinations



Phu Yen

Located south of Quy Nhon, Phu Yen boasts some of Vietnam's best beaches, offering an authentic and off-the-beaten-track experience. However, getting around the area can be challenging.

Best things to do

1. Explore the stunning beaches through beach hopping.
2. Immerse yourself in the local culture by visiting fishing villages.
3. Take a scenic drive through the picturesque countryside.
4. Savor delicious seafood, a local specialty.
5. Unwind and snorkel in the serene coastal waters.

Travel tips

- Xuan Thinh Peninsula offers one of the best beaches in Vietnam, but it remains relatively undeveloped.
- Consider renting a car or motor-bike as public transportation may be limited.
- If you prefer a more authentic local experience, Phu Yen can be a great beach alternative to Nha Trang.

Mini guides to more destinations



Quy Nhon

Quy Nhon is an undiscovered beach destination nestled between Nha Trang and Da Nang, offering beautiful beaches and charming, authentic fishing villages.

Best things to do

1. Relax on the pristine beaches.
2. Immerse yourself in the local culture by visiting authentic fishing villages.
3. Witness the breathtaking sunset at Eo Gio.
4. Embark on an island hopping adventure to explore nearby islets.
5. Discover the historical significance of the Cham Towers.

Travel tips

- The best time to visit is during the dry season from March to August.
- Experience the local vibe by staying at Bai Xep beach.
- Opt for a motorbike or rent a car with a driver for convenient exploration.



Mini guides to more destinations



Kon Tum, located in the Central Highlands, offers an authentic and off-the-beaten-track experience with stunning mountains, dense jungles, and a rich tapestry of ethnic minorities.

Best things to do

1. Immerse yourself in the unique culture of ethnic minorities.
2. Discover the enchanting jungle and waterfalls in Mang Den.
3. Embark on a hike through Chu Mom Ray National Park.
4. Experience the local culture and nature with an Easy Rider tour.
5. Explore the French colonial buildings in Kon Tum town.

Travel tips

- Enhance your experience by staying at an ethnic minority homestay.
- The best time to visit is from November to May when the weather is favorable.
- Plan multiple hikes to fully explore the captivating jungle landscapes.



Mini guides to more destinations



Dak Lak

Located in the Central Highlands, Dak Lak is renowned as the former hub for elephants and is now considered the coffee capital of Vietnam.

Best things to do

1. Embark on an ethnic elephant tour in Yok Don National Park.
2. Discover the beauty of Lak Lake and its surrounding villages by boat.
3. Marvel at the majestic Dray Nur and Dray Sap Waterfalls.
4. Indulge in the local coffee culture and visit the coffee museum.
5. Immerse yourself in the fascinating culture of ethnic minorities.

Travel tips

- Find the best coffee souvenirs and tasting experiences in Dak Lak.
- Plan your visit between November and April for the dry season.
- Opt for a unique stay at the Lak Tented Camp for an unforgettable experience near Lak Lake.





Culture

✓ Do

- Do dress modestly when visiting temples and other religious sites
- Do take your shoes off when entering someone's home or a temple
- Do carry small bills of Vietnamese Dong for easy transactions
- Do learn a few basic phrases in Vietnamese, it shows respect for the culture
- Do be respectful towards locals and their customs
- Do visit the local markets, they are a great way to experience the culture
- Do be prepared for the traffic, especially in cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City
- Do negotiate prices when shopping at markets



Not to do

- Don't touch someone's head, it is considered disrespectful in Vietnam
- Don't wear revealing clothing, it is not appropriate in the culture
- Don't raise your voice or show anger in public, it is considered impolite
- Don't disrespect the national flag or the country's leaders
- Don't take photos of people without their permission
- Don't litter, the country is struggling with waste management
- Don't show too much affection in public

Vietnamese people

Vietnamese are a special mix of cultures, languages and historical backgrounds. The only common denominator among them is that, as in most Southeast Asian countries, they like to smile and are genuinely interested in foreign visitors. In many ways, Vietnam is still a traditional, conservative society, especially for the older generation, who remember the long, hard years and every inch of the territory they fought for. The new generation of Vietnamese is largely unfamiliar with the devastation the country suffered years ago. For them, Vietnam is very different: a place to succeed and ignore the staid structures of the communists.



History of Vietnamese people:

Vietnamese culture and civilization have been deeply influenced by the Chinese, who occupied the country for 1000 years and whose culture deeply permeates Vietnamese society. History has, of course, influenced the mix of Vietnamese minorities. The steady expansion southwards in search of cultivable lands first absorbed the Kingdom of Champa and later the eastern extent of the Khmer Empire; both Chams and Khmers are large minorities today.

Family:

In Vietnam, family status is more important than salary. A family's reputation commands respect and opens doors. Extended family is important to the Vietnamese and that includes second or third cousins, the kind of family that you may not even realize you have. The extended family comes together in times of trouble and times of joy, celebrating festivals and successes, grieving deaths or disappointments. This is a source of strength for many of the older generations.



Culture — — — — —

Religion

Folk religion is, with almost 90 percent of the population, the biggest religion in Vietnam. Ancestor worship holds a significant place, reflecting the deep reverence and respect for ancestors. People also worship a variety of divine beings or gods and spirits, including ancestors, guardian spirits, village spirits, and nature spirits.



Ethnic minorities

Vietnam has a large number of ethnic groups. Most of the inhabitants belong to the Viet, the ethnic Vietnamese who make up 88% of the population. Vietnam has 53 ethnic minority groups (about 14 million people). Most live in Northern Vietnam and live in the lush mountain landscapes along the border of China and Laos. Some groups have lived in Vietnam for millennia, while the Hmong emigrated south from China in recent centuries. Each has its own language, customs, fashion of clothing and spiritual beliefs.

The government has long encouraged hill tribes to move to lower areas to farm rice, tea and coffee, with incentives such as subsidized irrigation, better education and health care. But the hill tribe's long history of independence keeps many away from the lowlands.



Tay (population 1.6 million)

Live at low elevations between Hanoi and the Chinese border. They closely adhere to Vietnamese beliefs in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, but many also worship geniuses and local spirits. Tay literature and art are famous all over Vietnam.



Thai (1.5 million inhabitants)

Originating in southern China, settled along the fertile riverbeds between Hoa Binh and Muong Lay. Villages consist of thatched houses built on bamboo poles. The Thai minority is usually categorized by color: red, black and white. Black Thai women wear bright colored blouses and headwear.



Muong (population 1.4 million)

Mainly concentrated in Hoa Binh province, the male-dominated Muong live in small hamlets in houses on stilts and are known for their folk literature, poems and music (performed by gongs, drums, flutes and string violin).



Hmong (population ~1 million)

Around a million Hmong are scattered across the far northern mountains. Most are animists, cultivating dry rice and raising animals. Every Hmong group – black, white, red, green and flower – has its own dress code.



Nung (population 800,000)

This tribe lives in small villages in the northeastern provinces; their culture combines ancestral worship and a knack for handicrafts.



Jarai (population 350,000)

These people of the south-central highlands still practice animistic rituals, respecting their ancestors and nature through a yang (genius). Jarai's burial grounds are extensive, including carved totem-like effigies of the deceased.



Sedang (population 150,000)

The 150,000 Sedang of the south-central highlands bear no surnames, and complete gender equality is said to exist.

History



This timeline below shows you the history of Vietnam in broad strokes.

- **3000BC – 1000BC** Tribes from southern China moved to the Red River Delta area.
- **208BC** – The Chinese general Trieu Da makes himself emperor of Nam Viet (part of present-day northern Vietnam and China).
- **111BC** – Han Chinese Emperor Wu conquers the Viet people, beginning nearly 1,000 years of Chinese rule in the north.
- **40AD** – Two Trung sisters led a rebel army against the Chinese; they have temporarily overthrown the Han and proclaim themselves queens of an independent Vietnam. China takes everything back and the capital moves to Hanoi.
- **939** – The Chinese are kicked out of Vietnam after 1,000 years of occupation, when Ngo Quyen leads his people to victory in the Battle of the Bach Dang River. The Viet Kingdom has been restored.
- **1288** – The Mongols invade Dai Viet but General Tran Hung Dao repeats history by defeating the Mongol fleet on the Bach Dang River.
- **1471** – The Dai Viet inflicted defeat on the kingdom of Champa, killing more than 60,000 Cham soldiers and 36,000 prisoners, including the king and most of the royal family.
- **1516** – Portuguese traders land in Da Nang, the start of European interest in Vietnam. They set up a trading post in Faifo (present-day Hoi An).
- **1524** – A period of instability and warfare between Trinh from the north and Nguyen from the south.
- **1600s** – Last of Champa territory conquered by Dai Viet.
- **1802** – Emperor Gia Long takes the throne and the Nguyen Dynasty begins, ruling Vietnam until 1945. The country will be reunited for the first time in more than 200 years.
- **1847** – France launches the first major attack in the port of Da Nang.
- **1859** – France conquers Saigon and Laos and Cambodia, which together formed French Indochina.
- **1883** – France took control of Vietnam and turned it into a French colony.
- **1930** – Ho Chi Minh founds the Indochinese Communist Party (ICP).

- **1941** – ICP organizes a guerrilla army, the Viet Minh, in response to the invasion by Japan during World War II.
- **1945** – The Viet Minh seizes power. Ho Chi Minh announces Vietnam's independence.
- **1946** – French troops attack Viet Minh in Haiphong in November, igniting the war of resistance against colonial power.
- **1950** – Democratic Republic of Vietnam is recognized by China and the USSR.
- **1954** – Viet Minh forces attack an isolated French military outpost in the city of Dien Bien Phu. The attempt to take over the outpost will last two months, during which time the French government agrees to peace talks in Geneva. Vietnam is divided into North and South at the Geneva conference.
- **1956** – South Vietnamese President Ngo Dinh Diem launches campaign against political dissidents.
- **1957** – Beginning of the communist uprising in the south.
- **1959** – Weapons and men from North Vietnam begin to infiltrate the south.
- **1960** – US aid to Diem increased.
- **1963** – Viet Cong, the communist guerrillas operating in South Vietnam, defeat units of the ARVN, the South Vietnamese army. President Diem is overthrown and then assassinated in a US-backed military coup.
- **1964** – Gulf of Tonkin incident: US says North Vietnamese patrol boats are firing at two US naval vessels. The US Congress approves the Gulf of Tonkin resolution and authorizes military action in the region.
- **1965** – 200,000 US combat troops arrive in South Vietnam.
- **1966** – The number of troops in the US rises to 400,000 and then to 500,000 the following year.
- **1968** – Tet Offensive – a combined attack by the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army on American positions – begins. More than 500 civilians die in the American massacre at My Lai. Thousands are killed by communist troops during their occupation of Hue city.
- **1969** – Ho Chi Minh dies. President Nixon begins to reduce US ground forces in Vietnam as opponents of the war grow.
- **1973** – A ceasefire agreement in Paris, US troops withdrew completely in March.
- **1975** – North Vietnamese forces invade South Vietnam and take control of the entire country after South Vietnamese President Duong Van Minh surrenders.
- **1976** – Socialist Republic of Vietnam proclaimed. Saigon will be renamed Ho Chi Minh City. Hundreds of thousands of flights abroad.
- **1979** – Vietnam invades Cambodia and expels Pol Pot's Khmer Rouge regime. In response, Chinese troops are crossing Vietnam's northern border. They are pushed back by Vietnamese troops.
- **1989** – Vietnamese troops withdraw from Cambodia.
- **1994** – US lifts its 30-year trade embargo.



Food

✓ Dining tips

- Enjoy street food where a lot of locals gather, ensuring freshly made and tasty dishes.
- Local street food and restaurants offer the best budget-friendly options.
- Look for "chay" to find vegetarian food easily.
- Discover the diverse flavors safely with a local guide on a street food tour.
- Choose boiled or cooked foods to reduce the risk of food-related illnesses.
- Avoid tap water; stick to bottled water and sealed beverages.
- Take precautions for stomach problems, such as carrying antidiarrheal medication and eating at clean and hygienic places.

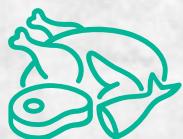


Meat dishes

- **Pho:** Traditional Vietnamese noodle soup, usually with beef or chicken.
- **Banh Mi:** Vietnamese baguette filled with various ingredients like meats, vegetables, and sauces.



Meat dishes

**Banh Cuon**

Steamed rice rolls filled with minced pork and mushrooms.

**Bun Thit Nuong**

Grilled pork served with rice vermicelli and fresh herbs.

**Banh Xeo**

Crispy Vietnamese pancake filled with shrimp, pork, and bean sprouts.

**Bun Cha**

Grilled pork served with rice vermicelli and herbs.

**Cha Ca La Vong**

Grilled fish with turmeric and dill, often served with noodles and peanuts.

**Mi Quang**

Central Vietnamese noodle dish with a rich broth and various toppings.

**Com Tam**

Broken rice dish typically served with grilled pork or other meats.

**Bun Dau Mam Tom**

Rice vermicelli served with fried tofu and shrimp paste.

**Bun Bo Nam Bo**

Beef noodle salad with fresh herbs and peanuts.

**Goi Cuon**

Vietnamese spring rolls, often filled with shrimp, herbs, and rice vermicelli.

**Bun Bo Hue**

Spicy beef noodle soup with lemongrass and chili.

**Lau**

Vietnamese hotpot with a variety of meats, seafood, and vegetables cooked in a flavorful broth.

**Xoi**

Sticky rice often served as a side dish or breakfast option.

**Nem Nuong Ninh Hoa**

Grilled pork sausage, usually wrapped in rice paper with herbs and dipping sauce.

Vegetarian dishes



Banh Mi Chay

Vegetarian version of the Vietnamese baguette, filled with plant-based ingredients and sauces.



Pho Chay

Vegetarian noodle soup with flavorful broth and plant-based toppings.



Nom Du Du

Papaya salad, typically mixed with herbs and peanuts.



Bun Cha Gio Chay

Vegetarian spring rolls served with rice vermicelli and herbs.



Banh It Tran

Clear dumplings filled with vegetables and mushrooms.



Banh Cuon Chay

Vegan steamed rice rolls, often filled with tofu and mushrooms.



Rau Muong Xao Toi

Stir-fried morning glory with garlic.



Dau Sot Ca Chua

Tofu cooked in tomato sauce.



Drinks



Ca Phe Sua Da

Vietnamese iced coffee with condensed milk.



Ca Phe Dua

Coconut coffee, a refreshing and creamy coffee drink.



Ca Phe Trang

Vietnamese white coffee, usually made with robusta beans and condensed milk.

Snacks



Banh Trang Tron

Rice paper salad with a mix of shredded vegetables, dried shrimp, and chili sauce.



Banh Mi Trung

Egg sandwich with various fillings like fried eggs, vegetables, and sauces.



Goi Cuon Chay

Vegetarian fresh spring rolls with tofu and herbs.

Desserts



Che

A variety of Vietnamese sweet dessert drinks made with beans, fruits, and jelly.



Che Chuoi

Banana and coconut milk sweet dessert.



Com

Young green rice, often enjoyed during autumn.



Kem Trai Cay

Fruit ice cream, a popular refreshing treat.

DICTIONARY

Ordering food

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Món này là gì?	Muhn nay la yee?	What is this dish?
Cho thêm...	Cho them...	Add some...
Ngon quá!	Ngon kwah!	It's delicious!
Tôi không ăn thịt	Toy khom un teet	I don't eat meat
Bạn có món chay không?	Ban co mon chai khom?	Do you have vegetarian options?
Cho tôi một ly nước	Cho toy mot lee nook	Give me a glass of water
Có thể gọi món không?	Koh teh goy muhn khom?	Can I order food?
Món ăn này có mì, phở không?	Muhn un nay koh mee, fuh khom?	Does this dish have noodles, pho?
Tôi muốn đặt một bàn	Toy moon dat mot ban	I would like to reserve a table
Xin mời đến bàn	Sin moy den ban	Please come to the table
Có thể đổi món không?	Koh teh doy muhn khom?	Can I change my order?

Ordering food

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Tôi muốn trả hóa đơn	Toy moon trah hwa don	I would like to pay the bill
Xin tính tiền	Sin teen teen	Please calculate the bill
Cám ơn	Kahm uhn	Thank you
Xin lỗi	Sin loy	Excuse me
Tôi đói	Toy doy	I'm hungry
Tôi khát	Toy kat	I'm thirsty

Asking for Directions

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Tôi không biết đường	Toy khom byet doo-ong	I don't know the way
Xin lỗi, tôi muốn đến...	Sin loy, toy moon den...	Excuse me, I want to go to...
Đi đâu?	Dee dow?	Where are you going?



Asking for Directions

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Đi đến đâu?	Dee den dow?	Where are you heading to?
Đường này đi đâu?	Doo-ong nay dee dow?	Where does this road go?
Đâu là đường...?	Dow la doo-ong...?	Where is the road...?
Đi thẳng	Dee tang	Go straight
Rẽ trái	Reh trahy	Turn left
Rẽ phải	Reh phai	Turn right
Bên trái	Ben trahy	On the left
Bên phải	Ben phai	On the right
Gần đây	Gahn day	Nearby
Tôi bị lạc	Toy bee lac	I am lost
Có nhà vệ sinh ở đâu?	Koh nha veh sinh uh dow?	Where is the restroom?
Cảm ơn	Kahm uhn	Thank you
Xin lỗi	Sin loy	Excuse me
Tôi muốn đi...	Toy moon dee...	I want to go...

Paying/Payments

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Xin tính tiền	Sin teeng tee-en	Can I have the bill/check?
Bao nhiêu tiền?	Bow n-yuh tee-en?	How much is it?
Tôi trả bằng tiền mặt	Toy tra bung tee-en maht	I will pay in cash
Có chấp nhận thẻ tín dụng không?	Koh chap nyuhn theh teen duhng kohng?	Do you accept credit cards?
Tôi cần rút tiền	Toy cahn root tee-en	I need to withdraw money
Chỗ để rút tiền gần đây ở đâu?	Chuh deh root tee-en gahn day uh dow?	Where is the nearest ATM?
Có giảm giá không?	Koh g-yahm g-yah kohng?	Is there a discount?
Tôi không có tiền mớ nhỏ hơn	Toy khom koh tee-en moh nhoh hawn	I don't have smaller money
Xin giữ hộ	Sin gew haw	Can you keep the change?
Tính tiền riêng	Teeng tee-en ree-eng	Separate bill, please
Cảm ơn	Kahm uhn	Thank you
Xin lỗi	Sin loy	Excuse me

Emergency Situations

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Cấp cứu	Kahp kew	Emergency
Tôi cần gọi cảnh sát	Toy cahn goy cahn saht	I need to call the police
Tôi cần gọi bác sĩ	Toy cahn goy bahk sih	I need to call a doctor
Xin hãy gọi xe cứu thương	Sin heyn goy se kew twung	Please call an ambulance
Tôi bị mất hành lý	Toy bee maht hahn lee	I lost my luggage
Tôi bị mất ví	Toy bee maht vee	I lost my wallet
Tôi bị lạc	Toy bee lahk	I'm lost
Có ai có thể giúp tôi không?	Koh ah-ee koh teh yewp toy kohng?	Can anyone help me?
Tôi cần sự trợ giúp	Toy cahn soo troh yewp	I need assistance
Xin hãy gọi cứu hỏa	Sin heyn goy kew hwah	Please call the fire department
Tôi cần sự trợ giúp khẩn cấp	Toy cahn soo troh yewp khan kahp	I need urgent help
Tôi bị cướp	Toy bee kew-uhp	I've been robbed
Tôi bị tai nạn	Toy bee tai nahn	I've had an accident
Tôi cần một bác sĩ ngay lập tức	Toy cahn mot bahk sih ngay lip took	I need a doctor im

Driving a Motorbike

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Xăng	Sang	Gasoline
Bơm xăng	Bum sang	Fill up with gas
Bãi đỗ xe	Bye doh se	Parking lot
Đường một chiều	Duong moot ch-yuh	One-way street
Đèn giao thông	Den gow tung	Traffic light
Không được quay đầu	Khohng duck quay dow	No U-turn
Rẽ phải	Reh phai	Turn right
Rẽ trái	Reh chai	Turn left
Dừng lại	Doom lai	Stop
Chạy nhanh	Ch-eye nhanh	Drive fast
Cẩn thận	Khan tarsng	Be careful
Làm ơn cho tôi một bản đồ	Lam uhn cho toy mot ban doh	Please give me a map
Tôi lạc đường	Toy lack doong	I'm lost
Đi thẳng	Dee thang	Go straight

Driving a Motorbike

Vietnamese	Pronunciation	English Translation
Tôi cần xin hướng dẫn	Toy cahn sin hoo-ung dahm	I need directions
Tôi muốn thuê xe máy	Toy mu-on thoo-ey seh mai	I want to rent a motorbike
Tôi hết xăng	Toy het sang	I ran out of gas
Bảo hiểm	Bao hiem	Insurance
Tôi bị hỏng xe	Toy bee hohng se	My bike is broken





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BY LOCALVIETNAM

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Happy exploring!