

What to do in Hanoi

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As part of a Master internship, we spent three months in Hanoi from June to August 2016 in order to discover what it's like to do research in cryptography. We worked with some local students and researchers, under the supervision of Phan Dương Hiệu, one of the organizers of Asiacrypt 2016. We stayed at the Institute of Mathematics in Hoàng Quốc Việt street so some of the addresses we give you are in this area, but there are other nice places closer to the city center.

This is a list of all the spots we love in Hanoi, things to see, streets to walk around in and good places to eat, sorted according to their location.

We hope you will enjoy your stay as much as we did!

City center



Hoàn Kiếm lake and Ngọc Sơn temple



Hoàn Kiếm lake is where we spent most of our time out during those three months. North of the lake there is a bridge leading to the Ngọc Sơn temple, the place is really worth seeing day or night. Do not hesitate to wander in the streets around the lake, there are lots of nice shops to buy souvenirs (don't forget to discuss the price!).

Admission to the temple is 30,000đ.



St. Joseph's cathedral



Nhà Thờ street

On a small square just west of Hoàn Kiếm lake, you can admire St. Joseph's cathedral. For those who want to go in, there is free access and opening hours are posted on the doors.



Hanoi Opera House



1 Tràng Tiền

Southeast of Hoàn Kiếm lake, there is the beautiful Hanoi Opera House. We recommend going at night when the facade is illuminated.



Tạ Hiện street

If you're looking for an animated neighbourhood to go out in the evening, this is the perfect place. There are plenty of bars where you can try the bia hơi (local fresh beer) for less than 30,000đ.



Quán Gốc Đa

52 Lý Quốc Sư

This street restaurant close to the cathedral is famous for its bánh gối, fried pastry stuffed with pork, vermicelli and mushrooms. The sea crab spring rolls are also really good. The price is between 5,000đ and 10,000đ for a single piece.



Phở 10 Lý Quốc Sư

10 Lý Quốc Sư

This restaurant is where we ate the best phở in Hanoi. Make sure to go there early, it's always very crowded.

The price is around 75,000đ.



Trang Trí Hoa Quả Dầm

46 Hàng Gai

For a refreshing break, this place serves delicious fruits with coconut milk (order a hoa quả dầm). They also have milkshakes and ice creams.

The price for a hoa quả dầm is 40,000đ.



Bánh Mỳ P



12 Hàng Buồm

This is a really good address to eat bánh mì, a vietnamese sandwich usually made with vegetables and meatballs or pâté.

The price is around 30,000đ for one bánh mì.



Chả Cá Lã Vọng

14 Chả Cá

Another of Hanoi's specialties is the chả cá, grilled fish with fresh dill. The dish is usually cooked at your table right in front of you, and the fish is very tasty. The price is around 150,000đ.

Around the Temple of Literature



Temple of Literature



58 Quốc Tử Giám

This might be one of the most pleasant and peaceful places in the city. The Temple of Literature consists of several courtyards with gardens, ponds and a pagoda. Really a must-see.

Admission is 30,000đ.



Vietnam National Museum of Fine Arts



66 Nguyễn Thái Học

This quiet museum, just in front of the Temple of Literature, is filled with decorative items from across Asia (paintings, sculptures). They have really beautiful objects and the visit does not take long.

Admission to the museum is 30,000đ.



KOTO Restaurant



59 Văn Miếu

This restaurant belongs to the KOTO foundation, which helps disadvantaged youth to acquire skills in catering and hospitality industry. They propose a lot of different dishes, we tried the vietnamese ones and the burgers and both were great.

The price is around 150,000đ, and you can also make a donation to help the foundation after your meal.



Quán Gà Nướng Bình Minh

5 Lý Văn Phúc

If you are feeling the urge to eat chicken, this is definitely where you must go. Here you can choose any part of the chicken you like, the meat is grilled and really delicious (in our opinion the best was breast and thighs but you can try feet if you're willing to). You can also order some potato skewers and grilled bread with honey.

The price is around 100,000đ per person.



Hồ Chí Minh's Mausoleum and around



If you have the opportunity during your stay, we recommend that you go to Hồ Chí Minh's mausoleum where they keep Hồ Chí Minh's remains. There is also a museum and a park, which houses the old residence of Hồ Chí Minh and the one pillar pagoda.

There is free access to the mausoleum but the last admission is at 10:15 am, and the site is closed on Mondays and Fridays. The admission to the park is around 30,000đ.

West Lake



Trần Quốc pagoda



Thanh Niên street

Probably the most impressive pagoda in Hanoi with its high tower, the site is quite big and in addition you can enjoy the view over West Lake.
Admission to the pagoda is around 30,000đ.



Bánh tôm Hồ Tây



Thanh Niên street

Just in front of the pagoda, this is the best place to eat the famous bánh tôm (shrimp fritters) from West Lake. You can also order some delicious phở cuốn (rolls with beef and cilantro).
The price is around 150,000đ.

Around Hoàng Quốc Việt street



Vietnam Museum of Ethnology



Nguyễn Văn Huyên street

This is probably the best museum we went to so it is definitely worth a visit although it's a bit far from the city center. There are two different buildings filled with traditional items and explanations about the life of the minorities in Vietnam, and a big park with beautiful traditional houses where you can also attend a water puppet representation. Admission to the museum is 40,000đ plus 50,000đ if you have a camera.

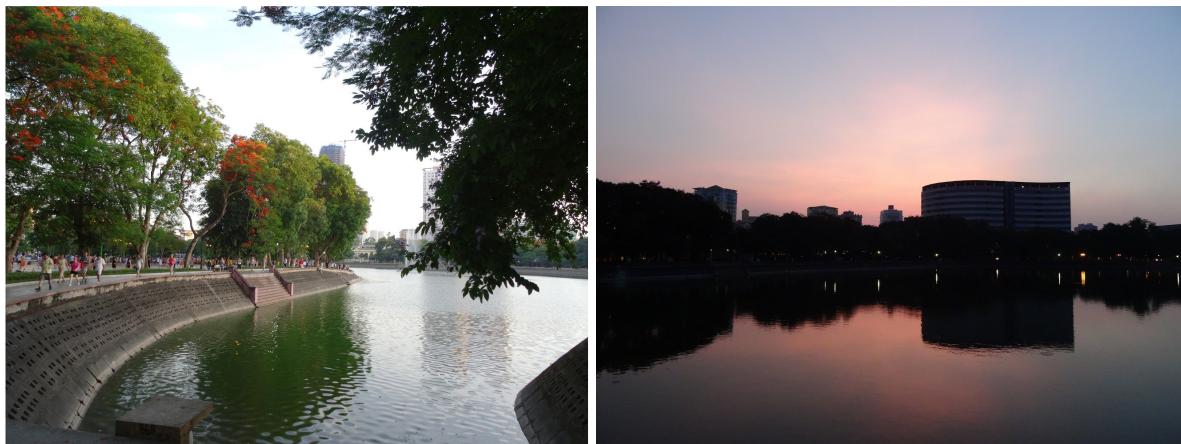


We also tried the museum restaurant for lunch which happened to be an apprenticeship restaurant, just like the KOTO.

The vietnamese dishes are not expensive and really good.



Công viên Nghĩa Đô



Nguyễn Văn Huyên street

If you ever feel the need to escape the city for a moment, this is a relaxing park just in front of the Museum of Ethnology. There's a small lake to walk around and it's always lively thanks to the many vietnamese people jogging, working out or dancing in groups.



In front of Viện Toán Học



Unfortunately we don't have an address for this restaurant (although we used to eat there almost every day), but it's quite easy to find:

- Go to the Institute of Mathematics (Viện Toán Học) at 18 Hoàng Quốc Việt.
- Cross the street just in front of the Institute.
- Go left for about 3 minutes (it's just after a duck restaurant).

Inside, you can see some metal tables and chairs and there are also stairs to go up to two other floors in case the place is too crowded.

Here you can order several traditional vietnamese dishes like bún chả, bún nem or bún bò (left picture). They also have a really good cơm rang (order a cơm rang thập cẩm for regular fried rice as in the right picture, or cơm rang dưa bò for fried rice with beef and vegetables), and mì xào (fried noodles).

The price is really cheap: 30,000đ for bún bò and around 40,000đ for cơm rang.



Cafe Luna



387 Hoàng Quốc Việt

A really good place with a wide choice of dishes (meats, tofu, fried rice, noodles). We tried the pepper beef (picture) for about 50,000đ.



Snake restaurant



15 Phố Lệ Mật

For the more adventurous, this is the best place in Hanoi to eat snake. You get to choose your snake (we strongly recommend cobra), then several snake dishes are brought to your table (soups, meat with vegetables, nems, fried skins) and it actually tastes very good! Depending on how many people are present, the price ranges from 200,000đ to 500,000đ per person. It's a bit expensive but the experiment is definitely worth the while.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact us at chloe.heb@gmail.com and charline.thebault@gmail.com.

Enjoy your time in Vietnam!