

**GOLDEN
GUIDE**

**to
South and East
Asia**

1961

HOTEL



CARAVELLE



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SOUTH VIETNAM

SOUTH VIETNAM—French in many outward ways but Oriental at heart—has become in recent years a popular destination for the tourist. Its sophisticated capital of Saigon (one of the largest and most beautiful cities of South-East Asia), its cool mountain resorts at Dalat and elsewhere, its white beaches at Cap Saint Jacques and Nhatrang, the palace and tombs of its ancient imperial city of Hue, its vast hunting reserves and fine landscapes all offer a holiday of particular attraction.

At the end of 1960 there was some terrorist activity in certain parts of the country, and you should take advice from travel agents in Saigon before settling on your plans for seeing the interior. There is no danger in Saigon itself, and this monument to French elegance in the Indochinese peninsula alone deserves a visit.

1. Entry

SAIAGON IS easily reached by air and sea. Regular jet flights land at Tan Son Nhut airport. Air France operates several flights a week from Paris to

Tokyo *via* Saigon, and TAI flies once a week from Paris to Djakarta and once from Paris to Sydney (and on to Los Angeles) with calls at Saigon.

KLM runs a weekly service to Saigon from Europe and PAA links the country with the U.S. CPA flies weekly from Hongkong and Singapore, and Thai Airways International, Air Laos and Royal Air Cambodge fly in from Bangkok, Phnompenh and Vientiane.

For the sea route, Messageries Maritimes, Chargeurs Réunis, East Asiatic, Barber Lines and others sail from Europe: American President Lines from the U.S. You can also enter by car from Singapore, Malaya and Thailand through Cambodia.

I. VISAS: transit passengers need no visa for a stay up to 48 hours. Tourist visas valid for 30 days are easily obtained by *bona fide* tourists at Vietnamese consular authorities abroad (in France, U.K., Belgium, Holland, West Germany, Italy, Spain, U.S., Brazil, Argentina, Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, the Malagassy Republic, Japan, Taiwan, Hongkong, Philippines, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Indonesia, India, Singapore, Malaya and South Korea).

American tourists do not need a visa for stays of up to 7 days. An exit visa is required for departure after more than 7 days, but there is little formality.

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SAIGON

II. **HEALTH:** smallpox vaccination certificate is required, cholera "recommended".

III. **MONEY:** the Vietnamese piastre (VNP) is the unit of currency. The tourist exchange rate is VNP 73 to 1 US\$, VNP 15 to one new French franc and VNP 205 to £1 sterling. Any amount of foreign currency may be brought in, but you must declare it at Customs and change it at official changers (banks, the airport, seaport and leading hotels).

You will be given a foreign currency registration card enabling you to benefit from the tourist exchange rates. You must not bring in more than VNP 400 in Vietnamese currency.

IV. **CUSTOMS:** duty-free allowances are 400 cigarettes and one opened bottle of liquor. The export of valuable jewelry and antiques is restricted.

V. **THE MOTORIST:** the road of entry from Phnompenh (Cambodia) is asphalted and takes about 4½ hours. You can bring your car in also, of course, by ship. The usual carnet and international driving licence are enough, and formalities are simple. Service and repair stations are abundant: petrol costs about VNP 8 a litre.

There are good asphalted roads from Saigon to Phnompenh in Cambodia, to Bien Hoa and Cap Saint Jacques, Dalat, Banmethuot and Myho—and also between Nhatrang and Banmethuot, Quinhon and Pleiku.

The Saigon-Hue road is mostly good as far as Nhatrang but variable thereafter, with several ferries to be negotiated. From Phanrang (60 miles south of Nhatrang) there is a good asphalted road to Dalat.

2. Where to go

SAIGON IS an attractive city of wide streets shaded by tall trees. Its picturesque residential districts and lovely market

places and pagodas make it one of the most agreeable cities of the Orient—and its stylish shops and numerous sidewalk cafes earn it its other name "the Paris of the East".

The most renowned of the great boulevards is Tu-Do (Liberty) Street, still often referred to by its old name of the Rue Catinat. It runs between the busy waterfront and the Catholic Cathedral, which sits in a typical, spacious French square.

Yet despite the modern shopping centres you will be fascinated by the Oriental street scenes — the rush-hour traffic jams of cars and bicycles, the itinerant barbers and dentists, the bicycle repairers with their equipment hanging on a tree at street corners, the soup and fruit vendors and so on.

Sea arrivals begin their sight-seeing before disembarking, since ships travel 40 miles up river to the city. Your liner will pass between mangrove-lined banks and will be surrounded by sampans and junks loaded with rice or fish or fruit and propelled by poles or oars. Even if you come by air a river trip can be arranged.

The sights of Saigon include Vietnamese and Chinese pagodas, the Botanical Gardens with a rich collection of equatorial plants, the zoo, the National Museum crammed with ancient Indochinese masterpieces, the Flower Market and the Tomb and Pagoda of Marshal Le Van Duyet (whose arms, costume and palanquins date from the 18th Century).

Cholon, the Chinese twin city adjoining Saigon, has an entirely

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Saigon.

different character. Close to Saigon are the art centres of Bien Hoa and Thudaumot, where patient craftsmen turn out delicate pottery and lacquerware.

HOTEL CARAVELLE (Lamson Square, corner of Tu-Do Street, Telephone 25712, Cables CARAVELOTEL). The newest hotel, inaugurated in 1960, entirely airconditioned and decorated with French Saint Gobain glass and Italian marble. The skyroom restaurant and roof garden give the best view in town. 100 rooms and suites with bath attached: VNP 880 single, 1,100 double, 1,980 to 2,420 suite. Restaurant à la carte.

HOTEL MAJESTIC (1 Tu-Do Street, Telephone 23711, Cables MAJOTEL). 125 rooms and suites, all airconditioned, facing river, VNP 700 to 900 single, 960 to 1,200 double (breakfast and one meal included). French, Vietnamese and Chinese dishes à la carte in the Trianon airconditioned dining room.

CONTINENTAL PALACE (132 Tu-Do Street, Telephone 20155, Cables CONTINENT). 95 airconditioned rooms and some non-airconditioned, VNP 650 single, 890 double (breakfast and one meal included).

HOTEL DES NATIONS (70 Nguyen Hue Street, 100 yards from Tu-Do Street. 80 rooms of which 30 airconditioned, VNP 450 to 550 airconditioned, 250 to 350 non-airconditioned, airconditioned restaurant attached.

SAIGON PALACE (8 Tu-Do Street, Telephone Saigon 503 and 582). May be pulled down 1961. 63 airconditioned rooms, VNP 495 to 700 single, 550 to 750 double, restaurant attached.

HOTEL CATINAT (69 Tu-Do Street, Telephone 21920). 35 airconditioned rooms, VNP 400 to 500, restaurant attached. Undergoing extension.

There are many more modest hostels in Saigon and innumerable Chinese hotels (some of them with some airconditioned rooms) in Cholon. A 200 to 500 room Inter-

national Hotel Centre is to be built, partly with American capital. Prices quoted are inclusive of tips, etc.

Tay Ninh, 60 miles northwest of Saigon, is the site of the very colourful Cao Dai temple. Cap Saint Jacques and Longhai have long white sand beaches that are favourite weekend haunts for locals and visitors alike. The drive by car from the capital is two hours. The former is the more developed (and crowded).

Stay at the **HOTEL PACIFIC** (VNP 150 to 250) or other hotels: there are also good French and Vietnamese restaurants.

At Longhai there are several good hotels, some under French management, ranging from VNP 100 to 400 per night. The **HOTEL DE LA PISCINE** has a private beach.

Dalat, a mountain resort about 212 miles by road from Saigon, is the jewel of Vietnam, surrounded by pine-covered hills overlooking glittering lakes more than 4,200 feet above the sea. The average temperature is 68°F in summer, 60°F in winter.

Every villa has its garden of cannas, gladioli, hibiscus, roses, bougainvillia etc. Almost all European fruits and vegetables are grown here. Gougah and Pongour are the most famed waterfalls. Sportsmen will enjoy yachting and swimming in the large lake in the centre of the city, and good golf courses adjoin.

DALAT PALACE (2 Yersin Street). 51 rooms with private bath and central heating, VNP 320 to 400 single, 440 to 600 double, including breakfast and one meal, attached French cuisine restaurant.

DALAT HOTEL (7 Yersin Street). 60 rooms, VNP 120, no restaurant. There are several other hotels with modern facilities at reasonable prices.

South Vietnam

and also smaller French-managed bungalows offering comfortable rooms and excellent food at fair prices—Sans-Souci, La Savoisienne and Auberge de Prennes, for example.

Nhatrang, about 260 miles north of the capital, is the best sea resort, conveniently reached for a weekend by the Friday night train. Stepping out of your air-conditioned berth at 7 a.m. on Saturday morning, you can relax by the sea for two days and return by the Sunday night air-conditioned train arriving in Saigon at 6.40 a.m. on Monday.

A broad white sand beach stretches over two miles along a calm (except between November and early March) blue sea, lined by coconut trees and backed by mountains. The clear water is ideal for swimming and aquatic sports. Motor boats will take you to small islets for underwater fishing, and little glass-bottomed boats allow you to see the wonderful corals on the sea floor.

Cap Varela, an hour further north by car, also has a splendid beach next to a tiny fishermen's village. You should see the Oceanographic Institute, one of the best-equipped in Asia.

DAI KHAC-SAN NHATRANG (on the beach, 22 rooms, VNP 100 to 300).

HOTEL NAUTIQUE (on the beach between Pasteur Institute and the French College, French management, 18 rooms, VNP 250 to 350).

LA FREGATE (80 yards from beach, French management, 13 rooms, VNP 150 to 180).

PACIFIC HOTEL (300 yards from beach, 13 rooms, VNP 220 to 240). French and Vietnamese cooking is available everywhere, especially seafood—try *Chez Francois* at Cauda,

two miles away, near the Oceanographic Institute.

The former imperial capital, Hue, lies on the River of Perfumes. You may well be disappointed if you expect a bustling city: Hue is to be discovered and enjoyed in its quiet, slow-flowing river and its imperial tombs outside the town, which belong to the glorious past of Vietnam.

By tradition the River of Perfumes should be seen from a sampan, guided by the Vietnamese counterpart of the Venetian gondolier, "when the moon is up, the stars are bright and the wind is fresh and free."

The Imperial Palace still stands, an extensive citadel 6 miles in perimeter formerly housing the Emperor and his 2,000 officials and servants. The main features of the tombs are their bronze urns, rampant dragons, pink lotus pools and smooth square lakes.

If you are interested in the ordinary life of Hue, stand by the Dong-Khanh high school overlooking the river at the hour when school finishes and watch the swarms of white-clad girls, their black hair hanging in plats to their waists, disperse homewards. Hue is relatively unwesternised and hotel accommodation, unfortunately, is extremely limited.

3. General Information

I. WEATHER: the most pleasant months are November to March. May to late November is the rainy season, but

296

297

there is no true winter and the average temperature varies between 79°F in January to 86°F in May. Only lightweight clothes are needed in Saigon, but you will need a jacket in airconditioned restaurants and cinemas and a light raincoat during the wet season.

At Nhatrang the rains usually last from late September to early January and winter is cooler than in Saigon. At Hue and Tourane the rains are October-March and winter is relatively cool. The yearly average temperature at Dalat is 67°F and you will find a light coat useful in winter there: its rainy period is December-April.

II. FOOD: the best French food in the Far East, prepared by French chefs, can be tasted in Saigon—as well, of course, as Chinese and Vietnamese cooking. The hotel dining rooms of the Caravelle, Majestic and Continental Hotels are recommended, and the Hotel des Nations restaurant has simpler French fare "comme chez soi". Both L'Amiral (reckoned to be the foremost restaurant in town: 39 Thai-Lap-Thanh) and La Cigale (18 Dinh-Tien-Hoang) serve all kinds of regional specialties.

The Guillaume Tell (32 Trinh-Minh-The), Caruso (also Italian cooking: 125 Ton-That-Thiep), Bodega (76 C, Le-Thanh-Ton) and Aterbea Capriccio are all good. The pastry and snack cafes are legion: Givral, Brodard and La Pagode are among the best.

For Chinese food go to L'Arc en Ciel (52-6 Tan Da, Cholon) or the Palais de Jade (466 Dong-Khanh, Cholon). The best Vietnamese fare is offered at the Tour d'Argent near the river—and at several restaurants in Thu Duc, six miles out.

III. DRINK: all French wines and spirits are available at reasonable prices. Other imported liquors can be bought: the local beer, however, may be recommended.

IV. NIGHTLIFE: night clubs close at 2 a.m. A Parisian atmosphere is found at the Baccarat (Tran-Quy-Cap) and La Cigale. The Dai Kim Do (107 Dong-Khanh) and L'Arc-en-Ciel in Cholon are good, and the Tu Do is central.

V. TRANSPORT: taxis, hired cars and trishaws or 'cyclos' are common in Saigon. Buses are crowded. All the 5,000 taxis (distinguishable by their cream-and-

blue colouring and their black-on-white licence plates) have meters, and fares are VNP 5 per kilometre (minimum VNP 6): most of them are Renaults or Peugeots.

The fare to or from the airport is always double, and at night (10 p.m. to 5 a.m.) the meter fares are subject to a 50% increase. You can hire a 1959 car, with or without driver, for between VNP 600 and 900 per day and this is a good way to see the town. A short cycle trip costs VNP 5: negotiate the price of longer journeys beforehand. In the provinces only Dalat boasts taxis, but cyclos are universal.

There are trains from Saigon to Dalat, Hue and Nhatrang with berths and dining cars (leave Saigon, for instance, at 8.30 p.m. to reach Nhatrang at 7 a.m. or Dalat at 9.15 a.m., or leave the capital at 4.45 p.m. to arrive in Tourane the next day at 4.52 p.m. or at Hue at 7.45 p.m. There are airconditioned berths once a week to and from Hue and Nhatrang.

The first class fare from Saigon to Nhatrang is VNP 456 one-way, 774 return (and to Tourane VNP 1,036 and 1,760). A berth costs VNP 200 to 300 according to distance, airconditioned 250 to 350. There is a special first class return fare with non-airconditioned berth to Dalat of VNP 422. Reservation of berths is recommended for Hue, Nhatrang and Dalat.

Air Vietnam links Saigon with Hue (2½ hours, VNP 1,275 single, 2,295 return), Tourane (1,150 single), Dalat (1 hour, 500), Nhatrang (600), Pleiku (900), Banmethuot (550) and Quinhon (1,115). Groups of 10, and families of four or more with two adults get a 10% reduction: children between 3 and 12 pay half-fare.

VI. SHOPPING: lacquerware, hand-painted silk, pottery, silverware and tortoiseshell goods are the best buys. Go to the Pottery and Arts Centre at Bien Hoa or the lacquercraft shops at Thudau-mot (or if you have little time the shops in To-Do Street: the best is the Handicraft Development Centre at number 86—it also has a counter at the airport).

The Central Market is interesting and you can bargain there. Tailoring and

South Vietnam

South Vietnam

shoemaking are relatively cheap in Saigon, and many luxury French imports can be bought at reasonable prices. Shopping hours are usually 8 a.m. to 12 midday and 3 p.m. to 6.30 or 7 p.m. (but many shops stay open till 9 or even 10).

VII. HOLIDAYS & FESTIVALS: top events are the lunar New Year (Têt) in January-February; Trung Sisters Anniversary and Women's Day on the 6th of the second lunar month; Children's Day on the 15th of the eighth lunar month; the National Day on October 26; and all Catholic and Buddhist feast days.

VIII. HUNTING: elephant, tiger, leopard, gaur, wild ox, wild buffalo, bear, deer and pheasant abound in Vietnam. Usual hunting bases are near Djiring and Banmethuot. The season is October-April but foreign visitors may, as a special courtesy, be issued permits out of season. Special arrangements can be made through the National Tourism Office or safari tour operators.

Licence A is for big game (VNP 4,800); Licence D for such wild and harmful animals as tiger and leopard (VNP

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298

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1,500). Apply with two photographs to Department of Agriculture, Division des Eaux et Forêts, 58 Nguyen binh Khiem Street, Saigon. An extra fee is levied for game actually killed—VNP 10,000 for an elephant, 2,000 for a deer. A licence —A holder may kill one male elephant, two male gaurs, two male oxen, two male buffaloes, etc. But there is no restriction on wild and harmful beasts.

For between US\$80 and \$100 per day per hunter, safari tour operators provide hunting guide, transport, food, drink, camping equipment and beaters as well as preliminary treatment of skins. You can arrange at the airport permits for temporary import of rifles and reasonable amounts of ammunition.

IX. LANGUAGES: Vietnamese is the national language but French is spoken and understood everywhere, while those concerned with the tourism business have adequate English. Cantonese or Fukienese are usually spoken by the Chinese residents.

X. FURTHER INFORMATION: the Director of the National Tourism Office, Dr. Ho Quang Phuoc, has an office at 3 Tu-Do Street, Saigon and branches at Dalat and Hue. The Saigon office is open daily save for Saturday afternoon and Sunday.

299

Taiwan

TAIWAN

IN BETWEEN glittering Tokyo and Hongkong, tourists may find their midway pause in pastoral Taiwan a much needed stopover and calm interlude. Since the 16th century when Portuguese sailors first set foot on Taiwan and named it "Ilha Formosa" ("Beautiful Island"), its landscapes of magnificent scope and exuberant tones have attracted tourists from far and wide.

In recent years, official and civic efforts to develop tourism on the island have gone ahead. Several coast-to-coast highways leading to scenic spots have been surfaced with asphalt, while new sections have been added to existing lines.

Train services have been further streamlined, featuring diesel-engine expresses and reclining seat sleepers. Sleek sightseeing buses are a new addition to the upswinging tourist trade in Taiwan.

Taiwan with its bland subtropical climate and natural beauty sits in the centre of the Pacific tourist's path. Attractions for visitors are numerous, notable among them being magnificent mountain views, lovely lakes, soothing hot springs, fine sandy beaches, quaint aboriginal tribes with their native dances and singing, and an evergreen golf course—reported the best in the Far East—and ancient objects displayed in the National Palace Museum.

1. Entry

I. VISAS: tourists from nations in diplomatic relations with Taiwan or from so-called "friendly" nations may stopover in the island without visa for a period of not more than 72 hours.

A foreign traveller applying for a 72-hour stopover permit in Taiwan must possess the following papers:—

1. Legitimate and valid passport issued by his or her own country.
2. Valid visa of destination country other than "unfriendly" countries, except United Nations officials in possession of certificates.
3. Air or sea tickets entitling the passenger to proceed to the destination country with the date of departure confirmed and endorsed thereon.

In addition to this new 72-hour no-visa regulation, foreign visitors coming to Taiwan on transit or tourist visas no longer have to report to the police before their departure. The registration can be made at the airport or harbour.

II. MONEY: the Taiwan dollar is the legal currency, and the official rate for one US\$ is New Taiwan \$40.30. Tipping is not the practice, but a 10% gratuity on the bill is a gracious thing to give.

