



FAST FACTS

Official Name

Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Capital City

Hanoi

Currency

Dong

Official Language

Vietnamese

Population

92,5 million

Total Area

331,210 km²

Boundaries:

Cambodia, China and Laos



VIETNAM DESTINATION INFORMATION

Xin Chao and welcome to Vietnam!

Vietnam is one of the most compelling destinations in Southeast Asia. The dragonshaped country guarantees charm, exoticism and adventure. In the north, you will discover the wonderful Halong Bay, the timeless charm of Hanoi and the very colorful ethnic minorities of Sapa and Ha Giang. In the center you will find the surprising Hoi An and the beautiful architecture of Hue. Sandy beaches with year round crystal sunshine stretch all the way southward in Nha Trang, Mui Ne and Phu Quoc. Your heart will be captured by the immense water, endless rice fields and buzzing floating markets of the Mekong Delta.

GEOGRAPHY

Located in the southeastern extremity of the Indochinese peninsula, spread over an area of about 331,210 km², Vietnam shares a border with the Gulf of Tonkin, Gulf of Thailand, South China Sea alongside China, Laos and Cambodia. What makes Vietnam's geography really remarkable is its S-shaped coastline that runs for as long as 3,260 kilometers.

The geography of Vietnam can be divided into four sections that range from rugged mountains to marshy fertile flatlands. Towards the south you'll find the Gulf of Thailand, towards the east and southeast there is the Red River Delta. Vietnam shares its northern border with China, where mountains extend up to 3.143m at Fansipan, which is also known as the highest point in Vietnam.

Tropical lowlands, hills, densely forested highlands and deltas are some of the major geographical features of Vietnam. The Red River Delta is a triangular region covering 3,000 km² and is densely populated than the Mekong River Delta. Owing to its low level, which is just 3 km above sea level, the entire delta region is subject to frequent flooding.

PEOPLE

Most people in Vietnam are ethnic Vietnamese (Kinh), though there is a sizeable ethnic Chinese community in Ho Chi Minh City, most who are descended from migrants from Guangdong province and are hence bilingual in Cantonese, or other Chinese dialects, and Vietnamese. There are also numerous other ethnic groups who occupy the mountainous parts of the country, such as the Hmong, Muong and Dao people. There is also an ethnic minority in the lowlands near the border with Cambodia known as the Khmer Krom.

Buddhism, mostly of the Mahayana school, is the single largest religion in Vietnam, with over 85% of Vietnamese people identifying themselves as Buddhist. Catholicism is the second largest religion, followed by the local Cao Dai religion. Other Christian denominations, Islam, and local religions also share small followings throughout the southern and central areas.

CULTURE

Due to its long history as a tributary state of China, as well as several periods of Chinese occupation, the Vietnamese culture is heavily influenced by that of Southern China, with Confucianism forming the basis of Vietnamese society. The Vietnamese language also contains many loan words from Chinese, though the two languages are unrelated.

Bang a gong

Instead of bells,
Vietnamese schools
bang a gong to call
children to class.



Buddhism remains the single largest religion in Vietnam, though like in China but unlike in the rest of northern South East Asia, the dominant school of Buddhism in Vietnam is the Mahayana School.

Nevertheless, Vietnamese culture remains distinct from Chinese culture, as it has also absorbed cultural elements from neighboring Hindu civilizations such as the Champa and the Khmer empires. The French colonization has also left a lasting impact on Vietnamese society, with baguettes and coffee remaining popular among locals

HISTORY

Vietnam's history is one of war, colonization and rebellion. Occupied by China no fewer than four times, the Vietnamese managed to fight off the invaders just as often. Even during the periods in history when Vietnam was independent, it was mostly a tributary state to China until the French colonization. Vietnam's last emperors were the **Nguyen Dynasty**, who ruled from their capital at Hue from 1802 to 1945, although France exploited the succession crisis after the fall of Tu Duc by *de facto* colonizing Vietnam after 1884. Both the Chinese occupation and French colonization have left a lasting impact on Vietnamese culture, with Confucianism forming the basis of Vietnamese social etiquette, and the French leaving a lasting imprint on Vietnamese cuisine.

After a brief Japanese occupation in World War II, the Communist **Viet Minh** under the leadership of **Ho Chi Minh** continued the insurgency against the French, with the last emperor Bao Dai abdicating in 1945 and a proclamation of independence following soon after. The majority of French had left by 1945, but in 1946 they returned to continue the fight until their decisive defeat at Dien Bien Phu in 1954. The Geneva Conference partitioned the country into two at 17th parallel,

with Communist-led North and **Ngo Dinh Diem** declaring himself President of the Republic of Vietnam in the South.

US economic and military aid to South Vietnam grew through the 1960s in an attempt to bolster the Southern Vietnam government, escalating into the dispatch of 500,000 American troops in 1966 and what became known as the **Vietnam War** – although the Vietnamese refer to it as the **American War**. Which was supposed to be a quick and decisive action soon degenerated into a quagmire and US armed forces were only withdrawn following a cease-fire agreement in 1973. Two years later, on April 30, 1975, a North Vietnamese tank drove into the South's Presidential Palace in Ho Chi Minh City and the war ended. An estimated 3 million Vietnamese and over 55 thousand Americans were killed. The American Vietnamese war was only one of many that the Vietnamese have fought, but it was the most brutal in its history.

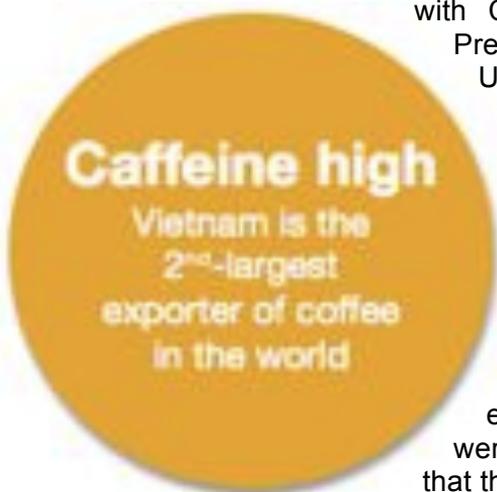
Over two thirds of the current population was born after 1975. American tourists will receive a particularly friendly welcome in Vietnam, as many young Vietnamese in some ways worship the American culture.

VIETNAM DESTINATIONS

It would be our pleasure to provide you with information of the entire country, but that would make enough for a whole book. Therefore, we stuck to the most important and developed destinations in the country. If you wish to receive details on one of the other beautiful destinations in the country, please contact our office in Ho Chi Minh City.

Hanoi

Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam, and also its second largest city, is a fascinating blend of East and West, with Chinese influence from centuries of dominance, and French design from its colonial past. It is largely unspoiled by modern architecture of the 1970s and 80s, and is now going through a modernization that is making it a rising star in Southeast Asia.



Throughout the thousand years of its eventful history, marked by destruction, wars and natural calamities, Hanoi still preserves many ancient architectural works including the Old Quarter and over 600 pagodas and temples. Famous sites include the One Pillar Pagoda (built in 1049), the Temple of Literature (built in 1070), Hanoi Citadel, Hanoi Opera House and President Ho Chi Minh's Mausoleum.

Hanoi also characteristically contains 18 beautiful lakes such as Hoan Kiem Lake, West Lake, and Truc Bach Lake, which are the lungs of the city, with their surrounding gardens and trees providing a vital source of energy.

Many traditional handicrafts are also practiced in Hanoi including bronze molding, silver carving, lacquer, and embroidery. Hanoi has many famous traditional professional handicraft villages such as Bat Trang pottery village, Ngu Xa bronze casting village, Yen Thai glossy silk and many more.

Ha Long Bay

Ha Long Bay is located in Quang Ninh province, Vietnam. The bay features thousands of limestone karsts and isles in various sizes and shapes.

Viewed from above, Ha Long Bay looks like an extremely vivid huge drawing, and sailing beneath the bay is like pleasuring in between a huge valley on water. Ha Long Bay is exactly a wonderfully skillful masterpiece of nature that turns thousands of dumb soulless stone islands into fantastic sculptural and artistic works of various graceful shapes, both familiar and strange to human beings. Thousands of islands emerging from the sea look strong and magnificent and at the same time mild and vivid. The names given to the islands were based on their shapes and forms, like for example Human Head Island, Sail Island and Fighting Cock Island. Inside the stone islands are various breath-taking caves like Thien Cung, Dau Go, Sung Sot, and others. These are truly magnificent palaces of many huge stalactites hanging poised in midair and stalagmites growing majestically upwards. Ha Long's sea always offers a beautiful blue, smooth and still surface.

Sapa

The Sapa district is famous for both its fine, rugged scenery and its rich cultural diversity. Sapa is an incredibly picturesque town that lies in the Hoang Lien Son mountain range near the Chinese border in northwestern Vietnam, known as "the Tonkin Alps". Sapa and its surrounding region is host to many hill tribes, as well as rice terraces, lush vegetation, and Fansipan, the highest peak in Vietnam.

The scenery of the Sapa region really reflects the relationship between the tribes and nature. This is seen especially in the paddy fields covering the rolling lower slopes of the Hoang Lien Mountains. The impressive physical landscape is a result of the work of the elements over thousands of years, wearing away the underlying rock.

Approaching the town, the very first thing tourists may find is the detached wooden mansions and villas perched on top or on the side of the hills, behind thick pine forests, hid by fog in the morning. Charming old and new villas with red roofs appear here and there in the green rows of pomu trees.

Foreign tourists are actually fond of scarce and precious specialties of the tribes living in Sapa, such as forest's products, handicrafts, delicacies (smoked meat, "thang co", "cai meo", san lung wine, corn wine, etc.), etc.

Hoi An

Hoi An Old Town is located 30km south of Danang City, and 60km northeast of Tam Ky. Hoi An used to be an international trade center by sea on the east area in the 16th and 17th centuries. It was the busiest trading port in the Dang Trong region of Vietnam during the reign of Nguyen as merchants from many countries, such as Japan, China, Portugal, Spain, Holland, etc., often stopped over to

10 million
motorbikes
are estimated to be
on Vietnamese
roads.

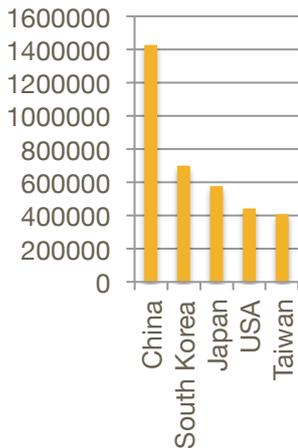


KHIRI PREFERED HOTELS

1. Sofitel Metropole Hotel, Hanoi
2. The Nam Hai, Hoi An
3. Six Senses, Con Dao
4. Victoria Hotel, Sapa
5. Intercontinental, Ho Chi Minh



Top 5 Source Markets in 2012



Khiri Travel Vietnam
 21 Huynh Tinh Cua
 Ward 8 District 3
 Ho Chi Minh City
 Vietnam

T +84 8382 07114
 F +84 8382 09010

exchange and purchase commodities. In the historical progress of establishment and development, Hoi An was known by foreign merchants as Faifo, Haisfo and Hoai Pho. Archeological relics and early records of architectural dwellings tell us that Hoi An also was an important meeting place of many cultures, such as Champa, Vietnamese, Portuguese, Japanese and Chinese, and has been greatly impacted upon by Vietnamese and Chinese civilization.

It is a coast of 7km with many nice beaches that are favorable for tourism development. Hoi An also has a large fishing industry as well as plentiful industries in other sea products. About 15km from the Cua Dai beach we can find the Cham archipelago (of 1,591 ha) where there are many famous sea swallow nests (bird nests) as well as excellent natural environments suitable for the promotion of eco-tourism.

Hue City

Established as the capital of unified Vietnam in 1802, Hue was not only the political but also the cultural and religious center under the Nguyen dynasty until 1945. The city is located between the hills on both sides of the Song Huong, the 'Perfume River'. Hue was declared a UNESCO World Heritage in 1993.

Hue is well known for its historic monuments, which have earned it a place in UNESCO's World Heritage Sites. The seat of the Nguyen emperors was the Citadel, which occupies a large, walled area on the north side of the Perfume River. The citadel harbored the so-called Purple Forbidden City. Today, little of the Forbidden City remains, though reconstruction efforts are in progress to maintain it as a historic tourist attraction.

Roughly along the Perfume River from Hue a myriad of other monuments are to be found, including the tombs of several emperors (for example Minh Mang, Khai Dinh and Tu Duc). Also notable is the Thien Mu Pagoda, the largest pagoda in Hue and the official symbol of the city.

A number of French-style buildings can be found along the south bank of the Perfume River. Among them are Quốc Học High School, the oldest high school in Vietnam, and Hai Ba Trung High School.

On 3 Le Truc Street, the Hue Royal Antiquities Museum maintains a very interesting collection of various artifacts from the city.

Ho Chi Minh City

Ho Chi Minh City, formerly named Saigon, is Vietnam's largest city. Ho Chi Minh's history is only 300 years old. Today Ho Chi Minh is very much the heart of the Vietnamese business world and its entrepreneurs. And yet the city still retains its connections to the past, particularly in Cho Lon, Ho Chi Minh's Chinatown. Here dozens of elegant temples and pagodas can be found. The French also left their marks with some fine colonial-era buildings such as the Notre Dame Cathedral and the Central Post Office.

Beach in Vietnam

You can count several places for beach breaks in Vietnam. Vietnamese people like visit the beaches during the weekends. 90 minutes away, by speedboat, from Ho Chi Minh City is Vung Tau. Many Vietnamese like to spend 1 or 2 nights here during their weekends.

Next to Vung Tau, Vietnam has got more options to choose from:

Phu Quoc is an island located in the South Vietnam. It is a beautiful, quiet area with deep blue sea. Relax on the white sand beach and explore the island by yourself. For a little adventure: go scuba diving! **Nha Trang** is located in southern Vietnam. You can stay in a luxury resort on an island nearby and/or enjoy the beach with access to this developed city. Scuba diving is available. **Muine** is the perfect beach for kite surfing, and at **Con Dao Island** you can enjoy a beach break in a luxury resort and combine it with a Con Dao National Park excursion.

