

Travel to Vietnam





You're reading this while packing your clothes, already on the long-haul flight or having landed in this captivating and stunning country. This may, or may, not be your first time here but there is always something new to discover in Vietnam.

This guidebook will help you do just that. NashTech has been here since 2000 and we have thousands of IT staff born in Vietnam. This means that all of the tips you're reading have come straight from the locals!

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PEOPLE AND CULTURE

You might be thinking, this is my first time in Vietnam, what are the people like?

Saigonese are energetic, sentimental, proud, hardworking, easy-going and hospitable.

Hanoians consider themselves to be traditional, more subtle in behaving and communicating, sophisticated, but sometimes ceremonious.

Danang people are full of smiles, kindness, warmth, and sincerity.

Let us tell you, Vietnam has the most friendly and outgoing people. Most of the time, you will find yourself wandering and smiling back at street vendors with their bamboo frames, holding two big baskets, carrying all types of local fruits and snacks.

The major religions in Vietnam are Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Cao Daim.



Fun fact

Vietnamese life revolves around family. It's not uncommon for three generations to be living together under one roof. Hierarchy is also important, hierarchical structures are mostly based upon age and status.





LANGUAGE

Vietnamese is the official language of the country. The Vietnamese language belongs to a language group which was established a long time ago in East Asia. Changes in material conditions over many centuries, and the increasing demands of cultural life, have influenced the Vietnamese language.

English is the country's second language and is widely taught throughout schools and universities. The majority of Vietnamese people can speak conversational English. You can order food and drinks, or even do your shopping, conversing in English but buying street food at a stall can be a bit tricky. Body language will do!

Here are some useful Vietnamese phrases to help you blend in, just like a local:

English	Vietnamese	Pronunciation
Hello	Xin Chào	Sin chow
How are you?	Bạn Khoẻ Không	Ban Kwe Khom
Thank you	Cảm ơn	Kahm uhn
Sorry	Xin Lỗi	Sin Loy
No problem	Không Có Gì	Khom koh zi
Goodbye	Tạm Biệt	Tarm Byeet
No, Thank You!	Không! Cảm Ơn	Khom, kahm uhn
My name is ____	Tên Tôi Là ____	Ten toy la ____
I am vegetarian	Tôi Ăn Chay	Toi an chayh
How much?	Bao Nhiêu?	Bao new
Too expensive	Đắt Quá!	Dat wa!
No	Không	Khom



CUISINE

It can be argued that food sits at the heart of the Vietnamese culture and we are very proud to have Vietnamese food in the top 10 list of best cuisines in the world. So, eat to your heart's content and enjoy the gastronomical diversity of this country. Here are some of our favourite dishes for you to try:

Signature dishes:



Phở (pronounced "Fuh"): arguably the most popular dish of Vietnam is said to originate from the north. Each region of Vietnam has their own way of cooking Phở. Try it all if you can and see if you notice the difference!



Vietnamese baguette – Bánh Mì (Bahn Mee): the pastry was introduced by the French colonials. A typical Vietnamese sandwich is a fusion of meats and vegetables. The ingredients have been localised and remain popular contemporary aspects of Vietnamese cuisine.



Vietnamese coffee: famous for its thick, sugary, sweetened condensed milk that is the perfect counterbalance for the incredibly strong, dark-roasted Vietnamese coffee. It's a must try, even if coffee isn't for you.



Fun facts

- In Vietnam, Bánh Mì are typically eaten for breakfast or as a snack; they are considered too dry for lunch or dinner.
- Vietnam is the 2nd biggest coffee exporter in the world.



CURRENCY

The Vietnamese currency is the Dong. You will not need cash immediately on arrival and it's not advisable to exchange money at the airport. ATMs are widely available should you need cash. All major cards are accepted at most hotels, in ATM machines and in large shops. If you're out shopping at a local market or just pop over for a coffee vendor, then cash preferable.

Here's a quick conversion table of a few main currencies and its VND equivalent to help you spend wisely in Vietnam:

Currency	VND equivalent
GBP £1	30,000
USD \$1	23,000
SGD \$1	17,000
JPY ¥100	18,000



Fun fact

The average salary in Vietnam starts at a million (yes, there are a lot of VND millionaires in the country!). This is because the base unit starts at thousands.



GETTING AROUND

Taxis with meters, found in most major cities, are very cheap by international standards and a safe way to travel around. The average tariffs are about VND12,000 to VND15,000 per kilometre.

Some nationwide companies with excellent reputations are:



Ho Chi Minh:

Mai Linh (mailinh.vn),
Vinasun (vinasuntaxi.com)

Hanoi:

Taxi Group
(taxigroup.com.vn)



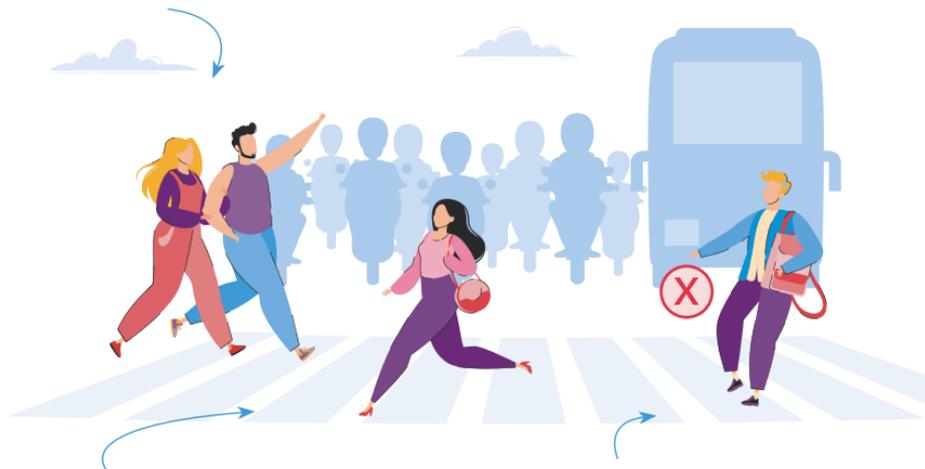
Another option of transportation for you is ride-hailing service using applications such as **Grab**, **Gojek** or **Be**.



Crossing the road in Vietnam, with hundreds of mopeds passing by that do not seem to follow any rules, could be considered an extreme sport! But, be not afraid! Here are our four step rules for you to follow:

Step 1:

Look both ways! So you know which way the traffic flows



Step 2:

Just go for it. This may sound crazy but it works. Walk confidently, slowly and in a straight line. Be predictable. The traffic will flow around you

Step 3:

Don't stop suddenly, change direction or speed when crossing



Step 4:

Congratulations! You have conquered the busy roads of Vietnam



HO CHI MINH CITY (SAIGON)

After the reunification of Vietnam in 1975, the city's name changed to Ho Chi Minh City, but is still frequently called Saigon by residents and visitors alike. This vibrant city is the focus for international investment opportunities but also offers so much more to explore.

It is the perfect architectural blend of old and new with French influence evident. Saigon is slightly over 300 years old. Despite a long history, it is still the youngest and most dynamic city in Vietnam.



District 1

Skyscrapers, high - rise apartments, international hotels and head offices of multinational companies



District 2

Expat housing, new developments



District 5

China town – Cho Lon



District 3

Luxury services, famous restaurants and shopping centres for locals



Tan Binh District

Tan Son Nhat airport, NashTech offices, pagodas



CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

Whether you're on holiday or a business trip, we recommend comfortable, light weight clothing. Vietnam is a tropical country so expect lots of scorching sunny days (and some unexpected showers!).

To help with packing, this is an expectation of the weather throughout the year:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
					
Cool	Sunny	Sunny	Hot	Scorching	Scorching with rain showers
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
					
Scorching with rain showers	Scorching with rain showers	Hot	Sunny	Sunny	Cool



Tip

Remember lots of sunblock, sunglasses and an umbrella (if you're going during the rainy season).



LOCATION

Saigon is a bustling city that never sleeps. Whether you spend 2 or 20 days in the city, there will always be some quirky hidden spots that you have never heard of, or some exciting activities that you can try. So don't be afraid to explore.

Attractions: Here are some typical tourist attractions which will tell you all you need to know about this incredible city, its history and why we're proud to be a Saigonese:



Ben Thanh Market



Central Post Office



War Museum



Independence Palace



Saigon Notre dame
basilica

Shopping centres: Vincom Center, Takashimaya, Bitexco

Souvenirs: You could do your last minute souvenir shopping at the airport but why not take your time choosing some dainty souvenirs at this small boutique shop, Saigon Kitsch, 43 Tôn Thất Thiệp Street?

Activities: We hope the city keeps you busy during your trip but, if you find yourself lost in an online search, wading through the many things to do and don't know where to start, here are some suggestions:



Cooking class: learn the most authentic way to cook Vietnamese food and impress your friends and family with these dishes at Saigon Cooking Class.

saigoncookingclass.com



Củ Chi tunnel tour: If you have one day out in the city, it's worth travelling to Cu Chi, located 37 miles (60km) from Ho Chi Minh City, to learn about its legendary history during the American war.

<http://en.diadaocuchi.com.vn>



À Ố Show: The name derives from 'Lang Pho', which means 'village and city'. The show depicts the charming beauty and cultural richness of Vietnamese life in the countryside with a mix of bamboo cirque, acrobatic acts, contemporary dance, and theatrical visual art.

luneproduction.com/saigon-opera-house



HANOI

Hanoi, the capital city for over 1,000 years, is nestled in a bend of the Red River. Hanoi has a compelling charm, different from its southern sister, Saigon. You can find a mix of well-preserved colonial buildings, ancient pagodas, unique museums alongside rolling countryside and the ever developing cityscape.

The Old Quarter, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is Hanoi's beating heart and is made up of 36 streets with eateries and shops selling all kinds of wares, but if a particular street seems repetitive, it's with good reason. The Old Quarter's streets are divided up by the type of merchandise sold. So you will quite literally walk down Sugar Street, Hat Street, or Silk Street, depending on the items traditionally sold there.



Fun facts

- Hanoi celebrated its millennial birthday on 10/10/2010. Talk about a birthday celebration!
- Hanoi got its name, "Inner River City" because it is located between the Red River and Nhue River. In Vietnamese, Ha means 'river' and Noi means 'inner'.



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To help with packing, this is an expectation of the weather throughout the year:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Very cold	Cool but very humid	Warm	Warm	Hot	Scorching
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Scorching	Cool and rainy	Cool	Cool	Cold	Very cold



Fun fact

Although the temperature gets below 5 degrees Celsius in Hanoi during winter, most households don't have built-in heating systems. Portable heaters have recently been used by households with elderly or small children.



LOCATION

In the Vietnamese capital, you can immerse yourself in the French-colonial feel of the past, or a very modern metropolis. Whether you spend 2 or 20 days in the city, there will always be some hidden spots that you have never heard of, or some exciting activities that you can try. So don't be afraid to explore.

Attractions: Here are some typical tourist attractions which will tell you all you need to know about this incredible city, its history and why we're proud to be a Hanoian:



Old Quarter



Hoan Kiem lake



West lake



Temple of literature



Imperial Citadel of
Thang Long



Ho Chi Minh
Mausoleum



Vietnam Museum of
Ethnology



St. Joseph's cathedral

Shopping centres: Trang Tien plaza, Lotte Centre Hanoi,
Vincom Mega Mall Royal City

Activities: We hope the city keeps you busy during your trip but, if you find yourself lost in an online search, wading through the many things to do and don't know where to start, here are some suggestions:



Weekend night market: Held every weekend in the Old Quarter. This is a bustling gathering that brings huge crowds of locals and tourists to keep you entertained for the night.



"The Quintessence of Tonkin" show:

An outdoor spectacle showcasing traditional elements of Vietnamese culture in a contemporary and innovative way.

www.thequintessenceoftonkin.com



Bat Trang pottery: Half an hour ride from the centre, experience traditional ceramic pottery making and why not spend a whole day in the market and really soak up the experience?



Trang An: Just a two hour drive to Ninh Binh from Hanoi, hop on a boat and be rowed through natural limestone mastiff, romantic rivers, cave systems of the spectacular Trang An landscape.



Halong bay: One of the seven new wonders of the world. Take a weekend boat cruise or simply enjoy all 60 views of the huge amazing lime stone cliffs. www.halongbay.info



DANANG

Da Nang is Vietnam's third largest city. From the 16th century, the city has steadily grown from being a small trading port to becoming a large shipbuilding site.

It is also the largest and most important area of Vietnam's Central region. Different than the hustle and bustle city life of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, Danang's life is more peaceful.

Not only is the city famous for its beaches, Da Nang's charm also lays in its geographical position: leaning against the majestic Truong Son mountains as well as having Son Tra Peninsula embracing the sea.



Fun facts

- Danang is widely considered as the most liveable city in Vietnam.
- The word Danang is a Vietnamese adaptation of the Cham word da nak, which is translated as "opening of a large river".



CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

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To help with packing, this is an expectation of the weather throughout the year:

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Cool	Sunny	Warm	Moderately hot	Hot	Scorching
Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Scorching	Hot	Moderately hot	Hot and rainy	Cool	Cool





LOCATION

Da Nang is the centre of 3 world cultural heritages, Hue Ancient Town, Hoi An Ancient Town and My Son Sanctuary. There is a booming restaurant and food scene developing and its proximity to natural attractions to make this place great to get out and explore.

Attractions: Here are some typical tourist attractions which will tell you all you need to know about this incredible city:



The Marble mountains



Lady Buddha



Cham island



Golden Bridge



Dragon Bridge



Son Tra Peninsula



My Khe beach



Cham museum

Shopping centres: Vincom Plaza, Lotte Mart

Activities: We hope the city keeps you busy during your trip but, if you find yourself lost in an online search, wading through the many things to do and don't know where to start, here are some suggestions:



Con Market and Han Market: great places to see a real local market and watch how life happens in Da Nang. These local markets host hundreds of stalls selling an array of local produce, handicrafts, and accessories. There are also fruit stalls where you can purchase some fresh tropical fruits.



Danang souvenirs & Café:

The place where you can find some cool souvenirs to gift your friends or family. There are also places inside it where you can relax and enjoy your perfect cup of coffee.



Get something custom made: In Danang (or more notably, Hoi An) you can get anything custom made. There are plenty of tailors within the city, waiting to cater to your every desire. Make sure to explore many shops before you decide on one.



Road trip to Hai Van Pass: If you are feeling adventurous enough to drive a moped, a round trip outside of town is a great idea. You can explore Hai Van Pass, or admire the views from Son Tra Peninsula.



Asia Park: One of the biggest and most modern amusement parks in South East Asia. The Sun Wheel ferris wheel provides amazing views of the city and is a prominent feature of Da Nang's night landscape.



CUISINE IN VIETNAM

Whether you want Hanoi style cooking in a traditional Vietnamese ambience or just want some comfort food because you're feeling a bit homesick, Vietnam has got you covered.

Scan the QR code below for the latest information of the Vietnamese cuisine that our country has to offer:



Tips

- No internet access to scan the QR code? No problem, we got you covered! We will include a printed version of some recommended local restaurants.
- It is best to avoid drinking tap water, especially from an unknown source. When in doubt ask for bottled water.
- As always, tipping is a matter of personal discretion. Bills normally include a service charge but it is customary to tip approximately 10% in restaurants and other places that cater to tourists.



This guidebook is just a little taste of what Vietnam has to offer. There are a million other things that we could tell you about, but we'll let you do the exploring!

We hope you enjoy the trip, remember to take lots of photos and share all of the interesting things you find while discovering your own Vietnam.

We'd love to hear from you!

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