

## General Information



Socialist Republic of Vietnam

### Area

330,991 square kilometres

### Population

85 millions

### Geography

Vietnam lies on the eastern seaboard of the Indochina Peninsula. It borders China to the north and Laos and Cambodia to the west. To the east and south lies the South China Sea, which Vietnamese call the East Sea. Mountains and Hills covers four-fifths of Vietnam's territory with the Truong Son range stretching over 1,400km. Mount Fansipan(3,142m) is the highest peak in Southeast Asia.

The most populated areas in Vietnam are the lowland alluvial plains: the Red River Delta (15,000 sq.km, with a 3,000km-long dyke network) in the north, and the Mekong Delta (39,000 sq. km) in the south. Vietnam's two biggest rivers, the Red River and the Mekong River, respectively discharge 122,109 and 1.4 million cubic metres of water a year.

Vietnam's 3,260km-long coastline features beautiful beaches like Tra Co, Lang Co, Nha Trang, Vung Tau, and Ha Tien. National parks include Ba Vi, Cat Ba and Cuc Phuong in the north, Bach Ma in the centre and Cat Tien in the south.

### Resources

Minerals: coal, iron, aluminum, tin and oil.

Agricultural and forestry products: rice, maize, sweet potatoes, peanuts, soy beans, rubber, lacquer, coffee, tea, tobacco, cotton, coconut, sugar cane, jute, and tropical and subtropical fruits.

### Climate

Vietnam is essentially a tropical country with a humid monsoon climate. The annual mean temperature is over 20 degrees Celsius throughout the country (Hanoi 23.4 C., Hue 25.1 C., Hochiminh City 26.9 C.).

In July, the average temperature in Hanoi is 28.6 C., in Hue it is 28.9 C., and in Hochiminh City, 27.6 C. Lowland areas receive around 1,500mm of rain per year, while mountainous areas receive 2,000mm to 3,000mm. Humidity can reach 90 percent in the rainy season.

Vietnam has two seasons: cool and dry from November to April and hot and rainy from May to October. The difference between summer and winter temperatures is dramatic in the north (varying up to 20 or 30 degrees Celsius). The south is warm all year round, with seasonal variations in temperature averaging just three degrees Celsius.

### Administrative Divisions

Vietnam has 64 provinces, including five municipalities (Hanoi, Hochiminh City, Haiphong, Can Tho and Danang).

### History

Vietnam's history may be divided into five periods:

- Prehistory: There is evidence of human settlements in Northern Vietnam as far back as 500,000-300,000 BC. In the third century BC, King An Duong Vuong founded Au Viet.
- Chinese occupation: Northern Vietnam was occupied by China from 189 BC to 939 AD.
- Independence: Local kings ruled the area from 939 to 1860 AD.
- French colonialism: The French colonized Vietnam from 1860 to 1945.
- Independence: The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was founded after the 1945 revolution, when President Hochiminh declared independence.

## Ethnic groups

There are 54 ethnic groups living in Vietnam. The Viet, or Kinh, people account for 88 percent of Vietnam's population and are mostly concentrated in the lowlands. In contrast, most of the country's 5.5 million ethnic minority people live in mountainous areas. Major groups include the Tay (960,000 people); the Nung (152,000 people); the Thai (770,000 people); the Muong (700,000 people); the H'mong (441,000 people); the Zao (340,000 people); the Hoa (930,000 people); the Khmer (720,000 people); the Bana (100,000 people); the Giarai (184,000 people); and the Ede (140,000 people).

## Religions

The three main religious influences in Vietnam are Buddhism, Confucianism and Ancestor Worship.

## Vietnamese Languages and Scripts

More than 80 percent of the population speaks Vietnamese or Kinh/Viet, the national language. Many ethnic minority people speak Kinh and their own native language.

Three scripts have influenced Vietnam's history:

Han Chinese ideograms were used until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The *Nom* script, created between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, was derived from Han script to transcribe the Vietnamese language.

European missionaries in the 17<sup>th</sup> century developed Quoc Ngu, the Romanised transcription of the Vietnamese language used to this day.

## Business Our

Government offices and museums open early, around 8am, and close between 4pm and 5pm. Avoid doing business from 11:30am to 2pm, when people are either at lunch or napping.

## Currency

The currency in Vietnam is the Dong (VND), which currently trades at about 20,860 Dong to the US dollar. US dollars remain widely accepted at hotels, but you should have local currency for use in taxis and shops. Credit card acceptance, especially for Visa, is spreading in higher-end hotels, restaurants and shops in big cities. Do not accept torn or soiled bills as you may have trouble spending them.

## Electricity

Vietnam uses 220V electricity nationwide. In the South, outlets are often US-Style flat pins. In the North, many outlets fit round pins. As the electrical current varies, use a surge protector when running sensitive electronic equipment like laptops.

## Hotels & Registration

There is a wide range of accommodation available, at least in Vietnam's major cities. Hanoi and Hochiminh City feature a choice of five-star hotels. As hotels and private hosts must register your presence with the police, you'll be expected to hand over your passport, along with your entry/exit form.

## Food

Eating in Vietnam ranges from cheap noodle soups on the street for about 1.5US\$ to a banquet in one of the luxury hotels. Vietnamese restaurants offer a broad selection of international fare including French, Italian, American, Indian, Chinese and Japanese.

The most typical Vietnamese food is PHO, the noodle soup with meat in it. It is very cheap at USD1.5 per bowl and usually well spiced. The main types are: PHO Bo with beef, PHO Bo Tai with rare beef fillets and PHO Ga with chicken. COM-steamed white rice is eaten for lunch and dinner. NUOC MAM is the fermented fish sauce used to spice absolutely everything in Vietnam.

Seasonal fruits such as dragon fruit, rambutans and longans, fresh vegetables and local seafood are widely available, although supply can vary by region and season. All fruits and vegetables should be cooked or peeled before eaten. Drinking water or ice is generally not recommended, even in the cities. Bottled water is cheap and readily available, so we recommend you do not take the risk. Vietnam is a beer culture. There are plenty of local as well as imported brands. 333, Carlsberg, Hanoi Beer, Huda Beer, Tiger Beer, Saigon Beer, LaRue, San Miguel and Heineken are some common brands.

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS 2012

1 Jan New Year's Day  
23-25 Jan 2012 Lunar New Year (Tet)  
31 Mar Hung King's Celebration  
30 Apr Saigon Liberation Day  
1 May International Labour Day  
2 Sep National Day

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS 2013

1 Jan New Year's Day  
10-13 Feb 2012 Lunar New Year (Tet)  
19 Apr Hung King's Celebration  
30 Apr Saigon Liberation Day



1 May International Labour Day

2 Sep National Day

## Health Care

No vaccinations are officially required to visit Vietnam. However it is prudent to have up-to-date inoculations for Polio, Meningitis, Hepatitis A & B, Tuberculosis, TABT (TYPHOID, paratyphoid A & B and tetanus) Cholera, Malaria, and Japanese Encephalitis. In addition, we suggest you contact your personal physician or clinic specializing in international travel. Vietnam does have a wide variety of medicines, but you may not be familiar with them. You are advised to bring any prescription medications (in the original containers) currently required. You should pack a small medical kit, which includes sunscreen, insect repellent, diarrhea medication, ibuprofen or aspirin and antibacterial ointments. For those who wear eyeglasses, it is recommended that an extra pair be taken, as the quality of local replacement services varies. It is strongly suggested that you have a dental checkup before departure. Medical care facilities are available, but are limited outside of Hochiminh City and Hanoi, and can be expensive for emergency care.

## EMERGENCY

Hanoi

International SOS

Central Building,

31 Hai Ba Trung St.,

Tel: 3934 0555

Fax: 3934 0556

Vietnam International Hospital located in Phuong Mai St.,

Tel: 3574 0740

Fax: 3869 8443

Huu Nghi Hospital

1 Tran Khanh Du St.

Tel: 3972 2231

Hanoi Family Medical Practice A 1 Van Phuc.

Tel: 3843 0748

Hospital K

43 Quan Su St..

Tel: 38252143

Viet Duc Hospital

40 Trang Thi St , Hoan Kiem District

Tel: (84.4) 38253531

Ho Chi Minh City :

+ International SOS

65 Nguyen Du St , District 1

Tel: (84.8) 38298520

+ Columbia International Healthcare

08 Alexandre de Rhodes St , District 1

Tel: (84.8) 38238455

1 No Trang Long St., Binh Thanh District, HCM city

Tel: (84-8) 3803 0678

## Safety

While Vietnam is one of the safest countries in Asia, you should take with your possessions. Secure your valuables, document and credit cards in your hotel's safe. Beware of pickpockets, purse-snatchers and mobile phone thieves, especially in Hochiminh City. If you choose to drive a motorbike or ride a bicycle, always wear a helmet.

## Telecommunications

International phone charges are steep in Vietnam and many hotels, especially upmarket ones, add extra fees. Check the rate before dialing. One long-distance service offers a flat fee of around US\$ 0.75 per minute to 50 countries; dial 171 followed by the number.

Public phones require phone cards, which are available at post offices.

## Keycontacts

### Phone numbers

Exit code: 00

Police: 113

Enquiries: 116

Medical aid: 115

Operator: 110

Fire: 114

Information: 1080



## Travel Tips

### Airport Tax

It's already included in the airticket

### Baggage Claim

Keep your baggage claim stickers (stuck on to your tickets) in order to get your luggage out of the airport.

### Business Class Lounge

Business Class passengers and Golden Lotus Plus Gold members may use Noi Bai's Business Class Lounge.

### Customs

On the yellow and white Customs form you are expected to declare:

\*Cameras, camcorders, and other electronic equipment not for personal use

\*Jewelry not for private use

\*Currency over US\$5,000

\*Video tapes (they may be kept for a few days and screened)

### Entry/Exit Forms

Don't lose the Entry/Exit form; you'll need it when leaving the country.

## VISA ARRANGEMENTS

A Vietnamese entry visa is required for all foreigners wishing to visit Vietnam except for citizens of countries having bilateral agreements on visa exemption with Vietnam. A Vietnamese embassy or consulate will only issue a visa with the approval of authorities in Vietnam. Documents needed to apply for a visa include: a passport of at least 6 months validity and the visa application forms. Other documents may be required for the country where the application form is submitted. Visa forms are available by sending a stamped, self addressed envelope addressed to the Visa Section, Embassy (or Consulate General) of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in your country, or at the legation itself. Visa Application forms may also be available from some travel organizers.

### Visa Types

#### *Tourist Visas*

Tourist visas will be granted only for single entry with a maximum stay in Vietnam of one month. Tourist visas are good for thirty days and may be extended after your arrival in Vietnam.

#### *Diplomatic and official Visas*

There are no fees for Diplomatic or Official visas unless otherwise agreed upon between Vietnam and applicant's country. In addition to the documents specified above, applicants must submit a Note Verbal or an official letter from the concerned agencies of the local government, foreign embassies or consulates accredited to the applicant's country, international organization, or other accredited organization based in that country. *Business or other types of Visas*

In addition to the documents specified in the general information above, the applicant must provide agreement from their sponsor in Vietnam. It is possible to arrange 1-month or 3-month multiple entry visas for business people.

### Ordinary holding passport

*Exemption entry visa: 30 days*

Brunei Darussalam  
Cambodia (Kingdom)  
Indonesia (Republic)  
Laos (People's Democratic Republic)  
Malaysia  
Singapore (Republic)  
Thailand (Kingdom)

*Exemption entry visa: 21 days*

Philippines (Republic)

*Exemption entry visa: 15 days*

Japan  
Korea (Republic)  
Russia (Federation)



Denmark (Kingdom)  
Finland (Republic)  
Norway (Kingdom)  
Sweden (Kingdom)

**Notes on applying for a VISA**

Fill in the details and send us via fax or email <b>+84 8 39705175</b> or <a href="mailto:sales.tour@apttgolf.com">sales.tour@apttgolf.com</a>	
1. Full name	5. Expiry date
2. Date of birth	6. Date of entry
3. Nationality	7. Type of visa
4. Passport no.	8. Place of receiving