

VIETNAM

TRAVEL TIPS



GENERAL INFORMATION



TIME ZONE

- Vietnam follows Indochina Time (ICT), GMT+7, with no daylight saving time.



LANGUAGE

- Official language: Vietnamese.
- English is increasingly used in tourism, business, and education.
- French, Chinese, Russian, and Korean are spoken in certain communities.



RELIGION & CULTURE

- Major beliefs: Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Catholicism, and ancestor worship.
- Vietnam boasts 8 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including Ha Long Bay, Hue Imperial Citadel, Hoi An Ancient Town, and Trang An Landscape Complex.
- Festivals such as Tet (Lunar New Year) and the Mid-Autumn Festival are celebrated nationwide.



ELECTRICITY & PLUGS

- Voltage: 220V / 50Hz.
- Plug types: A, C, and D. Bringing a universal adapter is recommended.



COMMUNICATION & INTERNET

- Country code: +84.
- SIM cards and data packages are affordable and widely available (Viettel, Vinaphone, Mobifone).
- Wi-Fi is common in hotels, cafés, and restaurants.



CURRENCY & PAYMENT

- Official currency: Vietnamese Dong (VND).
- Credit cards widely accepted in cities, but cash is still essential for small shops, local markets, and rural areas.
- ATMs are available nationwide, though rural access may be limited.

VIETNAM *ETIQUETTE*



Don'ts

- Don't refuse tea when it's offered in a meeting or at someone's home – it's part of Vietnamese hospitality.
- Don't point your feet at others or at sacred objects like Buddha statues – it's considered disrespectful.
- Don't show too much physical affection in public – modesty is appreciated.
- Don't touch someone's head or shoulders, especially adults – the head is considered sacred.
- Don't point with a finger – instead, gesture using your whole hand.

Dos

- Say “Xin chào” (Hello) to greet locals – it's a simple gesture that goes a long way!
- Show respect to elders and local customs, especially in temples and rural areas.
- Use both hands when giving something to an older person as a sign of politeness.
- Dress modestly when visiting religious sites: wear long pants or skirts and cover your shoulders.
- Take off your shoes before entering someone's home or sacred places like pagodas or temples.
- Ask for permission before taking photos of people, especially in rural villages or cultural sites.



VIETNAM *WHAT TO BRING*



- **Clothing:** breathable fabrics (cotton, linen) for hot & humid weather.
- **Shoes:** comfortable walking shoes, sandals for casual days.
- **Outerwear:** light jacket or sweater if visiting the North in winter.
- **Essentials:** sunscreen, insect repellent, sunglasses, hat.
- **Rain gear:** compact umbrella or poncho (sudden showers).
- **Others:** reusable water bottle, small backpack for day trips.

VIETNAM *SAFETY & HEALTH*

- Vietnam is generally safe, but watch out for pickpocketing in crowded areas.
- Tap water isn't safe to drink – always buy bottled water.
- Walk slowly, steadily, and let motorbikes flow around you when crossing the street.
- Pharmacies are common, but bring personal medication.
- Travel insurance is recommended for health and accident coverage.



VIETNAM *CLIMATE & WEATHER*

Vietnam has a tropical monsoon climate, with weather patterns varying across regions.

- **North (Hanoi, Ha Long, Sapa):**

- Spring (Mar–Apr): mild weather, many festivals.
- Summer (May–Aug): hot with frequent rain.
- Autumn (Sep–Nov): cool, the most beautiful season of the year.
- Winter (Dec–Feb): cold, foggy in the mountains.

- **Central (Hue, Da Nang, Hoi An):**

- Weather can be unpredictable with both heat and storms.
- Best time: Jan–Aug (blue seas, golden sunshine).
- Sep–Nov: heavy rain and possible typhoons.

- **South (Ho Chi Minh City, Mekong Delta, Phu Quoc):**

- Two distinct seasons:
 - Dry season (Nov–Apr): pleasant and ideal for travel.
 - Rainy season (May–Oct): short showers, usually not disruptive.

Tips:

- Always carry a compact raincoat and sunscreen.
- Check the forecast before heading to the mountains or the beach.
- Best nationwide travel season: Oct–Apr.



VIETNAM CONNECTIVITY & SIM CARDS

- SIM cards with 4G are cheap and widely available at the airport and convenience stores. Providers: Viettel, Vinaphone, Mobifone.
- Free Wi-Fi is available in most cafés, hotels, and even restaurants.
- For long stays, eSIM options are convenient and can be arranged online.

Tip: Get a SIM card at the airport for instant access to maps and Grab.



VIETNAM CUISINE

Foods

Vietnamese cuisine is a delicate blend of fresh ingredients and flavorful spices, which creates dishes that are not only delicious but also reflect the distinctive culinary tradition of Vietnam's three regions. The cuisine has a long history that is influenced by Chinese and, to a lesser extent, French culinary traditions.

- North: phở, bánh cuốn, bún thang...
- Central: bún bò Huế, cơm hến, bánh bột lọc, bánh bèo...
- South: cơm tấm, fresh spring rolls...

Drinks

- Coffee: Vietnam's coffee culture is well-known for strong local brews such as cà phê sữa đá (iced coffee with condensed milk), which is widely available.
- Beer: Local draft beer, known as bia hơi, is popular and affordable.
- Water Safety: Don't drink tap water; bottled water is easily accessible at reasonable prices.

THE BEST VIETNAMESE DISHES

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE



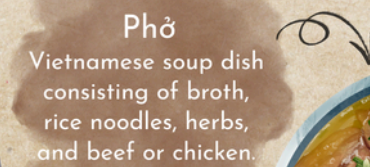
Cà Phê Sữa Đá
Cà phê sữa đá is iced coffee served with sweetened condensed milk.



Bánh Mì
Bánh mì sandwich typically contains green vegetables and various fillings, including pate and commonly pork.



Bánh Xèo
Vietnamese style crepe with whole shrimp, thinly sliced pork and bean sprouts.



Phở
Vietnamese soup dish consisting of broth, rice noodles, herbs, and beef or chicken.



Bún Chả
Bún chả is served with grilled fatty pork over a plate of white rice noodles and herbs with a side dish of dipping sauce.



Bia Hơi
Local draft beer (bia hơi) is popular and inexpensive.

VIETNAM *MONEY & SHOPPING*

- Currency: Vietnamese Dong (VND).
- Payments: cash is common in local markets, cards accepted in hotels & malls.
- ATMs: widely available in cities.
- Bargaining: expected in markets, but always politely.
- Exchange: use banks or official counters.



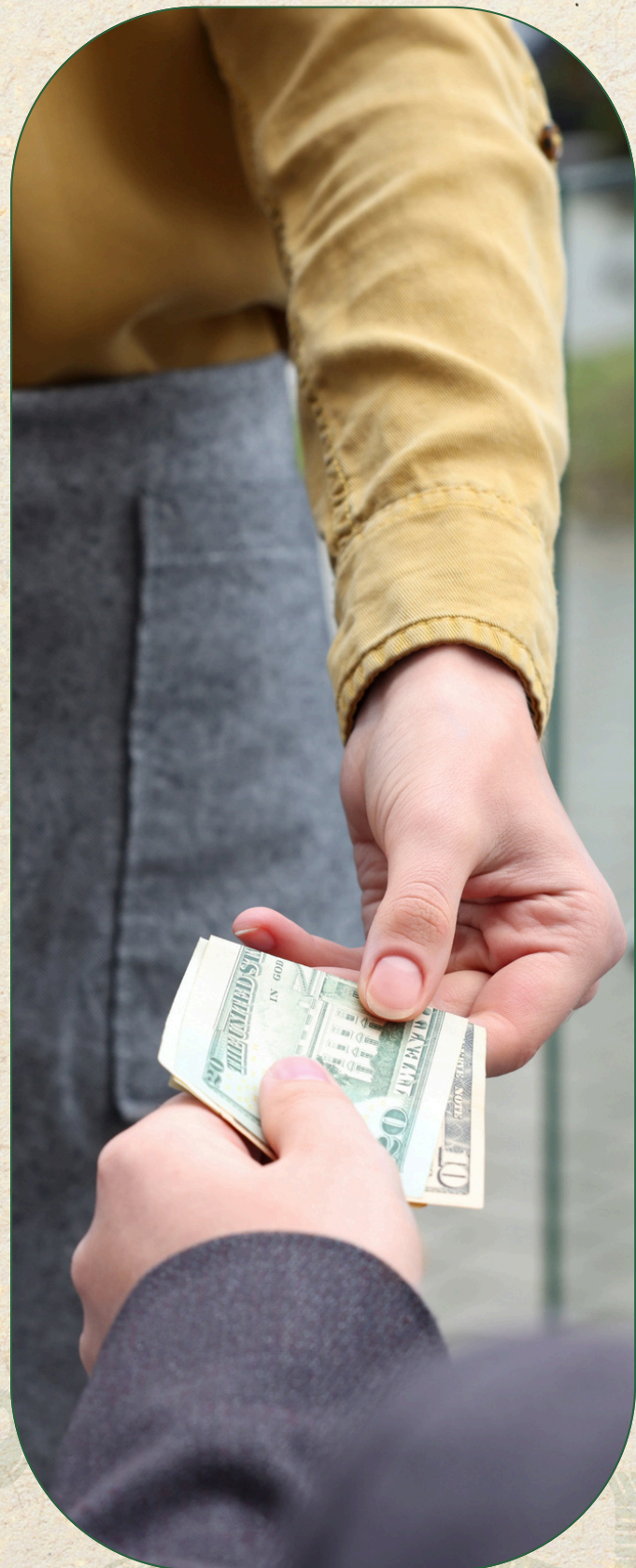
VIETNAM *GETTING AROUND*

- Flights: quickest way for long distances (Hanoi ↔ Ho Chi Minh in 2 hrs).
- Trains: scenic but slower; the coastal Hanoi – Hue – Da Nang route is stunning.
- Buses & Minivans: affordable, widely available for intercity travel.
- Grab/Taxis: convenient in major cities (always check meter if not using Grab).
- Motorbike Rentals: for adventurous travelers – always wear a helmet & have a license.

Tip: For short trips, Grab is most convenient. For longer journeys, flights save time.



VIETNAM *TIPPING POLICY*



COMPULSORY: TIPPING POLICY

Tour Guides & Drivers

- From 2 – 3 persons: \$10/group/day
- From 4 – 6 persons: \$5/person/day
- From 7 persons: \$3/person/day

Hotel & Restaurant Staff

- Restaurants: 5–10% of the bill (if a service charge is not included)
- Housekeeping: \$2–3 per day per room
- Porters: \$1–2 per trip

Boat Cruise Staff

- Day Boat Trip: \$1–2 per guest
- Overnight Cruise (e.g., Halong Bay, Mekong River): \$20–50 per group or \$3–5 per passenger
- Tipping should be in cash, preferably in Vietnamese Dong or USD (avoid coins or personal/travelers' checks).

Tipping is appreciated and should be given in cash, preferably in Vietnamese Dong or USD (avoid coins or personal/travelers' checks). While not mandatory, tipping is a kind gesture to show appreciation for excellent service.

VIETNAM



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