



Travel Tips

V I E T N A M



The Locals Know Best



General Information

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TIME ZONE & WORKING HOUR

Vietnam operates on Indochina Time (ICT), which is GMT +7 hours. Standard business hours are typically from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Most restaurants, shops and services in the tourist area will be open until 10:00 PM.



LANGUAGE

Vietnamese is the official language of Vietnam. English is widely used in business and tourism sectors.



PASSPORT & VISA

A passport with at least six months of validity remaining is mandatory for entry into Vietnam. Ensure your passport has sufficient blank pages for visa stamps. Visa requirements vary by nationality, some countries enjoy visa exemptions, while others may apply for E - visa in advance or obtain a visa on arrival. It's advisable to check the latest visa regulations before your trip.



TRANSPORTATION

Metered taxis are widely available at reasonable prices. Ride-hailing apps like Grab offer convenient options for car and motorbike rides. Traditional bicycle rickshaws (cyclos) and motorbike taxis (xe ôm) are also common; negotiate fares before starting your journey. Carrying a business card from your hotel is recommended to show drivers your destination.



CURRENCY

The local currency is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). As of 2025, the exchange rate is approximately 25,500 VND per US dollar. Foreign currency can be exchanged at banks, hotels, and authorized money exchangers. Major cities accept credit cards widely, but carrying cash is advisable when traveling to rural areas.



ELECTRICITY

Vietnam uses a 220V supply voltage and 50Hz frequency. The common plug types are A (two flat parallel prongs), C (two round prongs), and F (two round prongs with grounding clips on the side). It's advisable to carry a universal adapter to accommodate various socket types.



Etiquette



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DOs

- Greet people you meet by saying "Xin chao" (Hello)
- Show your respect to old people and religious beliefs
- Pass things to older people using both hands
- Dress modestly in religious spaces (shorts below the knees, shoulders covered)
- Remove shoes when entering homes or temples
- Ask for permission before taking photograph at the sights or the local people



Don'ts

- Don't touch an adult's head or shoulders
- Don't point with fingers (use your whole hand)
- Don't refuse an offer of tea at the reception or meeting
- Don't point the soles of your feet towards a person or a sacred object, such as an image of Buddha
- Don't make another person to "lose face" (i.e. to be embarrassed)
- Avoid excessive displays of affection in public





HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Travelers to Vietnam are advised to consult with their healthcare provider or a travel medicine specialist to ensure they are up-to-date on routine vaccinations and to discuss necessary immunizations. Recommended vaccinations may include:

- **Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR):** Ensure you are fully vaccinated against measles, as outbreaks have occurred in various regions.
- **Diphtheria and Tetanus:** Recent diphtheria outbreaks have been reported in Vietnam; maintaining current vaccinations is essential.
- **Hepatitis A and B:** Vaccination is recommended due to the potential risk of exposure.
- **Typhoid:** Advised for travelers, especially those planning to consume local or street food.
- **Rabies:** Consider vaccination if you plan to engage in activities that could bring you into contact with animals, particularly dogs.
- **Japanese Encephalitis:** Recommended for travelers spending extended periods in rural areas or during the transmission season.

It's highly recommended that all travelers purchase comprehensive personal travel insurance before departure. This insurance should cover health-related expenses, including medical evacuation, as well as loss or theft of personal belongings. Having insurance from your home country can simplify the process in case of accident or illness, avoiding complicated paperwork abroad.

WHAT TO BRING

To ensure a comfortable and safe trip to Vietnam, consider the following packing tips:

- **Clothing:** Pack lightweight, breathable clothing suitable for a tropical climate. Include a light jacket or sweater for cooler evenings or air-conditioned environments.
- **Health Essentials:** Bring sunblock, a wide-brimmed hat, and insect repellent containing DEET to protect against mosquitoes.
- **Medications:** Carry a basic first-aid kit and any prescription medications you require, along with a copy of the prescription.
- **Documentation:** Keep photocopies of important documents, such as your passport, visa, travel insurance, and vaccination records, in a secure location separate from the originals.
- **Miscellaneous:** A reusable water bottle, travel umbrella, and power adapter suitable for Vietnam's electrical outlets can be very useful.



Before Traveling



CUSTOMES & FORMALITIES

Upon arrival in Vietnam, travelers are typically required to complete a customs declaration form. However, if you do not carry any items exceeding duty-free allowances, this may not be necessary.

Duty-Free Allowances

- **Alcohol:** Up to 1.5 liters of spirits over 22% alcohol by volume, or 2 liters of spirits under 22% alcohol, or 3 liters of beer.
- **Tobacco:** Up to 200 cigarettes, 100 cigars, or 500 grams of tobacco.
- **Other Goods:** Personal items and gifts up to a total value of 10,000,000 VND.

Prohibited Items

- Narcotics and psychotropic substances.
- Firearms, ammunition, explosives, and military equipment.
- Obscene materials and publications.
- Endangered wildlife and products derived from them.

If you are bringing prescription medications, it's advisable to carry a doctor's note detailing the drugs you are taking to avoid potential issues during customs inspections. Music CDs and DVDs may be subject to inspection.





CLIMATE & WEATHER

Vietnam's climate varies significantly from north to south due to its extensive latitudinal range and diverse topography.

Northern Vietnam: Experiences four distinct seasons.

- Winter (November to April): Cool to cold temperatures, averaging 10–16°C (50–61°F), with occasional drops below 5°C (41°F). Fog and drizzle are common from January to March.
- Summer (May to October): Warm to hot temperatures, averaging 25–35°C (77–95°F), with high humidity and heavy rainfall.

Central Vietnam: Has a tropical monsoon climate.

- Dry Season (January to August): Hot and dry conditions, with temperatures ranging from 25–35°C (77–95°F).
- Rainy Season (September to December): Heavy rainfall and occasional typhoons, particularly affecting coastal areas.

Southern Vietnam: Features a tropical climate with two main seasons.

- Dry Season (November to April): Hot and humid, with temperatures between 25–35°C (77–95°F).
- Rainy Season (May to October): Frequent rain showers and thunderstorms, with temperatures remaining warm.

Highlands and Plateaus: Regions such as Đà Lạt (1,500 meters above sea level) experience cooler temperatures year-round.

- Dry Season (November to March): Cool to cold temperatures, averaging 10–20°C (50–68°F), with potential drops below 10°C (50°F).
- Rainy Season (April to October): Mild temperatures, averaging 20–25°C (68–77°F), with increased rainfall.

Travelers should pack accordingly, considering the specific regions and times of year they plan to visit.





COMMUNICATIONS

- **Phone/SIM Card**

Vietnam has high international telephone charges, so checking with your hotel about rates before making a call is important. VOIP services such as WhatsApp, Skype, or Zoom can help reduce costs. Prepaid internet and mobile SIM cards (4G/5G) are widely available in major cities, and if your phone is unlocked, purchasing a local SIM is a cost-effective option (starting at approximately USD 5). You can easily top up your credit at convenience stores, mobile shops, or through online banking apps.

- **Internet**

Internet access is available at most hotels, restaurants, cafés, and internet service centers. Free Wi-Fi is commonly provided in hotels, airports, and major tourist destinations, although connection speeds may vary by location. High-speed 5G networks are expanding in urban areas.

- **Post Service**

Vietnam's postal service offers regular international mail services. Express Mail Service (EMS) is available in over 50 countries worldwide, with delivery times ranging from 2 to 10 days, depending on the destination.

VIETNAM CUISINE

- **Foods**

Vietnamese cuisine is known for its fresh ingredients, balanced flavors, and healthy options. It is generally mild and not overly spicy or oily. The cuisine is influenced by Chinese and, to a lesser extent, French culinary traditions.

- **Drinks**

Coffee: Vietnam is famous for its coffee culture, with strong local brews such as cà phê sữa đá (iced coffee with condensed milk) widely available.

Beer: Local draft beer (bia hơi) is popular and inexpensive.

Water Safety: Avoid drinking tap water. Bottled drinking water is widely available at reasonable prices.





CURRENCY, MONEY EXCHANGE & ATM

The official currency is the Vietnamese Dong (VND). Banknotes come in denominations of 1,000; 2,000; 5,000; 10,000; 20,000; 50,000; 100,000; 200,000; and 500,000 VND. As of 2024, the exchange rate is approximately 25,500 VND per US dollar.

- **Credit Cards**

Visa, MasterCard, and JCB are widely accepted. Some merchants may charge a 3% transaction fee (4% for AMEX).

- **ATMs**

Available in all major cities and tourist areas. Most machines allow withdrawals of up to 3,000,000–5,000,000 VND per transaction.

- **Money Exchange**

Foreign currencies can be exchanged at banks, exchange offices, and authorized hotels. The US dollar and Euro are the most commonly accepted foreign currencies.

SAFETY

- **Personal Belongings**

Avoid displaying valuable items such as jewelry, cash, or expensive electronics in public.

- **Petty Theft**

Be vigilant in crowded areas like markets, public transport, and tourist sites. Keep an eye on your handbags, cameras, and wallets.

- **Lost Items**

Local police reports can be time-consuming, and recovery of lost items is not guaranteed. Travel insurance is highly recommended.





DOMESTIC FLIGHTS & AIRPORT TAXES

- **Airport Tax**

Included in domestic and international airfares.

- **Check-in Recommendations**

Arrive at least 3 hours before international flights and 2 hours before domestic flights.

- **Baggage Allowance**

Vietnam Airlines allows 1 checked bag (23kg) and 1 carry-on (10kg) for economy class. Budget airlines may charge extra for checked baggage.

SHOPPING & BARGAINING

Vietnam offers a diverse shopping experience, from luxury malls and boutique stores to traditional markets and street vendors. The country is known for its handicrafts, silk, lacquerware, ceramics, embroidery, war memorabilia, and gemstones.

- **Local Markets**

Dong Xuan Market (Hanoi) – A large wholesale market for clothing, fabrics, and street food.

Hoi An Night Market (Hoi An) – Ideal for lanterns, custom-tailored clothing, and jewelry.

Ben Thanh Market (Ho Chi Minh City) – Famous for textiles, handicrafts, and souvenirs.

- **Bargaining in Vietnam**

Bargaining is common in markets and with street vendors but is not accepted in malls and fixed-price stores.

Maintaining a friendly attitude can lead to better deals.

If a price isn't right, it's okay to walk away—the seller may lower the price as you leave.

- **Street Vendors & Hawkers**

Some street vendors can be persistent, especially in tourist hotspots. A simple "No, thank you" (or "Không, cảm ơn" in Vietnamese) is enough to decline.

Be cautious when buying gemstones, antiques, or electronics, as counterfeit goods are common.

Always check the quality of food or packaged goods before purchasing.





TIPPING

Tipping is appreciated but not mandatory. Below are suggested gratuity amounts (in USD):

Tour Guides & Drivers

- Private Tour: \$4–6 per guest per day (local/city guide)
- Group Tour: \$4–7 per guest per day (escorted guide); \$2–4 per guest per day (local guide)
- Drivers usually receive half of what guides get.
- For trekking/biking tours, additional tipping is recommended.

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).



Thank You



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