



TRAILS OF INDOCHINA

*Artisans of bespoke journeys to
Southeast Asia & beyond*

VIETNAM

PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION



INTRODUCTION



Vietnam today is a youthful nation fuelled by the desire for modernisation and commercialisation, while remaining protective of its traditional past. In the stoic political capital of Hanoi in the north and the vibrant cosmopolitan Ho Chi Minh City in the south, you will observe modern cities in the making. But along small streets, you will still find stalls practicing their century-old trades, far removed from the modern changes around them.

QUICK FACTS



Currency: Vietnamese Dong



Capital City: Hanoi



Time Zone: GMT +7



Electricity: 220 Volts, 50 Hz



International Airport:

Ho Chi Minh City	SGN
Hanoi	HAN



Population: 92 million



Language: Vietnamese



Calling Code: +84



Religion: Buddhism

Hue	HUI
Danang	DAD



When picturing Vietnamese cuisine, many people immediately think of pho (rice noodle soup) and cha gio (deep-fried spring rolls), which have become famous throughout the world. Vietnam provides the curious palate with a cornucopia of tastes in three regional traditions: savoury in the north, spicy in the centre and sweet in the south.



Pho

Pho is possibly the most widely known Vietnamese food outside of Vietnam. A noodle soup, pho consists of rice noodles, meat, onion, green onion and cilantro. Side components including bean sprouts, chilli and lime, which allow the diner to cater the dish to their pallet. Styles of pho vary by region, with different sweetness of the broth and type of noodle used



Spring Rolls

Considered an appetiser, spring rolls are a fresh and light way to beat the heat. The ingredients include shrimp, pork, lettuce, a variety of herbs and rice vermicelli. All the ingredients are then rolled into the soft rice paper, topped off with peanut sauce.



Banh Mi

The Vietnamese version of fast food, banh mi fillings include a few herbs, cucumber, pickled carrots and radish, and soy sauce. Stalls then get creative with the main fillings such as fried eggs, pork liver pate, pork floss, grilled meat and more.



Banh Xeo

Banh xeo is a savoury fried pancake made of rice flour, egg, water and turmeric. This is then stuffed with pork, prawns, diced green onion and bean sprouts. To eat add herbs, wrap each piece in a lettuce leaf and then dip in the fish sauce provided – delicious



Currency in Vietnam

Vietnam's currency is the Vietnam Dong (VND). It is the only accepted currency in the country and your local currency should be exchanged when entering the country.

Exchanging Money

The best place to change your money is in your hotel or at a local bank. Many banks, open Monday to Friday, may issue cash advances for Visa and MasterCard, usually for a specified commission. Foreign notes that are old, torn or faded can be difficult to exchange, so make sure you bring new, clean bills in small denominations. 100 US Dollar bills pre 2009 Series are often not accepted. Traveller's cheques can also often be difficult to change.

Credit Cards

Credit cards are accepted in major hotels, but not many other places. Some establishments will accept US currency (USD).

ATMs

ATMs are widely available throughout Vietnam. This is the easiest and safest way of accessing money. ATMs also offer the best exchange rate. Be careful to cover the pin pad when entering your personal identification number. To withdraw larger amounts of money, ATMs for international banks offer higher limits than those of local Vietnamese banks.



Gratuities

While not compulsory, tipping is greatly appreciated throughout Southeast Asia, especially in the service industry, when you are pleased with the services provided. For reference, we have provided a general guideline below:

- Guides (>4 travellers): \$10-\$15 per day per traveller
- Drivers (>4 travellers): \$5-\$7 per day per traveller
- Guides (<5 travellers): \$5-\$10 per day per traveller
- Drivers (<5 travellers): \$3-\$5 per day per traveller
- Restaurants: 10-15% of the total bill
- Hotel Maid Service: \$2 - \$3 per day
- Porters: \$2 - \$3 at time of service
- Local Boat Transport: \$5 - \$10 per boat
- Overnight Cruise: \$5 - \$10 **per night per traveller** (to cover all crew)

Please note all prices are quoted in USD



Insurance

Travellers are highly recommended to purchase trip and travel insurance. This can cover anything from trip cancellation to accidents, emergencies, hospital fees, property loss and medical evacuation.



Health

Please consult your doctor to discuss your particular health or immunisation requirements. For further information, please refer to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov



Medical

The standard of medical facilities within Vietnam varies. International care facilities can be found in the major cities of Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Danang. Facilities in public and rural hospitals are well below international standards and medical evacuations to a major centre may be required even for a relatively small injury. If a problem arises where you are in need of medical attention, the best option is to visit an international clinic. Please contact your hotel or guide for information on clinic services and to find one that is appropriate for Western visitors.



YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE



A Yellow Fever Vaccination certificate is only required for travellers coming from – or in transit through an airport of – a country with risk of yellow fever transmission. The vaccination requirement is imposed by this country for protection against yellow fever since the principal mosquito vector *Aedes aegypti* is present in its territory.

If you are visiting Vietnam and you live in or have travelled through a yellow fever zone, then you need to have a yellow fever certificate to show that you have been vaccinated against the illness.

When you arrive in Vietnam, you will be asked for your yellow fever certificate. You need to show this at the medical counter before queuing for immigration.

Check to see if you have been in any of these places during the last six months. Please consult your doctor to discuss your particular health or immunisation requirements.

If you would like to have a source of further information, please refer to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC) website at www.cdc.gov

AFRICA

Risk of yellow fever transmission exists in these countries:

Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Sudan, Togo, Uganda.

AMERICAS

Risk of yellow fever transmission exists in these countries:

Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.

Validity of Certificate

A yellow fever certificate is valid for ten years after vaccination.

Children

A vaccination certificate is required for children over one year of age.

Common Procedure:

1. Complete yellow fever form
2. Wait in queue for an assigned health counter
3. Submit required documents to immigration officer and proceed to arrival immigration counter



The following should act as a useful checklist of essential items worth taking

- Passport - ensure your passport is valid for at least 60 days after your date of return
- Copies of your passport - it is advisable to leave copies at home as well
- Sun protection: Hat, sunscreen, sunglasses and lip balm
- Antibacterial wipes and/or gel
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Lightweight clothing
- Mosquito spray and insect repellent
- Money Belt - ensure that it is discrete and comfortable to wear
- Personal Medication - it is often good to carry a doctor's note to ensure easy passage of medication across international borders
- Basic First Aid Kit
- Emergency contact numbers: Trails of Indochina, Insurance Company, credit card companies, friends and family.

Clothing

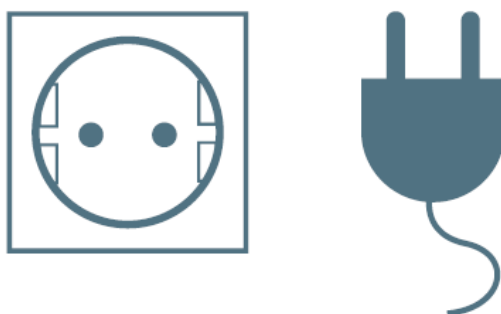
If your trip to Vietnam includes stops at beaches and mountainous areas, you will need clothes for all temperatures.

If you plan to visit northern Vietnam in the winter, you'll need a warm coat. Mountainous areas can get chilly so choose clothes you can layer. If trekking is on your agenda, you will need sturdy footwear with traction—plus lots of socks. Slip-on shoes or sandals are useful for visits to pagodas or people's houses as you'll save time taking your shoes on and off.

Larger cities like Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi offer upscale bars and restaurants so be sure to pack some clothes and shoes for a nice evening out. It's not advisable to bring flashy jewellery.

Plugs and Converters

In Vietnam, the electricity runs at 220 Volts, 50Hz. The standard plug used is a two-pin plug that accepts both flat and round pins.





If you have any questions or encounter any issues, please contact us at our Vietnam office so we can provide an immediate solution.

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