

Vietnam Travel Tips and Information



OVERVIEW

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam is similar to Italy in area, though amazingly enough it is over 1,600 kilometers (1,000 miles) long. Its geography contributes to its immense cultural diversity. The country's varied climate and landscape range from four seasons in the mountainous north, to year-round tropical temperatures in the lush south.

TOURIST VISA

Regulations for visa applications change very frequently in Vietnam. Some nationalities are eligible for visa-free entry, while others must apply for a visa in advance of arrival, and so we recommend discussing the matter of visas with your travel consultant here at ABOUTAsia.

Please do not use any of the online-services you can find on the web; unfortunately they are often unreliable and misleading in terms of the actual services provided.

CLIMATE

Vietnam has a standard tropical climate; from May to September the south monsoon sets in, and the country is dominated by south to south-easterly winds. From October to April, the north monsoon is dominant with northerly to northeasterly winds affecting the country. Temperatures are high all year round for southern and central Vietnam; but northern Vietnam has a definite cooler season from December to March.

HEALTH & VACCINATIONS

For expert advice consult your doctor or local travel clinic. No vaccinations are mandatory, however, some are recommended. Avoid being bitten in the first place with preventative measures such as mosquito repellent containing DEET and long clothes. If you are on medication, bring this with you - it may be hard to find. We recommend to only drink bottled water as tap water is not safe enough for ingestion.

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INSURANCE

We strongly recommend you have adequate health insurance when travelling in Southeast Asia.

ADAPTORS & OUTLETS

Vietnam uses socket 'type C,' but most hotels feature universal, two prong outlets. Voltage 220v AC. While nearly all laptops and phones are universal and work on any voltage, you should consult the owner's manual for appliances such as curling irons and electric shavers.

CURRENCY & MONEY

The official Vietnamese currency is dong, though US dollars are widely accepted in larger stores and supermarkets. The exchange rate fluctuates frequently, but very rough calculations place one million VN dong as equivalent to 50 US dollars. ATM's are available throughout the country and generally dispense a maximum of 2 or 3 million VN dong per transaction. Please note that VN dong are not convertible outside of Vietnam.

TIPPING

Tipping is not customary in Vietnamese culture, so it is not necessarily expected in bars and restaurants. Tips are, however, very gratefully received. With the average Vietnamese wage still very low, tips from tourists can make a real difference, so we do suggest to honor good service. Our guests typically reward our guides with USD 5 - USD 15 per person, per day, while drivers usually receive USD 3 - USD 5 per person, per day.

EATING & DRINKING

Vietnamese food is delicious and varies vastly throughout the North, Central region and South of the country. Vietnamese food is not spicy and usually accompanied with chili sauce, fish sauce and soy sauce. Generally, food in the South tends to be a little hotter with a greater abundance of spices available. We recommend to drink bottled water only as tap water is not safe enough for ingestion.