

# COUNTRY :

# VIETNAM

Capital City : Hanoi  
Most Populous City : Ho Chi Minh City  
Population : 97,793,803(2020 census)  
Language: Vietnamese  
Currency : Dong (VND)  
Bordering Countries : China in the North, Cambodia and Laos on west, shares its maritime borders with Thailand through the Gulf of Thailand, and the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia through the South China Sea



NATIONAL EMBLEM



## TRADITIONS / FESTIVALS

### Tet Nguyen Dan (Lunar New Year) : Jan/Feb

the biggest festival of the year with the whole country downing tools for family get-togethers. Principally a religious celebration, don't expect too much of a wild party, but it's still a fascinating time to visit Vietnam and you'll certainly find locals lighting fireworks, visiting temples with their families, and the interesting sight of many flower stalls set up as giving flowers is customary during Tet. Best celebrated in Hanoi

### Hue Festival: Apr/May/Jun every two years

This is a biannual celebration that takes place in UNESCO-listed Hue City. One can enjoy an array of cultural events, games, and performances held over a week. Founded in 2000, the festival was held to preserve traditional customs that were practised during the Nguyen Dynasty. If you're visiting Hue in April, May or June, expect unique showcases such as the Hue Poetry Festival, Dialogue of Drums and Percussions, and Ao Dai Fashion Shows, sporting activities like kite flying, boat racing, and human chess, as well as street performances, film screenings and art exhibitions.

### Perfume Festival: Mid-Feb/Mar

Perfume Festival draws throngs of local pilgrims from all over Vietnam to Hanoi's iconic Perfume Pagoda, where they to pray for a prosperous year and pay their respects to Buddha. The pilgrimage starts with a dragon dance at Den Trinh Pagoda involves travel by boat along the Yen River to the base of Huong Mountain, passing by limestone caves and rice fields. The journey continues on foot by climbing hundreds of stone steps towards Huong Tich Cave, offering a colourful display of food offerings, statues of deities, lit incenses, and praying locals. Best celebrated in Hanoi

### Mid-Autumn Festival: Mid-Sep

held on the 14th and 15th day of the lunar month, features a wide range of activities such as children carrying paper lanterns, lion dances, and food booths selling mooncakes, sticky rice, fruits, and various sweets. Also known as the harvest festival, households set up an altar during the night of the Mid-Autumn Festival, on which they display offerings in honour of the full moon.

Mid-Autumn Festival is best enjoyed in Hoi An, where you'll get to see plenty of street performances, lantern processions and arts exhibitions throughout UNESCO-listed Ancient Town. Children also get to participate in essays, drawing and colouring contests during Mid-Autumn Festival, while visitors can enjoy breathtaking sights of colourful paper lanterns lining the Thu Bon Riverside and Japanese Covered Bridge.

### Hung King Temple Festival: Early Apr

Held in commemoration of Kinh Duong Vuong, who became Vietnam's first king in 2879BC. While the main worship event takes place at the Hung Temple, which is perched atop Nghia Linh Mountain in Phu Tho Province, 100 lanterns are released into the sky on the eve of the festival. The next morning, a flower ceremony is held at Den Thuong (Upper Temple), where the Hung Kings used to worship deities during their reign. Lastly, a huge procession starts at the foot of the mountain, consisting of pilgrims, xoan classical song performances, and ca tru classical operas at several temples along the way towards the main Hung Temple.

### Lim Festival: Mid-Feb

Here you can enjoy UNESCO-listed quan ho folk singing performances and a wide range of traditional games during your visit. Held on the 12th and 13th day of the first lunar month, several stages are built within the village where you get to see locals performing in traditional costumes.  
Lim village

### Wandering Souls Day: Early Sep

The annual Wandering Souls Day takes place on the 15th day of the 7th lunar month, which locals believe is the day when spirits of their ancestors are able to visit their homes. On the eve of the festival, families flock to Buddhist temples and graves of their departed loved ones to offer prayers, flowers, sticky rice cakes, sugarcane, and fruits. Paper money and clothes are also burned during this time of the year. Celebrated in Hue

### Hoi An Lantern Festival: 14th day of every month

A monthly event that transforms the quaint UNESCO World Heritage Site into a spectacular display of paper lanterns. On the 14th day of each lunar month, every shop, restaurant, bar and businesses in the Ancient Town switches off all electricity and relies on hundreds of candles and lanterns. Meanwhile, entrance to all temples is free of charge, where you can see monks and locals holding candlelit ceremonies.

### Buddha's Birthday: Early May

Buddha's Birthday is celebrated by devotees throughout Vietnam, despite being a communist country. Taking place on the 8th day of the 4th lunar month, many temples are adorned with lavish decorations with locals offering fruit, flower garlands, and various Vietnamese dishes. This event often draws thousands of visitors looking to partake in street parades and prayer sessions. Best place to celebrate is in Hoi An

### Phu Giay Festival: Late Mar to Early Apr

..draws in worshippers of the goddess Lieu Hanh to Phu Giay Pagoda, where they pray for good fortune whilst carrying decorated bamboo relics and wearing traditional costumes. Located 88km east of Hanoi, the temple also hosts various games such as capture-the-flag, human chess, lion dancing, and wrestling, resulting in a vibrant atmosphere throughout the day. Visitors can also enjoy folk dance and classical songs such as trong quan, cheo (satirical musical theatre) and ca tru (chamber music). Celebrated only by villages in the Kim Thai Commune. The best place to celebrate is Phu Giay Temple

## ALTITUDE (HIGHEST POINT):

Fan Si Peak,, 10,312 feet (3,143 metres)

## CLIMATE:

Nov - April Winters with Moisture, avg annual temperature is generally higher in the plains than in the mountains, Temp in Southern plains vary betn 21 - 35 deg. In mountains and plateaus seasonal variation between 3 -37deg. High precipitation leading to high rainfall,

## PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Jan 1: Western New Year's Day

Feb 3: Founding Day of the Communist Party of Vietnam

Apr 30: Liberation Day of South Vietnam and Saigon

May 1: Labour Day

May 19: Ho Chi Minh's birthday

May 28: Holiday in commemoration of the birth, the enlightenment and the death of the Buddha

Sep 2: National Holiday

Sep 3: Day to commemorate the death of Ho Chi Minh in 1969

Nov: Birthday of Confucius; moveable holiday, as it depends on the moon calendar

## LANDMARKS

With over 366 islands in Vietnam, there's an abundance of amazing sights to see: floating villages, uninhabited islands and more..

The coast of Northern Vietnam is an archipelago of 366 islands, the largest of which is Cat Ba of the coast of Halong Bay. The vast majority of the islands are uninhabited but there are a few fishing villages that are home to 13,000 inhabitants. Additionally there are 4000 more that live on floating villages off the coast. These floating villages have become major tourist attractions in last few years.

Halong Bay: the largest limestone island ecosystem in Asia \*

Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park \*

Son Doong caves-Worl's second largest caves

Fan Si Peak

Binh Chau Hot Natural Springs

The Golden Bridge: held up by The Hands of God!

The Annamite Forests

The Mekong river

World Natural Heritage Sites

## NATURAL RESOURCES

Cashew, Black Pepper, Coffee, mineral resources including many that not been developed, coal, phosphates, rare earth elements, bauxite, chromate, copper, gold, iron, manganese, silver, zinc, offshore oil and gas deposits, timber, hydropower

## UNIQUE FLOWERS & ANIMALS

Ranked 16th worldwide in biological diversity & home to approximately 16% of the world's species. 15,986 species of flora have been identified in the country, of which 10% are endemic. Fauna includes: 307 nematodespecies, 200 oligochaeta, 145 acarina, 113 springtails, 7,750 insects, 260 reptiles, and 120 amphibians. 840 birds and 310 mammals are found in Vietnam, of which 100 birds and 78 mammals are endemic.

Home to 1,438 species of freshwater microalgae, constituting 9.6% of all microalgae species, as well as 794 aquatic invertebrates and 2,458 species of sea fish. Six new mammal species, including the saola, giant muntjac and Tonkin snub-nosed monkey have also been discovered, along with one new bird species, the endangered Edwards's pheasant

In recent years, 13 genera, 222 species, and 30 taxa of flora have been newly described in Vietnam. 6 Orchids found only here, several Endemic plants like Golden Vietnamese Cypress among others.

Visit the [link](#) for detailed list of unique flora and fauna found in Vietnam.



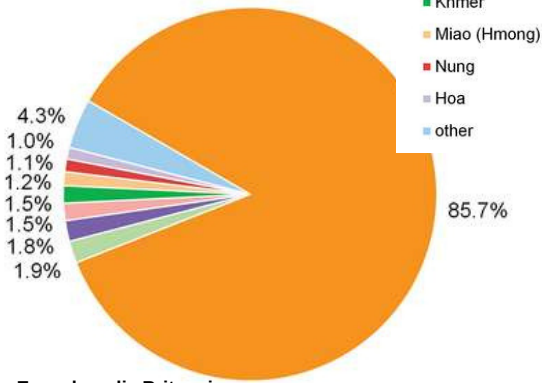
Native species in Vietnam, clockwise from top-right: crested argus, a peafowl, red-shanked douc, Indochinese leopard, saola.



## FOOD

- Goi Cuon – alias Nem Couon in Northern Vietnam(Spring rolls)
- Banh mi (Vietnamese/Saigon sandwich)
- Banh xeo (Sizzling pancakes)
- Bun cha (grilled meatballs)
- Pho/ Mi Quang (noodle soup)
- Cao lau (noodle bowl)
- Com tam (Broken Rice)
- Mi Quang (noodle soup)
- Cha ca (turmeric fish)
- Snake Wine
- Ca phe da (Vietnamese style coffee)

## VIETNAM'S ETHNIC COMPOSITION (2009)



Encyclopedia Britannica

## FUN FACTS

### SEPAK TAKRAW

is a traditional sport played in Vietnam. It's also known as 'kick volleyball' Participants must pass a ball over a net, slightly smaller than a badminton net, using only their feet and heads. It is also played in Thailand, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia.

### IT IS EASY TO MIX THINGS UP IN THE VIETNAMESE LANGUAGE.

The Vietnamese language has six different tones. Changing the tone changes the meaning of the word.

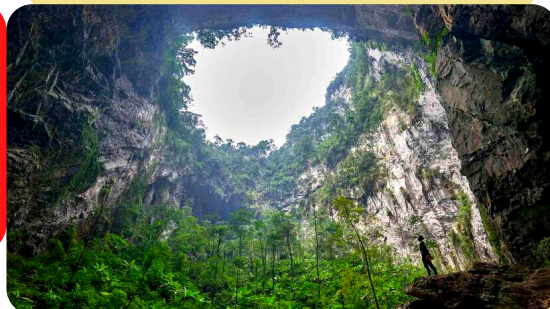
Some gifts such as handkerchiefs, anything black, yellow flowers are considered **BAD LUCK!**

### CROSSING YOUR FINGERS IS SUPER RUDE!

You hoping to pass your grades at school...you cross your fingers for luck! Do not, cross your fingers to a Vietnam. It is seen as an obscene gesture, akin to raising your middle finger.

### STONE DOG AND TEAPOT ARE ISLANDS OF HALONG BAY!

All islands in the bay are named after their shapes.



HALONG BAY WAS THE SETTING OF TWO JAMES BOND MOVIES!

YOU COULD FLY A BOEING 747 in the largest cavern of Son Doong caves! These are world's second largest caves!

**MOTORBIKES ARE EVERYWHERE!** hence it's nickname: "The Kingdom of Motorbikes"! Many a times carrying large loads or accompanied with a dog or two.

### THE BINH CHAU HOT NATURAL SPRINGS

get so hot that they can boil eggs!



## INTERESTING!

Five points of the golden star in the Vietnamese flag represent farmers, workers, intellectuals, youth and soldiers. The red background pays tribute to the bloodshed during the wars.

Vietnam has a literacy level of 97.3%

Vietnamese cuisine is considered amongst the healthiest in the world!

The King of cashew - Vietnam is the world's leading exporter of cashew nuts and black pepper.

World's second largest coffee-producing nation after Brazil, producing 16% of the world's total coffee (Brazil's is 40%).

Snake Wine has an almost legendary status in Vietnam. It is claimed to boost health.

The Hoan Kiem Turtle was one of the most endangered animals in the world, made Hanoi its home and is revered by Hanoians

The name Nguyen is the most common surname in Vietnam ..including Ho Chi Minh himself! pronounced as "Win"

### HALONG BAY,

comprising about 2,000 limestone karst islands, is the largest limestone island ecosystem in Asia and a UNESCO listed attraction.



In ancient Vietnamese, 'Viet' is used to refer to fairies and dragons. Scholars believe this is referencing how the Vietnamese people came into being.

ACCORDING TO LEGEND, THEY ARE DESCENDED FROM DRAGONS AND FAIRIES!



### THE CAU VANG OR "GOLD BRIDGE,"

appears to be suspended at 4,600 ft. above sea level held up by nothing more than two giant hands. Principle designer Vu Viet Anh said he "AIMED TO INVOKE THE SENSATION OF WALKING ALONG A THREAD STRETCHING THROUGH THE HANDS OF GOD."

### THE UNIQUE S-SHAPE OF VIETNAM-

top of the narrow S curve starts in the North with the capital, Hanoi, bordering China, and Laos in the West; trailing down passing Hoi An, Hue (both must-see cities for any traveller to Vietnam!), sharing a border with Cambodia to the West and a long narrow coastline to the East with the South China Sea. The S then curves out at its southern tip to Ho Chi Minh City (also referred to as "Saigon" locally).



### ONG TAO THE VIETNAMESE GOD OF THE KITCHEN

As per legend, he makes an appearance just before the Vietnamese New Year (Tet) festival, which is usually in mid-February. During this time he rushes up to heaven to give his annual report to the Jade Emperor (the King of Heaven) on the activities of the family, which determines the fate of each household in the new year.



### CA PHE DA-

the Vietnamese-style coffee with condensed milk.- literally tastes like chocolate. One unique version is the "ca phe trung" of Hanoi - served in with egg yolk whipped into the condensed milk. It originated in the 1940s when milk was scarce and egg yolks provided a convenient replacement.

### WATER PUPPETRY: A 1,000-YEAR-OLD FOLK ART !

The art of water puppetry first originated in the Red River Delta area of northern Vietnam during the 11th century. When the rice fields became flooded with water, nearby villagers would gather to entertain each other by making intricate wooden puppets dance across the wet surface.

