

Vietnam : Travel Tips

Climate

Vietnam has a tropical monsoon climate that varies significantly from the north to the south. Vietnam shares borders with Cambodia, Laos and China, and features 3,200 km of coastline bordering the Eastern Sea. With an area of 332,000 square km, Vietnam's topography varies from coastal plains to mountain ranges. Vietnam stretches over 1,800 km from north to south; therefore weather patterns in the principle cities are very different. **North:** Winter lasts from November to April, with temperatures averaging 16C but little rainfall. Summer begins in May and lasts until October, with an average temperature of 30C, heavy rainfall and the occasional violent typhoon. **Center:** Central Vietnam experiences a transitional climate, halfway between those of the north and south. **South:** Temperatures are fairly constant through the year; 25C - 30C. Seasons are determined by the rains -the dry season runs from November to April and the wet season from May to October. The hottest period is March and April, before the rains have broken. Typhoons are quite common in coastal areas between July and November. **Highland areas:** In the hill resorts of Dalat (1,500 m), Buon Ma Thuot and Sapa, nights are cool throughout the year, and in the winter months, October to March, it can be distinctly chilly with temperatures falling to 4C. Even in the hottest months of March and April the temperature rarely exceeds 26C.

Currency

The local currency is the Dong (abbreviated "d" or VND). Bank notes are 500d, 1000d, 2,000d, 5,000d, 10,000d, 20,000d, 50,000d, 100,000d and 500.000d. The rate of exchange (at time of printing) is approximately Dong 15.900 to one US. Dollar. Credit cards are generally only accepted in the major cities. Visitors are recommended to carry US Dollar bills in small denominations.

Shopping

Foreign visitors to Vietnam have the opportunity to buy souvenirs made of rattan, gold, silver and stone. There is a diverse range of products, from wooden wares such as wooden buttons or sindora beds to lacquer paintings, bowls and chopsticks, bamboo screens and stone tea-sets. Woven tapestries, "tho cam" handbags and other handicrafts are produced by the traditional skills of the women of ethnic minorities in such rural regions in the north as Sapa, Mai Chau and Dien Bien.

Public Holidays

Jan 01 - International New Year Day *Jan 24-27* - Lunar New Year (Tet) *Apr 30* - Liberation Day
May 01 - Labour Day *Sep 02* - National Day

Airport Tax

USD 25 per outgoing passenger on international flights in Hanoi USD 8 per outgoing passenger on international flights in Danang USD 25 per outgoing passenger on international flights in Ho Chi Minh

Passport & Visas

Visas are required for all nationalities. If visas are to be obtained via Thailand Vacation

Tour, the following personal data must be supplied to us at least 2 (two) weeks before travel to Vietnam: Full name as per passport Passport number, date of issue and expiry Date and place of birth Occupation and nationality

Visas are usually issued by the Vietnamese Embassy in Bangkok or in the passengers' home country (against the visa's approval number), which require the original passport and 2 photos for 2 (two) full working days in order to issue a visa stamp. Visas can also be obtained upon arrival at entry points to Vietnam, in which case the stamping fee will be quoted separately. We also require passport details in advance for visa stamp upon arrival. Thailand Vacation Tour will send a confirmation letter to show to airport staff at the departing airport, confirming that clients will get the visa on arrival. Visas can only be requested via Thailand Vacation Tour in connection with the booking of travel arrangements to Vietnam.

Health Requirements

No actual vaccinations are officially required. Malaria prophylaxis is no longer recommended but visitors are advised to check with their doctor or travel immunization clinic regarding the advisability of inoculation against typhoid, tetanus, hepatitis A & B.