

LIVING IN VIETNAM GUIDE



Welcome

Many aspects of living in Vietnam may be different from what you are accustomed to, so this guide is to help you find the resources you need for a more comfortable life for you and your family.

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Welcome to Vietnam

A country of captivating diversity, land of 'authentic' Asia, fertile plains of the Mekong Delta, spectacular coastline, majestic Northern mountains; classic pagodas, tranquil rice paddies, dense jungles; ancient civilizations and imperial citadels. In Vietnam, you will encounter people rich in culture, tradition, and history with yet a refreshing warmth and friendliness unequalled in SE Asia, a people who have put war behind them and are focusing on a bright future.

Vietnam is changing rapidly. Now is an exciting time to be here. You will see the country change and develop even in the short time that you will be here.

Living in Vietnam is interesting, challenging, exciting and different in so many ways from life in the West. But each of the sights, sounds, smells and temperatures that greet you when you open your door are all evocative of South East Asia, are usually pleasant and are all part of life in Vietnam.

Vietnam is a developing country but not, by any standards, an underdeveloped country. Infrastructure, in terms of roads, telecommunications and electricity, are well developed and reliable. There has been, and will continue to be, an increase in the last few years in the availability of consumer goods and imported food stuffs, with a number of new supermarkets and even shopping malls and cinema showing English-language films. Everything you'll need for living, household use and school items is becoming more and more widely available and there continues to be an increasing number of leisure opportunities, such as fitness clubs and sporting facilities, restaurants and bars, and cultural events.

However, don't expect things will function the same way as in your home country, or even the country you are leaving. Vietnam has its own way of doing things, some of which will be a blessing to you and some of which will cause frustrations. A sense of humour, much patience and a consciousness that you are here as a guest in this country are definitely all required.

Your life in Vietnam will no doubt be a change to you. You will need to find accommodation – which could be an apartment or house – and it will generally be spacious. You may employ domestic staff for cooking, cleaning and caring for your children. You may drive a motorbike (with a helmet) or catch taxis for transportation. Your diet will change as you adjust to the many wonderful tastes of Vietnamese food. You will need to find ways of negotiating in the Vietnamese language or through an interpreter when things go wrong – from the water pump in your house breaking down to difficulties over bargaining in the shops.

Remember that all of your colleagues, and many of the expatriates you will meet in your stay here, have been through the same experience of settling-in to life in Vietnam. They are your best resource in trying not only to cope with the transition to a new job but to make the many day-to-day decisions that must be resolved during the settling in process.

Living in an ancient culture, visiting new and interesting places, meeting and getting to know many different people, all add to the very positive aspects of life here in the capital city of Vietnam. Most Vietnamese people are extremely helpful when you find yourself in a difficult situation where you may need directions or help. Many services are not only inexpensive but easy to access – people will come to your home to collect money for your bills, shine your shoes, teach you a new skill or even give a massage. Many people are pleased to support your efforts in making contact with the local community.

There are ways of becoming connected to the local Vietnamese community, notably by participating in community service activities through the school, charitable groups or arts activities. The expatriate community is also an active one, with many opportunities for socializing, playing sport, becoming involved in community work, or even joining a drama group or a band. You will have your work at RMIT with a wonderful student population, supportive colleagues and exciting plans for the future. Your life here in Vietnam can be varied, colourful and rich.

1. Introduction

Officially the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Vietnamese: Cộng hòa xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam); is the easternmost country on the Indochina Peninsula in Southeast Asia.

It is bordered by China to the north, Laos to the northwest, Cambodia to the southwest, and the East Sea (South China Sea) to the east. With a population of over 90 million, Vietnam is the 14th most populous country in the world.



2. National Flag of Vietnam

The flag of Vietnam consists of a red base with a yellow, five pointed star in the center.

The red base represents blood spilt during the country's fight for independence. The star represents Vietnam's unity and the points on the star represent the union of the workers, peasants, soldiers, intellectuals and young people working together in building socialism.

Vietnamese Flag History:

The Vietnamese flag was adopted on November 30, 1955, after gaining independence from French rule in 1954. The basic design of the Vietnamese flag originates from the 1940s and was used by liberation forces fighting for independence against Japan. When the Vietnamese flag was adopted in 1955, it was only used by the communist-led North Vietnam. The southern half of the nation was called the Republic of South Vietnam. The south collapsed in 1976 and the country was unified under the name the Socialist Republic of Vietnam



3. Time Zone

Vietnam is officially 7 hours in front of Greenwich Mean Time.

4. Language

The Vietnamese language (Kinh) is derived from the Thai, Mon, Khmer and Chinese languages. It is tonal and monosyllabic, which means that every syllable represents an independent word. Every syllable is inflected by a tone, which determines the meaning of the word. There are six tones in the north and five in the south, indicated

by diacritical marks. For example, the word “ba” can have different meanings – three, madame, waste, embrace, bait and any – depending on the tone. Furthermore, there are three different accents for the vowels.

Originally, Vietnamese was written with Chinese characters. In the 17th century, the Jesuit missionary Alexander de Rhodes helped develop the written language based on the Latin alphabet, which is still used today.

Most businesses, shops and even street children have enough English to communicate. However, you do get a better experience of the country if you can speak just a little Vietnamese. Market shopping and riding in taxis are a lot easier if you master a few relevant phrases, which we have included in the next page.

It is relatively difficult for the native English speaker to learn Vietnamese. There are not as many published or free resources to learn Vietnamese as there are for other languages, but there are enough options to get you started.

Seasite-Vietsite

<http://www.seasite.niu.edu/vietnamese/VNLanguage/SupportNS/tableofcontent.htm>

The Seasite main page for Vietnamese language and culture has lots of cultural info - history, music, food etc. There is also a Vietnamese language section which has lots of lessons with audio.

L-Lingo.com

<http://www.l-lingo.com/en/learn-vietnamese/index.html>

This is a great new resource for learning a variety of Asian languages, including Vietnamese. The initial few dozen lessons are available free in your internet browser. The lessons are introduced with some great extras like downloadable transcriptions and grammar, mp3 audio and a flashcard feature. There is a monthly subscription fee which is very affordable, and a downloadable desktop version if you want it. A very interesting course with great value.

BASIC VIETNAMESE

English	Vietnamese	Pronunciation
Hello	Xin chào	Sin ciao
Good-bye	Chào tạm biệt	Ciao dam biet
Thank you	Cảm ơn	Calm uhn
Thank you very much	Cảm ơn nhiều	Cam uhn you
No, thank you	Không, cảm ơn	Khom, cam uhn
No	Không	Khom
Yes	Vâng/ dạ	Vung/ ya
Sorry	Xin Lỗi	Sin loy
One	Một	Mope
Two	Hai	Hi
Three	Ba	Bah
Four	Bốn	Bone
Five	Năm	Nam
Six	Sáu	Sow
Seven	Bảy	Bye
Eight	Tám	Dam
Nine	Chín	Chin
Ten	Mười	Mooy
Eleven	Mười một	Mooy mope
Fifteen	Mười lăm	Mooy lum
Twenty	Hai mươi	Hi mooy
One hundred	Một trăm	Mope cham
One hundred and one	Một trăm một	Mope cham mope
One thousand	Một nghìn	Mot nhin
How much?	Bao nhiêu	Bow new
Toilet	Nhà vệ sinh/WC	Nha Ve sin/WC
Bottled water	Nước đóng chai	Noouhc dom jai
Tea	Trà	Cha
Coffee	Cà phê	Cah fey
Iced coffee with milk	Cà phê sữa đá	Cah fey sooa dah
Iced coffee	Cà phê đá	Cah fey dah
Hot	Nóng	Nom
Cold	Lạnh	Lan
Vegetarian	Ăn chay	An chai
Turn left	Quẹo trái	Wayo jai
Turn right	Quẹo phải	Wayo fai
Go straight	Đi thẳng	Dee tang
Stop	Dừng lại	Yoong lie

5. Vietnam Legal System

In Vietnam, the legal system comprises of constitution, codes, laws, ordinances, decrees, decisions, circulars, directives, and official letters, to some extent. Although all have the force of law, only a law passed by the National Assembly is referred to as such.

6. Culture

As with many countries there are different customs, etiquette and rules which you may not be aware of. It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the local customs in Vietnam to avoid offending a local, work mate or neighbour. Many ceremonies and traditions have been preformed over centuries and should be strictly adhered too.

Dealing with Culture Shock

Culture shock can be defined as a sense of disorientation and the accompanying anxiety and stress that result from being transported from one culture to another.

It is important to remember that it is normal, even in the most seasoned expatriates, and usually follows quite recognizable states. It particularly affects the non-working partner of a relocated executive.

The initial excitement and euphoria at the prospect of living in a new state or country often gives way to confusion and frustration as the settling in process begins. Clues given out by the locals may be unfamiliar and difficult to read. Local customs, language and messages conveyed by body language will need to be learned and interpreted before the appropriate responses can be given.

This can lead to discouragement and despair and a generally negative and critical attitude to the new environment (and even your loved ones) unless steps are taken to move into the next stage. It is important to:

- Become familiar with your immediate surroundings
- Resist making negative comparisons between the old and the new environment
- Become involved in the local community - join a tennis or golf club or a local bridge group
- Get out and about
- Set goals and targets to acquire new skills and interests (for example, collecting antiques, attending local history or photography classes)
- Find a balance between physical activity, rest and relaxation
- Be prepared to ask for advice when necessary
- Retain a sense of humour

Above all, it is vital to communicate with your family, to be open and accepting of each other's thoughts and feelings, and to listen to and support each other. Allow each other time and space to grieve for what has been left behind. Acceptance is reached when the behaviour of the locals no longer seems so strange, when there is pleasure from new opportunities and experience and joy from new friendships - when you finally feel in control.

Being relocated is an opportunity for personal growth, for expanding horizons both physically and emotionally. It is a chance to enjoy a new closeness with family through shared experiences.

7. Customs

In general, the Vietnamese are characterised by their great enthusiasm and hospitality towards foreigners. Still, many customs are different from ours and misunderstandings while frustrating, can be very entertaining and are part of life as an expat.

Body Language

It is important to maintain harmony and a pleasant atmosphere around you. Observing the Confucian reverence for authority, older persons or high-ranking officials are treated with great respect. When arriving or departing, you should always greet the most senior person first.

The Vietnamese often clasp your hand with both of theirs, but do not give anyone a friendly slap on the back unless you know the person very well. You may touch a child's head, as this is held to bring luck. In general, the Vietnamese are refreshingly physical with their friends; it is quite touching to see two old women with bend backs holding hands and giggling along and very uplifting to see middle-aged men in full business attire leaving a restaurant with their arms around each other.

When gesturing for someone to come to you, hold your palm down, cupping your hand slightly and wiggling your fingers. The Western style of holding the palm upright and wiggling one finger is very rude, as this is used for summoning animals.

The radiant Vietnamese smile can mean many things, but the most common meaning is simply that – a smile! It may also indicate fear or embarrassment, sometimes even anger or disagreement. The words for “yes”, “vâng” and “ạ”, may mean agreement, but also mean, “Yes, I have heard you.”

Dress

Men tend to dress formally for business meetings – suit and tie, often a dark suit at high-level meetings. During the hot months (up to 37°C), a shirt and tie is often acceptable. Businesswomen usually wear suits or dresses with skirts and knee level or below. Jeans and short skirts accompany high heels and tight t-shirts on many young city women, but bare midriffs and visible underpants are still not appropriate.

The conical hat is traditional female attire, while male workers wear green tropical helmets. In the city, many women cover their heads, faces and arms to protect them from the sun on the often long motorbike rides to and from work.

The formal wear for Vietnamese women is the ao dai. Mature women wear ao dai in rich colours with elaborate patterns and young women wear brighter ones. The ao dai, while thoroughly appropriate, is constructed so as to emphasise femininity in the

most elegant way. Not many sights are as beautiful as a group of young Vietnamese women in traditional white ao dai.

Names

The Vietnamese name often contains two or three given names. The name is written in the opposite way from the Western manner, with the surname first. There is not a wide variety of surnames and Nguyen and Le are common.

As parents often believe the first given name will affect the life of their child, the name is carefully chosen. Girls are often named after beautiful flowers or trees, such as Liên (lotus) or Hương (perfume), while boys are given names such as Minh (bright) and Đức (virtuous). Traditionally, Thị (for a girl) and Văn (for a boy) are used as middle names.

The given name, with Mr. or Ms., is often used to address a person when communicating in English (e.g. Ms Lien or Mr Minh).

A woman does not normally take her husband's surname when she marries, but the children are given their father's surname.

Gifts

Gift-giving plays an important part in Vietnamese social life. In the past, the giver regarded himself as indebted to the receiver for having made the successful deal possible. Today, this may no longer be the case, but expect to receive flowers and gifts on many occasions, especially when you have signed a contract or are leaving on a long trip. Gifts are always given at Tet and the Mid-Autumn Festival. The polite time to open a present is after the giver has left.

When a baby is born, you give gifts at the one-month anniversary of the birth. The period immediately after the birth is seen as a very delicate time by Vietnamese and new mothers might be uncomfortable receiving gifts then.

You should also keep a good supply of gifts, although the most common wedding gift is money. Simply stuffing money into an envelope may seem slightly non-festive to Westerners, but it is the most treasured gift. The envelope can either be deposited in boxes that are placed outside the reception hall or given directly to the bride and groom as they go around and greet their guests.

When a person dies, you visit their house and put an envelope on the altar.

Ancestral Altars

The ancestral altar occupies the most sacred place in the home and at business locations. You can enter any fancy shop, or visit the most modern and rebellious young artists; there will always be an altar. Traditionally, the eldest son will have the family's ancestral altar in his home. A woman whose husband dies will have an altar for her husband, but will worship her own ancestors at her eldest brother's altar. Therefore, without a son, it would be impossible to continue to worship the family ancestors. However, the situation is more flexible these days, and some women take the altar from their parents' home to the house of their husband.

8. Festivals and public holidays

Lunar Calendar

The months of the Lunar Calendar are based on the movements of the earth and moon in relationship to each other and their movement around the sun.

Each year is dedicated to a particular animal, for example, 2015 is the Year of the Goat. It is useful to have a calendar indicating both Gregorian and Lunar dates. You will not only know when festivals are being held, but know when flowers are more expensive at the market.

RMIT's Academic year is also based on the Lunar Calendar, with Semester One commencing after Tet holidays.

TẾT "Chúc Mung Nam Moi" or Happy New Year (Official Holiday)

The most important holiday in the year is the Lunar New Year known as Tet. Traditionally Tet lasts a month, but nowadays, so that working city life is not interrupted too much, the period is generally about a week.

The event is heralded on the 23rd day of the 12th lunar month (the week before Tet) when the Kitchen God from each household goes to Heaven to present the Jade Emperor a comprehensive report on house members' behaviour. He will return on the New Year.

To encourage a positive report, before being taken off the wall and burned with some paper clothes to wear for the journey, he is offered a farewell meal and a live carp to ride on. After the ceremony, the carp is released into a river or lake.

Women spring clean their houses and prepare traditional foods. Banh Chung, a cake made from sticky rice, mung beans, and pork, is rolled in banana leaves and cooked in a pot. All debts must be paid off so that the New Year can be started with a fresh slate.

On the 30th day of the 12th moon, Tet Eve, the Vietnamese are at home. The ancestor's altar is laden with new food, water and flowers. A feast for the Heavenly King is laid on a table at the front entrance or in the courtyard. The central item is a cock trussed in at particular position. At midnight, the head of household honours the King. Years ago, this was done to the deafening noise of firecrackers, which are generally now banned in the interest of public safety.

There are many superstitions related to Tet, such as, no sweeping can be done on New Year's Day, in case the family's good fortune is swept out with the trash. One should be careful not to break any dishes, for such an accident could cause serious problems between family members during the coming year.

The first visitor over the doorstep in the New Year should have the correct zodiac sign. This ensures good luck for the whole year.

Other people are off in the early **hours** of the first day to visit pagodas to pray for good fortune. The visiting of family and friends continues for several days. Visitors are given little red money envelopes, known as *lucky money*, to encourage their good fortune for the year. Traditionally minded people may consult the calendar to

ensure they begin work again on a fortuitous day and hour.

8 March – International Women’s Day

30 April - Saigon Liberation Day (Official Holiday)

The day which the armed forces of northern Vietnam entered Saigon and reunified the country.

1 May - International Labor Day (Official Holiday)

19 May - Ho Chi Minh's Birthday

May - Buddha's Birthday. 8th day of the fourth lunar month

July - Feast of the Wandering Souls and Hungry Ghosts. 15th day of the 7th lunar month.

Paper money is burned for absolution and generous offerings of food are made to deceased relatives whom it is believed will wander into the homes of their offspring on this day.

8th Lunar Month - Tet Trung Thu - Mid-Autumn Festival

Tet Trung Thu is the Children's Festival in Vietnam, which comes at the time of the harvest moon. Usually Tet Trung Thu falls on the 15th of the 8th month accordingly to the Lunar Calendar, therefore, it is also known as the Mid-Autumn Festival or the Moon Festival. On this day, children are honoured and reminded to show love and respect for one another and to be good citizens. They receive presents and special treats from their parents and relatives.

On the days preceding the Moon Festival, the market streets turn into a lively festival and markets are packed with shoppers. Masks, lanterns, drums and other traditional Moon Festival gifts for children can be found everywhere.

At night, children parade through the streets with lanterns and play cymbals and drums. The lanterns are the shapes of stars, fish, boats and dragons or other animals. Children carry on this tradition by staging parades around lakes and in their neighbourhoods.

Moon Cakes are a central feature of Tet Trung Thu. These cakes are made of sticky rice filled with peanuts, lotus seeds, duck egg yolks, raisins, green beans and more. The cakes are made in the shapes of moons, earth, or animals and can be found in all markets, bakeries and mini marts.

2 September National Day of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Official holiday)

Commemorates the Vietnamese declaration of independence from the French on 2 September 1945 in Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi. Excellent day for photography throughout Vietnam.

20 November - Teacher's Day.

Teachers throughout Vietnam are honoured this day with wishes and/or gifts from their students.

9. Climate and weather

Ho Chi Minh City has a tropical climate with two seasons: wet and dry. The average humidity throughout the year is between 78 per cent and 82 per cent.

Most days have high temperatures ranging between 30 degrees Celsius and 37 degrees Celsius. The hottest days are in April and May, with the coolest December to March.

At night, the lowest temperatures are 22 – 25 degrees Celsius.

In the wet season, May to October, it rains heavily most days for around an hour in the afternoon.

Hanoi has a humid sub-tropical climate with four distinct seasons. The average humidity throughout the year ranges between 74 per cent and 83 per cent.

Summers are hot and humid. The hottest months are May-September, with highs of 30-33 degrees Celsius during the day and lowest temperatures around 25 degrees Celsius at night.

Winters are comparatively cold and dry. The coolest months are December to March, with highs of around 20 degrees Celsius and lows of 13-15 degrees Celsius at night. However some days may drop to below 10 degrees.

The wettest months are May to September and daily afternoon/evening downpours are common.

10. Currency, banking and cost of living

The currency of Vietnam is the Dong, pronounced dom. The exchange rate fluctuates, but a common rate to go by is about 21,000 VND = US\$ 1.

Check xe.com or at the bank to see a more up-to-date exchange rate.

Use the following chart to get an idea of what each bank note looks like, and its rough USD equivalent. Please note:

*There are also bank notes and coins in denominations of: 5,000, 2,000, 1,000, 500 and 200 VND. However, coins have long been absent from use in Vietnam

**Be careful, the 20,000 notes look only slightly different from the 500,000 one but the value is a big gap! The same case applies to 10,000, 50,000 and 200,000 notes. Pay close attention to the colour, size and, of course, the value of the note.

Value in VND	Bank note	Value in USD
10.000 VND	 A 10,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'MƯỜI NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is UO 06990559.	50 Cents
20.000 VND	 A 20,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'HAI MƯƠI NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is NG 06354392.	\$1
50.000 VND	 A 50,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'NĂM MƯƠI NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is AB 00000000.	\$2.50
100.000 VND	 A 100,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'MỘT TRĂM NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is KP 04627817.	\$5
200.000 VND	 A 200,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'HAI TRĂM NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is CN 06522171.	\$10
500.000 VND	 A 500,000 VND banknote featuring a portrait of Ho Chi Minh. The text includes 'CỘNG HÒA XÃ HỘI CHỦ NGHĨA VIỆT NAM' and 'NĂM TRĂM NGHÌN ĐỒNG'. The serial number is AB 00000000.	\$25

There are a number of international banks operating in Vietnam. These include HSBC, ANZ, Citibank, Standard Chartered and Maybank to name a few.

Bank Opening Hours

Banks in Vietnam are usually open from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm from Monday to Friday and 8:30am to 12:30 pm on Saturday. The Automatic Teller Machines (ATM's) are available for after-hours withdrawals. **However, each bank has its own opening hours. It is advisable to check the timing of your personal bank.**

Cost of living

You will find the cost of locally produced food and goods to be quite inexpensive compared with costs in Western developed countries. Buying products of any kind that are imported from Western countries will add significantly to the amount you spend, but the convenience and pleasure of familiar or Western-quality goods may balance the cost. Eating out can be inexpensive, although high-end restaurants are in abundance and the price tag is moderate to high. Imported wine however continues to be of a slightly higher cost. If you are currently living in a major North American, European, Australian or other developed city, you will find the prices very reasonable.

Many items are sold at higher prices to expatriates so negotiation is a fact of life. It's possible to avoid the extra cost by asking your household helper or other local person to shop for you or with you.

Air travel into and out of Vietnam can be expensive but costs are reducing and internal flights are not prohibitive. There are now budget airlines that fly into Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. Ask your colleagues for recommendations. Hotels cost more than in most developing Asian countries (between US\$6 and US\$250, average US\$70).

11. Housing

Hotel Accommodation

Vietnam offers a range of hotel accommodation including 5 star hotels, boutique hotels and budget accommodation. For a comprehensive list see: www.asiahotels.com

Serviced Apartments

Serviced apartment accommodation is a popular alternative for families on the move. A serviced apartment, typically, has its own kitchen and laundry facilities, and comes fully equipped with linen, towels, crockery, cutlery and cooking equipment; so that you may self-cater. There is also a daily or weekly cleaning service where linen and towels are replaced. Rates for serviced apartments depend on the standard of the accommodation and location of the apartments.

Renting a House / Apartment

Vietnam offers a wide range of residential areas and housing styles for all housing budgets. District 1, 2 and 7 are the most common, also, district 3 and 9. Please contact Human Resources department so we can assist you in your house search.

Additional information on renting a property:

- When renting it is normal that landlord will require a two month deposit as well as the one month's rent.
- Rental listings also do not include government rates or management fees. These are usually 10% – 15% extra. The management fees are dependent on the facilities available in the building and the age of the development.
- Utilities are not included in the rental (unless you choose a serviced apartment). Water, electricity and gas are all extra. Deposits are also required for all utilities.
- For electrical appliances in Vietnam the Voltage is 220 V, power sockets includes type A/C/G.
- You should discuss lease terms and conditions BEFORE you sign the Residential Tenancy Agreement.

12. Schools

Of prime concern for relocating families is children's education and welfare. Fortunately, Vietnam has a fine selection of international schools.

A key source of worry to parents is the disruption to their children's education, as well as the loss of friends. The proximity of an appropriate school is therefore an important consideration when selecting an area in which to live.

Ho Chi Minh City

The British International School has primary campuses in District 3 and An Phu (District 2) and its secondary campus in An Phu. The International School Ho Chi Minh City has its main campus in An Phu and a secondary campus in District 3. District 9 is home to Lycee Fracais International Marguerite Duras. Saigon South offers the ABC International School, the Renaissance International School, Saigon South International School and the Japanese, Korean and Taiwanese schools.

Following is a list of suitable schools for expatriate children in Ho Chi Minh City. It is not intended as an exhaustive list.

International School Ho Chi Minh City

28 Vo Truong Toan Street, An Phu Ward, District 2

(www.ishcmc.com)

The Saigon South International School

78 Nguyen Duc Canh, Tan Phong Ward, District 7

(www.ssis.edu.vn)

American International School

102C Nguyen Van Cu Street, Nguyen Cu Trinh Ward, District 1

(www.ais.edu.vn)

British International School

Primary and Fundino An Phu, 225 Nguyen Van Huong Street, District 2

(www.bisvietnam.com)

Canadian International School

Residential Quarter, 13C Phong Phu Commune, Binh Chanh District
(www.cis.edu.vn)

International School Saigon Pearl

92 Nguyen Huu Canh Street, Ward 22, Binh Thanh District
(www.issp.edu.vn)

Kids Club Saigon

79/7 Pham Thai Buong. Phu My Hung, District 7
(www.kidsclubsaigon.com)

Korean International School

S15 Saigon South, Tan Phu Ward, District 7
(kshcm.net)

Saigon Kids Educational Childcare Centre

15 Street 12, Perpendicular to Tran Nao Street, District 2
(www.saigonkidscentre.com)

Saigon Star International School

Residential Area 5, Thanh My Loi Ward, District 2
(www.saigonstarschool.edu.vn)

Singapore International School - KinderWorld International Kindergarten

Number 29 Road No 3, Trung Son Residential Area Hamlet 4, Binh Hung Ward, Binh Chanh District
(www.kinderworld.net/sis/campuses-sis/school-campuses.html)

Smartkids International Child Care Centre

1172 Thao Dien Compound, Thao Dien Ward, District 2
(www.smartkidsinfo.com)

Stamford Grammar School

Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, Ward 6, District 1
(www.stamfordgrammar.com)

The ABC International School

#2 1E Street, Khu Dan Cu, Trung Son, Binh Hung, Binh Chanh
(www.theabcis.com)

The American School of Vietnam

172-180 Nguyen Van Huong Street, Thao Dien Ward, District 2
(www.theamericanschool.edu.vn)

Ha Noi City

The United Nations International Schools is in Tay Ho, while the Hanoi International School and the Lycee Francais are in Ba Dinh.

Following is a list of suitable schools for expatriate children in Hanoi. It is not intended as an exhaustive list

United Nations International School of Hanoi

G9 Ciputra, Lac Long Quan Road, Tay Ho District
(www.unishanoi.org)

Hanoi International School

Living in Vietnam

48 Lieu Giai Street, Ba Dinh
(www.hisvietnam.com)

Kinderworld International Kindergarten (Hanoi)

3rd Floor, Somerset Hoa Binh, 106 Hoang Quoc Viet Street, Cau Giay District
(www.kinderworld.net)

Lycee Francais Alexandre Yersin

12 Nui Truc, Ba Dinh
(www.lfay.com.vn)

QSI International School of Hanoi

17 lane 67 To Ngoc Van Street, Tay Ho District
(hanoi.qsischool.org)

Singapore International School

Dilmah Building, Duy Tan Street, Dich Vong Hau Ward
(<http://www.kinderworld.net/sis/campuses-sis/school-campuses.html>)

13. Transportation

Due to the convenience and inexpensive cost of taxis and motorcycle taxis (Xe Oms), there is little need to own a vehicle. Due to prohibitive cost, very few foreigners purchase cars, though cars with drivers are available for hire for trips or by the month. If you have a valid driving license you can use it to be issued a Vietnamese driving license.

The challenges and hazards of vehicle traffic in Vietnam cannot be over emphasized, yet many foreigners opt for the independence of owning a bicycle or motorcycle for mobility.

Taxi

Taxis are easily available and inexpensive compared to Western countries. They can be contacted by telephone (their numbers are clearly marked on the sides of the taxis or see below for listings) or, more routinely, by hailing them on the street. You will get to know where the taxis are parked in your local area fairly quickly. Most taxis are metered but make sure the meter is turned on before you set off.

The rates vary; again, you will get to know the cheaper taxis quickly. Many taxis don't have seatbelts. Many of the phone operators speak some English or you can learn some useful phrases in Vietnamese. Reliable taxis are:

- **Hanoi:**

- Taxi Group – Call centre: 04 38 53 53 53

- Mai Linh - Call centre: 04 38 222 666

● Ho Chi Minh city:

- Vinasun – Call centre: 08 38 27 27 27

- Mai Linh – Call centre: 08 38 38 38 38

- Vinataxi – Call centre: 08 38 111 111

Xe Om

A Xe Om is a motorbike taxi and they are situated at just about every busy street corner in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh city. You need to negotiate a set price with the driver before you get on the bike. Foreigners always pay more for Xe Oms than locals; that is a fact of life and reflects the greater salaries of expatriates. Xe Om drivers are usually very poor; some will try to rip you off but again you will get to know your local xe om driver and, once a relationship is built up, there is usually no need to worry about negotiating the costs. Some drivers these days will have mobile phones; if you have some Vietnamese or they have a little English, you can ring them.

Motorbike

There are sales outlets for new motorbikes all over the city. There is a range of motorcycles from which to choose.

Most expatriates buy motorcycles from people who are leaving as it is sometimes difficult to organize the paperwork for registration for new bikes. Motorbikes can be hired and this is a good way to find out whether you want to go ahead and purchase one. Rental is about \$50US per month. The quality of motorbike helmets has been questioned in the past; so it may be a good idea to bring your own.

Driving License

You need a Vietnamese licence to drive a car or motorbike in Vietnam. Please check with Human Resources department the details of how to obtain/ convert a licence. However, if you do not have a motorbike license and you plan to ride a motorbike, you cannot convert your motor vehicle licence to a motorbike licence. You will need to take a test here, which is extremely difficult to organize. If at all possible, try to obtain a driving licence in your home country or country of residence.

Bicycles

Bicycles can be purchased here, both locally made and those made in China or Taiwan; costs are inexpensive and there is a large variety to choose from, including mountain bicycles and models for children.

14. Communication

Mobile Phones

The mobile phone network in Vietnam is generally very reliable and inexpensive compared with some Western countries such as Australia; most local people use mobile phones for communication. You have three choices for your network: Mobiphone, Vinaphone or Viettel. If you already have a mobile phone from another country, such as Australia, it will work in Vietnam if it is a Tri-Band or Quad-band phone. You will need a new SIM card, which can be purchased at any mobile phone shop for around 100,000 VND. Some phones, such as those from America and some phones from the UK, will not work in Vietnam. You will need to purchase a new phone. The SIM card is not included in the price of the phone.

Internet/ADSL

3G internet and ADSL connections are also continuing to improve and are relatively inexpensive. Most local people have an email address and you will be allocated a university address on arrival.

Your landlord or housing agent will generally organize your internet service at your home, and you have the choice of cabled internet dial-up, ADSL and wireless ADSL. Once it is installed, the usually very skilled and helpful technicians will set up the correct configurations for receiving mail and accessing the internet on to your computer. You should be present for the configuration process.

Many expatriates use an internet phone service, such as Skype, as landline international calls are expensive, but it is wise to initiate an account (for example, set up an account through www.skype.com) and create a phone out account (for example, Skype Out) which you will top up in your home country before arrival. It is difficult, but not impossible, to pay into your internet phone account from Vietnam.

Landlines

Vietnamese landline phones are more expensive than in many countries, particularly for international calls. At least one phone is generally provided by the landlord. The phone number will be allocated by the phone company or leftover from the previous tenant and the landlord organizes the service.

Cable/Satellite TV

Your landlord will organize your cable/satellite television needs, including installation of decoders and receivers.

15. Safety and security information

Vietnam is seen as a safe and secure country, the main risks arising from the chaotic traffic conditions and high number of accidents. It is safe to walk in the streets at night and generally taxi drivers and other service personnel are trustworthy and helpful. The crime rate is low but, as with every country that is experiencing development, there are increasing concerns about petty thefts and home thefts.

Keep your bags and wallets secure at all times, as you would in any city, and particularly when travelling by motorbike, as thefts of bags from motorbikes have been known to occur. Ensure that your windows and doors are locked at home when you are not there and that the landlord has provided security in terms of double locks and, where appropriate, bars or secure fencing.

The government is stable and, for economic reasons, is favourable to the presence of expatriates. Full diplomatic relations exist between Vietnam and Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom, the United States and most other countries.

Safety and Assistance in case of accidents or theft

- Maintain an up-to-date list of telephone numbers to ring such as, your partner's/friends mobile number, a colleague or manager, a hospital, a taxi service, your home, your hotel or your Consulate.
- Keep the address of the doctor or hospital that you use on you at all times -it is easier to give a written address than to try to say it when you are in shock.
- ALWAYS carry some form of identification, work identification or business cards, a photocopy of your passport or driving licence and something with your address on it (should your bag be stolen it is better to have to change the locks at home rather than risk yourself by not carrying identification which may help you to get proper assistance medical or otherwise).
- Always try to stay calm, as shouting, getting aggressive and crying may lose any "respect" that passers-by have for you.
- If you do not have a phone card or mobile phone, make your way to the nearest hotel or westernized bar or shop, as most receptionists and shop owners speak some English. Do not assume that "someone" will call help for you, most likely you will have to call yourself, or ask someone to call for you. Vietnamese people or accident victims are usually taken or accompanied to their local hospital by a relative or friend who must guarantee that the hospital will be paid for services.

Recommendation:

Photocopy all credit cards/ passport/ visa/ driver's license and other important documents both the front and the back. Store this copy in a safe place. In the event you ever need to contact the involved party for replacement, you have their phone numbers and your information readily available.

16. Health Precautions

Water

It is advisable not to drink tap water. Ice is sometimes made from tap water in the smaller restaurants and using it may defeat your attempts to purify your drinking water. Most people purchase their drinking water in bottles, by the case, or through local companies that provide a water dispenser.

Humidity

Vietnam's humid climate sometimes aggravates upper respiratory problems such as asthma, bronchitis, and sinusitis. Dust in the street, mould in the rainy season, and pollens during much of the year can also cause problems and aggravate allergies. If you are asthmatic, bring a supply of your usual medication.

Malaria

Malaria is not a danger in Hanoi or Ho Chi Minh City. However, medical advice should be sought if you plan to travel to other areas of Vietnam and Southeast Asia.

Dengue Fever

Dengue Fever is present in Vietnam and you should take the same precautions as you would against malaria, as it is spread by mosquitoes. There is no better medication than you protect yourself by using repellent during the evenings and sleeping under a mosquito net.

Traffic

Accidents are a source of some concern in Vietnam and some taxis do not have seat belts, let alone passenger or side air bags. If you are considering riding a motorbike in Vietnam, it is advisable to bring a motorbike helmet that is designed to protect the full face, as there have been some concerns about the quality of helmets available in Vietnam at present. The wearing of helmets in Vietnam is now required by law.

Medicines

Bring a supply of any prescription medications you need. You may be able to replace them here, but it is better to feel comfortable at the start of a new contract. If need be, you can refill prescriptions in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, Bangkok or Hong Kong. You need to know the generic names of the medications you routinely use as they may have a different brand name here in Vietnam.

A basic first-aid kit is available to purchase at the International SOS Clinic or Family Medical Practice, but you may prefer to bring your own stocked with more familiar items.

As previously noted, alternative medicines (besides traditional Chinese/Vietnamese medicines) and some vitamins are not available and will need to be brought with you or purchased on visits to Bangkok, Singapore or Hong Kong.

Glasses and Contact Lenses

Eye check-ups are advisable prior to leaving your home country. If you wear glasses, bring an extra pair or purchase them locally. If you bring prescriptions for glasses with you, they can be made locally and inexpensively. You may consider packing extra pairs and a supply of the lens care products you use. Non-Routine Contact Lens Supplies for at least a year should be brought with you as they may not be available here

Healthcare Centre

Good medical care in Vietnam is available from private clinics staffed by Western doctors. We recommend the Family Medical Practice and International SOS:

Family Medical Practice

<http://www.vietnammedicalpractice.com/>

Available for emergencies and ambulance 24 hours a day, 365 day per year

Hanoi

FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE HANOI

298, Kim Ma Street, Van Phuc Compound, Dinh District, Hanoi

Tel (24hrs): +84 4 3843 0748

Email: hanoi@vietnammedicalpractice.com

Ho Chi Minh City

DIAMOND PLAZA CLINIC

34 Le Duan Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City

Tel (24hrs): +84 8 3822 7848

Email: hcmc@vietnammedicalpractice.com

DISTRICT 2 CLINIC

95 Thao Dien Street, District 2, Ho Chi Minh City

Tel: +84 8 3744 2000

Email: d2.reception@vietnammedicalpractice.com

CARE1 - EXECUTIVE HEALTH CARE CENTER & CLINIC

The Manor 1, 91 Nguyen Huu Canh Street, Binh Thanh District, Ho Chi Minh City

Tel: +84 8 3514 0757

Email: care1_reception@vietnammedicalpractice.com

International SOS

https://www.internationalsos.com/en/asia-pacific_vietnam.htm

Available for emergencies and ambulance 24 hours a day, 356 day per year

Hanoi

Address: 51 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

Office Tel: +84 4 3826 4545

Assistance Centre: +84 4 3934 0666

Ho Chi Minh City

Address: 65 Nguyen Du Street, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City

Office Tel: +84 8 3823 6520

Assistance Centre: +84 8 3829 8520

These clinics have pharmacies, nurses and the ability to conduct some screening, tests and medical services. These clinics currently will direct bill to the insurance company which is used by RMIT for your health care insurance needs. In cases of life-threatening emergencies, you will be evacuated to the nearest appropriate medical facility (usually, Bangkok or Singapore).

There are alternative health care options in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, with a number of reliable acupressure and acupuncture practitioners. In addition, there are many opportunities for meditation, yoga and other health-related practices.

17. Where do I find?

Ho Chi Minh city (HCMC)

When phoning a landline/business from a cell/mobile phone you must dial 08 before the number. This is denoted with (08) in all listings below.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

For HCMC

Police (08) 113
Fire (08) 114

For Phu My Hung area (PMH)

PMH Security (08) 54 113 113
(08) 54 136 232

BANKS

ANZ Bank

Ho Chi Minh city branch:

39 Le Duan, District 1

District 7 transaction office:

47 Nguyen Van Linh Blvd., District 7

Contact Centre (24 hours, 7 days):

1900 1276

(08) 3881 5977

Website: www.anz.com/vietnam

HSBC Bank

Ho Chi Minh city branch:

235 Dong Khoi, Ben Nghe ward, D1

District 7 transaction office:

1401 - 1403 Nguyen Van Linh, My Toan
2, Phu My Hung, Tan Phong, District 7

Contact Centre: (08) 37 247 247

Website: www.hsbc.com.vn/

Vietcombank

Ho Chi Minh city branch:

10 Vo Van Kiet, Nguyen Thai Binh ward,
District 1

District 7 transaction office:

801 Nguyen Van Linh Blvd., District 7

Contact Centre (24 hours, 7 days):

1900 545413

Website: www.vietcombank.com.vn/

BOOK STORES

Fahasa Xuân Thu

391 Tran Hung Dao, District 1
(08) 3920 9329

Fahasa District 7

1st Floor, Lotte Mart, 469 Nguyen Huu
Tho, Tan Hung ward, District 7
(08) 3775 2987

Website: www.fahasa.com/

Phuong Nam bookstore

2nd Floor, Saigon Centre, 65 Le Loi, D.1
(08) 3821 7131

PNC bookstore

S1-1, S2-1, S3-1 Sky Garden 1, Nguyen
Van Linh, Phu My Hung, District 7
(08) 5410 2474

Website: www.phuongnambook.com.vn/

BOWLING

Ten Pin Bowling

4th Floor - Diamond Plaza
34 Le Duan, District 1

V Bowl

3rd Floor - Lotte Mart
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, District 7

MOBILE PHONE/ ELECTRONIC DEVICE RETAILERS

Cholon Electronic Supermarket

Basement – Crescent Mall, District 7
(08) 5414 1415

Website: dienmaycholon.vn/

Nguyen Kim

63 – 67 Tran Hung Dao, District 1
(08) 3821 0818

Website: www.nguyenkim.com

Sim cards and top-up cards can be purchased at many stalls/ shops around the city

COFFEE SHOPS

Coffee shops are widely popular in Vietnam; you do not have to go far to find somewhere to have coffee. In fact, coffee will often come to you on a motorbike laden with coffee, milk, ice, and cups. The list below is popular western-style coffee shops.

Angels-in-Us

Ground floor, Lotte Mart, Dist. 7
Grandview, Dist. 7

Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf

Metropolitan Building - corner of Dong Khoi and Nguyen Du, Dist. 1
Crescent Mall, Dist. 7

Gloria Jean's Coffee

Grandview, Dist. 7
Crescent Mall, Dist. 7

Highlands Coffee

All over HCMC
Garden Plaza, Dist. 7 (Next to Citi Mart)
Broadway, Dist. 7 (Across from Parkson Paragon)
Top floor - Lotte Mart, Dist. 7

DENTISTS

Lan Anh Dentist

149 Ton Dat Tien, District 7
(08) 5412 1314
nhakhoalananh.com

International SOS Dental Clinic

167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, District 3
(08) 3829 8424
www.internationalsos.com

Sakura Dental Clinic

96 Ha Huy Tap, District 7
(08) 5415 6868
www.nhakhoasakura.com.vn

West Coast International Dental Clinic

27 Nguyen Trung Truc, District 1
(08) 3825 6999
www.westcoastinternational.com

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Colombia Saigon 24-hour Clinic

Evacuation facilities
8 Alexandre de Rhodes, District 1
(08) 3823 8888
www.columbiaasia.com/saigon

Family Medical Practice

Evacuation facilities
Diamond Plaza, 34 Le Duan, District 1
(08) 3822 7848
www.vietnammedicalpractice.com

FV Hospital

6 Nguyen Luong Bang, District 7
(08) 5411 3333
www.fvhospital.com

International SOS

Evacuation facilities
167A Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, District 3
24 Hour Hotline: (08) 3829 8520
www.internationalsos.com

DRY CLEANING/ LAUNDRY

Cosmo Laundry and Dry Cleaning

Crescent Residence 2, District 7
090 8207 440
www.cosmolaundry.com

Dang Khoa Laundry and Dry Cleaning

2-1a My Canh, Ha Huy Tap, District 7
(08) 5410 0464

Dry Clean Vina

Sky Garden 1, District 7
(08) 6678 0020, 6678 0021
www.drycleanvina.com

CLIMBING WALLS

Push Rock Climbing

Sky Garden 3 D7
0126 472 2134
[w: www.pushclimbing.com](http://www.pushclimbing.com)

X-Rock Climbing

Phan Dinh Phung Sport Center
75 Nguyen Dinh Chieu D3
[w: www.xrockclimbing.com](http://www.xrockclimbing.com)

FURNITURE

Austin Home

20 Thao Dien, District 2
(Close to An Phu Supermarket)
(08) 3519 0023
yen.austinhom@gmail.com

Bambu Decor

21 Thao Dien, District 2
(08) 3744 6326
0913 903 671
www.bamboovietnam.com

Chi Lai

53 Pham Ngoc Thach, District 3
207 Dien Bien Phu, District 3
(08) 3827 3696
www.chilai.com.vn

DeCosy

112 Xuan Thuy, District 2
(08) 6281 9917

The Furniture Warehouse

3B Tong Duc Thang, District 1
(08) 3519 4640
www.thefurniturewarehouse.com.vn

Index Living Mall

196 Hoang Dieu, District 4
(08) 3826 2666
www.indexlivingmall.vn

Le Van Au

122 Pasteur, District 1
(Directly opposite Saigon Center,
entrance next to Pho 2000)
090 3701 426

Living and Giving

59 Nguyen Huu Canh, Binh Thanh Dist.
(08) 3514 7614
www.livinggiving.vn

Nha Xinh

Crescent Residence 3, District 7
(08) 5413 6657
www.nhaxinh.com

N'N Classical Furniture

668G Thao Dien, District 2
(08) 37 444 334
0903 720 881, 0902 345 106
www.nn-furniture.com.vn

Pham Hoang Kich

3 - 5 Nguyen Thi Binh, District 1
(08) 3821 5807
098 8533 299

Rossano

123 Le Loi, District 1
(08) 3824 8370, 3825 8630
www.rossanoonline.com

UMA

1419 - 1421 Nguyen Van Linh, District 7
(Near HSBC)
(08) 5412 3728, 5412 3729
www.uma.vn

GYM/ FITNESS CENTRE

Crescent Wellness

3rd Floor - Crescent Plaza
105 Ton Dat Tien, District 7
(08) 5415 8888 ext. 4016

Yofi Fitness Center

Sky Garden, District 7
(08) 5410 3008, 5410 3010
Hung Vuong 3, District 7
(08) 5410 3388

HOME WARES

Low-end

Ben Thanh Market

Le Loi, District 1

Dan Sinh Market

104 Yersin, District 1

Tan My Market

2 blocks behind FV Hospital, District 7

Mid-range

Cholon Electronic Supermarket
Basement - Crescent Mall, Dist. 7

Citimart
Garden Plaza Dist. 7
(Next to Highlands Coffee)
(08) 5410 2088
Nam Long 1 Dist. 7
(Same street as Pizza Inn/Mon Hue Restaurant)
(08) 5412 8008
Hung Vuong, District 7
(Near Nathalie's Restaurant)
(08) 5410 1040

Co-Op Mart
Nguyen Van Linh, District 7
(08) 5412 0084

DeCosy
112 Xuan Thuy, District 2
(08) 6281 9917

Index Living Mall
196 Hoang Dieu, District 4
www.indexlivingmall.vn

Life 1
Garden Plaza 1
(Near Highlands Coffee and Citimart)
(08) 5412 2911

Lotte Mart
469 Nguyen Huu Tho, District 7
(08) 3775 2828

Mekong Creations
35 - 37 Ngo Duc Ke, District 1
Sky Garden 1, District 7
www.mekong-quilts.org

Nguyen Kim
63 - 67 Tran Hung Dao, District 1
www.nguyenkim.com

UMA
Nguyen Van Linh, District 7 (near HSBC)
www.uma.vn

High-end

Parkson Paragon Department Store
3 Nguyen Luong Bang, District 7
(Across from Lawrence Ting Building and Convention Centre)

Song Home
63 Pasteur St., District 1
www.song-life.com

Vincom Center
Corner of Dong Khoi and Le Thanh Ton
District 1

MOTORBIKE RENTALS

Chi's Cafe
40/27 Bui Vien, District 1
090 364 3446

Mr. Ly
090 361 2950
motorcycle-rental.webs.com

MOVIE THEATRES/ CINEMAS

Galaxy Cinema
116 Nguyen Du, District 1
(08) 3823 5235
230 Nguyen Trai, District 1
(08) 3920 6688
www.galaxycine.vn

CGV Cinema
Crescent Mall, District 7
(08) 5412 2222
Parkson Paragon, District 7
(08) 5416 0088
59 Pasteur, District 1
(08) 3822 3111
Thao Dien Mall, District 2
(08) 3519 3000
www.cgv.vn

OPTICAL

American Eye Center

Dr. Nam Tran Pham
5th floor Crescent Plaza, District 7
(08) 5413 6758
www.americaneyecentervn.com

Eyewear Plaza

33 Nguyen Du, District 1
(Corner of Nguyen Du and Hai Ba Trung)

New Friendship Optical

(Closed daily from 12 - 1:30)
92 C1 - C2 Le Thanh Ton, District 1
(08) 3823 0883

PHARMACIES

The Vietnamese word for pharmacy is nha thuoc. Many prescription drugs are available over the counter here. Be sure to check the condition of the packaging and use by date. All international clinics/hospitals in HCMC have pharmacies.

There are two pharmacies in Phu My Hung (District 7) that are quite popular: in My An Apartments (building 8) and on Nguyen Van Linh Parkway next to Brodard Bakery/near Co-op Mart.

Hai Ba Trung Street in district 1 has several pharmacies, most notably:

My Chau Pharmacy

389 Hai Ba Trung, District 1

POST OFFICE

Buu Dien Saigon

(Main post office)
Cong Xa Paris, District 1
(Near Notre Dame Cathedral)

If you do not have a box for your parcel, do not worry one will be made for you at a small cost. It is best to have parcels posted to your work address as if you are not home you will need to go to the post office in person to collect your parcel.

RESTAURANTS

Asian

Best House/Choi Go Jip (Korean)

11 - 13 Lam Son Square, District 1
(08) 3824 7194
095 565 5020

Com Nieu Sai Gon (Vietnamese)

59 Ho Xuan Huong, District 3
(08) 3930 2888

Gaya (Korean Noodle Restaurant)

Huong Vuong 2, District 7
(08) 5410 0645
095 252 2077

Indian Lounge

My Toan 3, District 7
(08) 5410 4919
0128 543 8091

Khoai Nha Trang Seafood Restaurant

3A Le Quy Don, District 3
(08) 3930 0013

Loving Hut Hoa Dang Vegetarian Restaurant

38 Huynh Khuong Ninh, District 1
(08) 3820 9702

Monsoon

No. 1 Cao Ba Nha, Nguyen Cu Trinh Ward, District 1
(08) 6290 8899

Pho 24

All over HCMC
Broadway, District 7
Grandview, District 7
My Khanh 3, District 7
Sky Garden, District 7

Temple Club (Vietnamese)

29 - 31 Ton That Thiep, District 1
(08) 3829 9244

The Sushi Bar

Top floor - Thien Son Plaza, District 7
02 Le Thanh Ton, District 1
sushibar-vn.com

Tib Vegetarian Restaurant
11 Duong Tran Nhat Duat, District 1

Tokyo Deli
Nguyen Duc Canh, District 7
(Parkview Apartment)
(08) 5410 1166
Crescent Residence 1, District 7
(08) 5415 5566
www.tokyodeli.com.vn

Nha hang Ngon (Vietnamese)
160 Pasteur, District 1
(08) 3827 7131

Wrap and Roll (Vietnamese)
All over the city
My Khanh 1, District 7
(Next to KFC)

Western

Al Fresco's
My Toan 3
Nguyen Van Linh Parkway, District 7
(Near Sky Garden)
(08) 5410 1093

Au Parc
23 Han Thuyen, District 1
(08) 3829 2772

Boomarang Bistro Saigon
Crescent Residence 2, District 7
(08) 5413 6592
www.boomarang.com.vn

Ciao Bella
11 Dong Du, District 1
(08) 3822 3329

The Elbow Room
52 Pasteur, District 1
(08) 3821 4327
www.elbowroom.com.vn

El Burro Loco
Take away and delivery only
Sky Garden 1, District 7
090 396 7712

FB Deli
My Khanh 2, District 7
t: (08) 5411 9696

The Greenhouse Restaurant
Canh Vien 1, District 7
t: (08) 5417 0511

Gourmet Shop and Restaurant
My Khanh 1, District 7
t: (08) 5412 0558

Hard Rock Cafe
Kumho Asiana Plaza - The Link
39 Le Duan, District 1
t: (08) 6291 7590

Jaspas
33 Dong Khoi, District 1
t: (08) 3822 9926

Le Jardin
31 Thai Van Lung, District 1
t: (08) 3825 8465

KOTO Saigon
151a Hai Ba Trung, District 3
(08) 3934 8151
www.koto.com.au

Phatty's Sports Bar and Grill
46 - 48 Ton That Thiep, District 1
(08) 3821 0705

Red Tomato
Sky Garden, District 7
(08) 5410 2472
www.redtomato.com.vn

The Refinery
74/7C Hai Ba Trung, District 1
(Walk under the archway)
(08) 3823 0509

Sarpino's Pizzeria
Grandview, District 7
(Next to Gloria Jean's Coffee)
(08) 5412 2480
095 412 2480
www.sarpinos.vn

Scott and Binh's
Bizu Hotel, Hung Phuoc 1, District 7
094 890 1465

Skewers
9A Thai Van Lung, District 1
(08) 3829 2216

Zan Z Bar
41 Dong Du, District 1
(08) 3882 7375

Don't feel like going out? Most restaurants will deliver. Alternatively, you can order online from a variety of restaurants at: www.vietnammm.com and www.eat.vn

SALONS/ SPAS

Happy Spa
My Khanh 4, District 7
(Next to Annam Gourmet Market)
(08) 5412 1918
www.happyspavn.com

Jimmy Le Salon
35 Le Thi Rieng, District 1
(08) 3925 3155
090 934 2022

L'Apothiquaire
Crescent Residence 1, District 7
(08) 3932 5181
www.lapothiquaire.com

May Spa
Hung Gia 2, District 7
(08) 5410 1107
090 864 0155

Sim Spa
69 Ha Huy Tap, District 7
(Across the street from Citimart)
(08) 6277 4330
simspa.com.vn

Yen Nails and Spa
Hung Gia 5, District 7
(08) 66 747 147
090 983 4939

SHOPPING CENTRES

Crescent Mall
Wide selection of Western and Asian brands, food court, cinema and coffee shops
Ton Dat Tien, District 7

Diamond Plaza
Department store, food court, bowling, arcade, billiards
Corner of Dong Khoi and Le Duan, Dist.1

Huong Vuong Plaza
Department store, food court, cinema, gym
126 Hung Vuong, District 5

Parkson
Department store, food court, supermarket
Corner of Le Thanh Ton and Dong Khoi
District 1
www.parkson.com.vn

Parkson Paragon
Department store, cinema and food court
Nguyen Luong Bang, District 7

Saigon Center

Many popular Western brands, coffee shops, book store
Corner of Le Loi and Pasteur, Dist.1

Saigon Square

DVDs, CDs, clothes, shoes, bags
77 - 89 Nam Ky Khoi Nghia, District 1

Vincom Center

High end shops, popular western brands, food court, arcade, indoor play center
Corner of Le Thanh Ton and Dong Khoi
District 1

SUPERMARKETS/ GOURMET SHOPS

Annam Gourmet Market

SB2-1 My Khanh 4, District 7
(08) 5412 3263
www.annam-gourmet.com

Citimart

Garden Plaza, District 7
(Next to Highlands Coffee)
(08) 5410 2088
Nam Long 1 St., District 7
(Same street as Pizza Inn/Mon Hue Restaurant)
(08) 5412 8008
Hung Vuong
(Near Nathalie's Restaurant)
(08) 5410 1040

Co-Op Mart

Nguyen Van Linh Parkway, District 7
(08) 5412 0084

Giant Supermarket

Basement - Crescent Mall, District 7

Gourmet Shop and Restaurant

My Khanh 1, District 7
(08) 5412 0558

Lotte Mart

469 Nguyen Huu Tho, District 7
(08) 3775 2828

Oasis Gourmet Shop

Grandview 2 (back side), District 7
(08) 5412 2449

Living in Vietnam

Phuong Ha

(Large selection of imported foods, bakeware, baby items)
58 Ham Nghi, District 1
(08) 3914 1318, 3824 1423

TAILORS

An Duong Market

(To purchase fabric and notions)
18 An Duong Vuong, District 5

Dai Huong

(Closed daily from noon - 2pm)
153a Tran Quang Khai, District 1
(08) 3848 4279
090 820 6966
daihuong164@yahoo.com

Phuc Loi

136 Pasteur, District 1
(08) 3824 3171
0908 508 605
lengoc_lanchi@yahoo.com

Tan Dinh Market

(A great market for fabric, shoes, pillows, sheets etc.)
443 Hai Ba Trung, District 3

Tuyet Lan Orchids

86 Le Loi, District 1
(08) 3825 8976

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For additional information on what to see/do in HCMC and for further business listings look for copies of:

- Asia Life: www.asialifehcmc.com
- The Word: www.wordhcmc.com

Ha Noi city (HN)

When phoning a landline/business from a cell/mobile phone you must dial 04 before the number. This is denoted with (04) in all listings below.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

For HCMC

Police (04) 113
Fire (04) 114
Emergency (04) 115

BANKS

ANZ Bank transaction office

102 D5 Tran Thai Tong, Cau Giay

Contact Centre (24 hours, 7 days):

1900 1276

Website: www.anz.com/vietnam

HSBC Bank

Giang Vo transaction office:

185 Giang Vo, Ba Dinh, Ha Noi

Contact Centre: (08) 37 247 247

Website: www.hsbc.com.vn/

Vietcombank

521 Kim Mã, Ba Đình, Hà Nội

Contact Centre (24 hours, 7 days):

1900 545413

Website: www.vietcombank.com.vn/

BOOK STORES

Foreign Language Bookworld:

32 Hai Ba Trung, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
(04) 3825 4068

64 Trang Tien, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
(04) 3825 7376

CELL/MOBILE PHONES

Nhat Cuong mobile shop:

93 Cau Giay, Hanoi

Tel: 04 3938 5000

Viettel shop:

50 Van Cao, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: 04 62580168

The gioi di dong

146 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: 1800 1060

SIM CARDS

Ms. Duong – Receptionist RMIT Hanoi

Extension: 6004

COFFEE SHOPS

There are a lot of coffee shops next to RMIT building.

DENTIST

Nha khoa Ba Dinh

57 Linh Lang, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: 04 3766 7542

Nha khoa Viet Nhat

12C Lang Ha, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: 04 3994 0094

Nha khoa quốc tế VietPhap

6 Thai Ha, Dong Da, Hanoi

Tel: 1900 6478/04 6275 5177

Hotline: 0932 203 588

MEDICAL FACILITIES

Family Medical Practice Hanoi

298, Kim Ma Street, Van Phuc Compound, Dinh District, Hanoi

Tel (24hrs): +84 4 3843 0748

Email: hanoi@vietnammedicalpractice.com

International SOS Hanoi

51 Xuan Dieu, Tay Ho, Hanoi

Office Tel: +84 4 3826 4545

Assistance Centre: +84 4 3934 0666

DRY CLEANING/ LAUNDRY

427 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh, Hanoi

Tel: 04 3771 2636

FURNITURE

Uma Doi Can

147 Doi Can, Ba Dinh, Hanoi
Tel: 04 3722 7646

Arthome

20 Giang Vo, Dong Da, Hanoi
Tel: 04 2242 6879

Morehome

600 Duong Lang, Dong Da, Hanoi
Tel: 04 6275 6699

GYM/ FITNESS CENTRE

CURVES Kim Ma

102 DMC building, 535 Kim Ma, Ba Dinh
Tel: (04) 37246760/ 3724 6761/ 8585
7910

Email: curves.kimma@curves.com.vn

Website: <http://www.curves.com>

Nshape Fitness

5th floor, 71 Nguyen Chi Thanh, Dong
Da, Hanoi
Tel: 04 6266 0495

R&B Fitness World

3rd floor, 29T1 Hoang Dao Thuy, Trung
Hoa Nhan Chinh, Hanoi
www.rnbfitnessworld.vn

HOME WARES

Full house shop

282C Ho Ba Mau, Le Duan, Hanoi
Website: fullhouseshop.com.vn
Tel: 0904 86 84 48

www.ikeashop.vn

www.megahome.vn

www.lazada.vn

MOTORBIKE RENTALS

Chothuexemay.net

Tel: 04 8 587 1253

HP : 092 829 0000/ 0904 2323 41 / 0922 586 122

Bình An

Địa chỉ : 26/113 Đào Tấn, Ba Đình, Hà Nội
Điện thoại : 0122 6743863

Anh Hữu

Địa chỉ : 10/406/66 Âu Cơ, Tây Hồ, Hà Nội
Điện thoại : 0912 265529

MOVIE THEATRES/ CINEMAS

Lotte Cinema Landmark

Floor 6 Parkson, Keangnam Tower, E6
Phạm Hùng, Cau Giay, Hanoi
(04) 3837 8035
<http://lottecinemavn.com/>

CGV MIPEC Tower,

229 Tay Son, Dong Da, Hanoi
(04) 6252 3333

CGV Vincom City Towers,

Floor 6 Vincom City Towers, 191 Ba Trieu,
Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi
(04) 3974 3333
<https://www.cgiv.vn>

OPTICAL

Viet Tin optical

C4/142 Giảng Võ, Ba Đình, Hanoi

VietnamOptical CO., LTD

138B Giang Vo, Ba Đình, Hanoi

PHARMACIES

Song Hong Pharmacy - MEGA 3

31 Lang Ha, Ba Dinh, HN - (046)
255.22.55 hoặc (046) 288.22.88

VNA Pharmacy

102 Ngoc Khanh, Hanoi – 38354939

POST OFFICE

Giang Vo Post Office

D2, Giang Vo, Ba Dinh, Hanoi
(84-4) 38 313 366

Viettel Post Joint Stock Corporation

No 1 Giang Van Minh, Ba Dinh, Hanoi
84-4.6 2660306

RESTAURANTS

Goeth Institutue's restaurant

56-58 Nguyen Thai Hoc, Ba Dinh, Hanoi
Tel. +84 4 37342251

An Ngon Restaurant

18 Phan Boi Chau, Hoan Kiem, Hanoi
Tel: 04.3942 8162
<http://ngonhanoi.com.vn/index.php/vi/>

SALONS/ SPAS

Omamori Spa

No 102 B1 Alley 5 Huynh Thuc Kháng,
Hanoi (near Hanoi Television Centre)
(04) 3773 9919 or (04) 37741814

La Siesta Spa

32 Lo Su Str., Old Quarter & 94 Ma May
St | Hoan Kiem District, Hanoi
+84 4 3935 1632

SHOPPING CENTRES

Lotte Center Hanoi

54 Lieu Giai, Ba Dinh, Hanoi
TEL : +84-4-3333-6016 FAX : +84-4-3771-
3439
<http://www.lottecenter.com.vn/vn/index.asp>

Vincom Mega Mall - Royal City

72A Nguyen Trai, Thanh Xuan, Hanoi

Vincom Bà Triệu

191 Ba Trieu, Hai Ba Trung, Hanoi
<http://vincomshoppingmall.com/vi-VN/Vincommegaroyalcity/default>

SUPERMARKETS/ GOURMET SHOPS

Fivimart Nguyễn Chí Thanh

71 Nguyen Chi Thanh, Dong Da, Hanoi
Tel: 84.4.37730991 Fax:
84.4.37730990

Siêu thị Kim Mã

535 Kim Mã, Ba Đình, HN

TAILORS

Zeds Threads

51A To Ngoc Van
<http://www.zedsthreads.com/>

Cao Tailor

No 1 Trieu Viet Vuong, Hai Ba Trung
<http://caotailor.vn/en.html>
0913.579.579 – 0439.454.988

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For Hanoi:

- The Hanoian forum:
<http://tnhvietnam.xemzi.com/vi>
- Hanoi massive:
<http://www.talkvietnam.com/tag/hanoi-massive/>

18. What to ship/ not to ship to Vietnam

Clothing

Vietnam is a shopper's paradise for clothes. Fabric markets and tailors abound, there are many shops set up to clothe tourists so even some larger sizes (up to medium) can be bought off the rack, and there is an increasing amount of modern and well-known brand shops for younger styles. However, clothes shopping and establishing relationships with tailors can be confusing at first and choices and sizes are limited in buying off the rack, so it is best to pack enough clothing to cover your first few month's work and play. This is particularly true for men; while some shirts are available it is hard to buy trousers off the rack. Cotton and cotton blends are the most appropriate because the weather will be hot and humid. Layers of clothing (shirts, light jackets) are needed as the weather turns cooler in November (in Hanoi only). Bring your own bathing suits if you are larger than a medium size.

Although cheap rain ponchos are available locally, good quality wet-weather gear is harder to find. Light wet weather gear that can be used in hot and humid conditions is the most appropriate. The months of December to February can be very cool (in Hanoi), so jackets and warmer clothing are needed at these times. Sweaters/jumpers can be harder to find in larger sizes. Remember that the humidity is high so leather goods will go mouldy during the wetter months. Umbrellas of serviceable quality are easily purchased.

Because many silk, linen and high-end fabrics and clothing are available in Vietnam, the style outside of work can often be "dressy" but there are many opportunities to have clothes made in these styles. Full evening wear or black tie functions can easily be catered for by purchasing or making locally and these events do not occur regularly. If you are concerned about cleaning, there are good dry cleaners available all over Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City at a reasonable cost.

Many people bring favourite clothes that they have copied or catalogues/pictures of clothing with varying degrees of success. Ask your colleagues for recommendations of tailors who can achieve the best results.

Underwear

Underwear of Western style, size and quality is not as readily available as in other countries but this is changing considerably with the addition of shops such as Jockey and Triumph. Women's underwear and lingerie in larger sizes is especially harder to find, and larger sizes means anything above the very slim and small Vietnamese figure (above size 80B, 36 or Medium). It is easier for you to bring your own underwear and sleepwear, at least one year's supply.

Shoes

Sometimes it's a challenge to find good shoes in larger Western sizes, for men and women. Though there are several shops that sell shoes made for the export market, it is a hit and miss situation depending on whether they have your size. Athletic shoes are available and inexpensive though they may not come large enough to fit Westerners' feet. Children's feet can also be hard to fit, for example, for width and leather children's shoes are hard to find. Shoes can be made locally. Rubber and plastic sandals are readily available. Good walking boots are not easily available. It is better to bring the shoes that you need and are comfortable. Remember that leather boots may go mouldy in the more humid months.

Children's Clothing

There are many clothing shops for children so pack enough clothes for current sizes and you can get more from children's clothes shops as they grow. You can also have children's clothes made or copied into larger sizes. However, rubber boots and rain gear are not readily available. There are many "Made in Vietnam" stores which carry name brand clothing-GAP, Old Navy, etc., these can be great finds but it is hit or miss.

Children and Baby Products

Johnson baby products and Western-quality disposable diapers are available in supermarkets. Baby Formula is also available, in several familiar brands, and a limited selection of baby food. Bring any baby medications you prefer to use and a children's medical reference book.

Baby equipment, including strollers and carriers, are available, though they are more expensive here and not as good quality as in the West. Baby car seats are not available and seat belts in taxis are not reliable.

Good quality wooden and other educational toys are not readily available here and it is recommended to bring good toys. Bring books, music and DVDs for kids in their own language if it is other than English.

Toiletries and Cosmetics

Many Western brands of shampoos, toothpaste, soap and other toiletries are readily available. If you have special needs (particularly for more natural products) or favourite brands, bring a supply. Cosmetics are not as readily available though brands such as Shiseido, MAC and Clinique have stores here with more expensively-priced products. Bangkok and Hong Kong have larger selections if you are planning a trip there. It is difficult to find face creams, such as cleansers and moisturizers here, that don't contain whiteners, unless you are buying expensive brands such as Clinique, so bring your favourite brands.

Women's sanitary products of Western quality are available, both tampons and pads. They are not expensively priced but the selection of tampons is more limited so you may like to bring a supply. Bring a year's supply of contraceptive, including condoms, contraceptive pill, extra diaphragm, and spermicidal jelly. The quality of local goods is not reliable and it is likely that you will not find your brand here.

Kitchen Items

Bring a few kitchen items you regularly use in case they are not available in the markets, such as wire whisks, cookie cutters, muffin tins, measuring cups, potato mashers, pastry cutters, cake pans, baking sheets, spatulas, pastry brushes, etc. These items are beginning to be found in local shops. However, if you are a gourmet cook and think you want to continue cooking when you get to Vietnam, you will probably want to bring along your favourite tools and spices.

Stainless flatware and measuring devices are difficult to find or of mixed quality. Pots and pans of all types are becoming more readily available, but can be expensive for quality cookware and microwave-safe dishes are still not freely available in all shops. Pyrex glassware is certainly worth shipping. Attractive ceramic dinnerware, good kitchen knives, locally produced crystal, and plastic items for food storage are easily

purchased at reasonable prices. Once again, if you are an avid cook, plan to pack accordingly especially if you are baker—bread pans, muffin tins, cookie sheets.

Food

Vietnam has definitely increased its variety of available foods, but some ethnic foods – such as Middle Eastern ingredients – are not as easy to come by and you may consider bringing them along if they make-up part of your diet. There may be also foods that your child absolutely has to eat.

Health Items

There are not many “health food shops” in Vietnam, though some whole-grain and organic goods are increasingly being seen in supermarkets. Any vitamins (besides basic C and multi-vitamins), alternative medicines, creams/salves or specialty food stuffs will need to be shipped if you need to use them regularly.

Books and Resources

The University library has a good collection of books, and teachers share reading materials, including participating in a monthly book club. There is an English-language bookshop that sells both second-hand and new books and another English-language floating bookstore situated in cafes around town, but the selection is limited compared to what you will find in Bangkok, Singapore and Hong Kong. Western magazines are starting to slowly appear, but the choice is limited. Travel guides are easily available on the streets. Consider bringing a limited supply of leisure reading material in addition to classroom materials and resource books you enjoy using. Professional books, cookbooks (both Vietnamese and Western) and medical reference books are not easily available. Cookbooks are especially useful to give to household staff in order for them to learn to make your favourite or home country foods.

There are still books banned in Vietnam by Vietnamese writers that can be obtained overseas. Do not attempt bring these into the country as there may be serious consequences. Your bookseller should be able to advise on these authors.

DVDs/Videotapes

There are laws protecting Vietnam from importation of subversive items. Videos, DVDs and some books with a religious, erotic or political theme should not be brought into Vietnam. DVDs and CDs are available locally and are very reasonably priced.

Personal Computers and Laptops

We highly recommend that you bring your laptop with you to Vietnam with your hand luggage. They are slightly more expensive to purchase here and the selection may be more limited. Computer equipment, such as flash/memory sticks, computer mouse and headsets are easy to purchase.

You may ship your personal computer equipment. There is no duty on your computer, provided it is taken out of the country with you at termination of employment.

Photographic Equipment

You can bring your photographic equipment here as there are few specialty camera shops. Any photographic equipment or cameras need to be kept in a “dry box” which can easily be purchased for about \$35.

Without this there is a good chance that your lenses will develop internal mould. Memory cards, film and batteries are readily available. Film processing can be hit and miss, but there are several good digital labs. Ask your colleagues for recommendations.

Miscellaneous

Tool Kit: It is advisable to bring a small tool kit, possibly including needle nose pliers, and, if you're bringing a bicycle, other small wrenches for bicycle repair. Tools are available here but they are of questionable quality.

Bikes and Bike Helmets: Bikes are available here to purchase inexpensively compared to other countries and bikes are sometimes stolen so consider this when you are deciding whether or not to bring your own, possibly expensive, bike.

However, bike helmets, especially for children, are not as good quality and should be brought. Quality air pump that is interchangeable is very useful for balls, tires, etc.

Shoe Polish: Other than black or brown.

Musical Equipment: If you are a musician, there are ample opportunities to play with fellow musicians, either in the amateur orchestra, a band or through taking lessons.

Voltage and Appliances

Electricity voltage in Vietnam is 220V and European-style plugs (two-prong) are used. Electricity is generally dependable, apart from occasional power failures. There are sometimes current fluctuations that will shorten the life of your appliances and electronic equipment, and power blackouts increase in the summer months, but the electricity supply has substantially improved in recent years.

You can use an automatic voltage regulator (AVR) to protect your equipment. AVRs and transformers are heavy and it is recommended that you do not ship these to Vietnam. Good AVRs and transformers can be purchased for about US\$50. If you have very expensive equipment for which you want maximum protection, an uninterruptible power supply unit (UPS) is also available locally for about US\$300. Adaptor plugs and power boards are easily available here, though they are not of great quality and often need to be replaced.

Electrical appliances from your home or country of residence will work in Vietnam at 220 or 240 volts without an adaptor or at 110V with a voltage adaptor, which can be purchased here. If you have favourite electrical items, kitchen appliances that are used daily (such as a good sandwich maker/press or low-fat griller, which we have yet to see in the shops) or you are a true audiophile who needs your own equipment, consider bringing these items to Vietnam. Large appliances, such as refrigerator, cooktop and washer are supplied by the landlord. Microwaves can be supplied in some houses but this is not standard. Brand name items can be purchased locally but these can be expensive. Items made in China or Vietnam are less expensive but some find them to be less reliable. See the next page for a summary list of What to Ship and What Not to Ship.

What to Bring

- Underwear and lingerie
- Cotton or cotton-blend clothing for work
- Bathing Suits
- Wet-weather gear
- Jackets and sweaters/jumpers for the cold weather
- Favourite clothes and pictures/catalogues of clothes to have copied
- Shoes, boots and good walking boots if you are planning on trekking
- Rubber boots and rain gear for children
- Baby medications, favourite baby foods
- Children's Medical Reference Book
- Baby Equipment such as strollers and car seats
- Good quality toys; books/dvds/cds in your child's own language
- Favourite toiletries and cosmetics
- Contraception
- Sanitary protection for first two months, favourite brand tampons
- Favourite cooking/kitchen wear items
- Ethnic Food
- Alternative health items
- Books, classroom materials, reference books, cook books
- Laptop and personal computers
- Tool Kit
- Bike Helmets, especially for children, and full-face motorbike helmets; helmets are required for motorbikes. Cheap helmets can be purchased in Vietnam but come with little protection.
- Shoe Polish other than black or brown
- Favourite electrical appliances
- Non-routine contact-lens and cleaning products
- Extra pair of glasses
- Prescription medicines
- Basic First Aid Kit

What not to bring

- Art work on paper
- A large amount of photographs and other personal memorabilia that may be damaged by the humidity
- Antiques with mechanisms and intricate woodwork that may be difficult to import
- Foodstuff in large quantities
- Larger items made from leather
- DVDs, books and CDs that may contain offensive or politically sensitive information