



# Vietnam Country Information



## Travelling and staying in Vietnam\*

Vietnam has two major cities: Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC). Hanoi is known as the capital of Vietnam as well as the second largest city with over eight million residents. Hanoi is the commercial, cultural, and educational centre of Northern Vietnam. In the south of Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) is the largest city with a population of 8.9 million. The city is described as a vibrant and charming city which converges all the conveniences of a modern metropolis.

There is no direct flight from the Netherlands to Vietnam. Normally, the flight time from Amsterdam (Schiphol Airport) to Hanoi (Noi Bai International Airport) and Ho Chi Minh city (Tan Son Nhat International airport) takes approximately 13 hours 30 minutes with connections in either Singapore or China.

Upon arrival in Hanoi and HCMC, it is advised to buy a SIM card at the airport.

In Hanoi and HCMC, top favourite vehicles which are used by locals, include motorbikes, cars and buses. However, for a short-term stay, international visitors are recommended to use the GRAB app. Traffic jams during working hours are common in big cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh city. The GRAB-app offers different types of travel services such as GrabTaxi, GrabCar or GrabBike. These options beat the traffic fast and will pick you up from your location. Link to download app: [www.grab.com/vn/en/download/](http://www.grab.com/vn/en/download/).

Besides Grab, there are some local taxi brands you can reach:

- In Ho Chi Minh City: VinaSun, phone: (028) 38 27 27 27
- In Hanoi: Mai Linh, phone: (024) 38 27 33 33

## Where to stay

There are many options in Vietnam for places to stay. Below are some popular websites for booking a room:

- [Agoda](#)
- [Traveloka](#)
- [Hotels in Ho Chi Minh City](#)
- [Hotels in Ha Noi](#)

## Vietnamese culture, people and doing business

In general, Vietnamese people are a mix of cultures, languages and historical backgrounds. They are friendly and hospitable to each other and foreigners. In daily life and labour, Vietnamese people are hard-working, creative and resilient.

Below are some tips for doing business in Vietnam:

1. People should be addressed by their title and first name when you meet them for the first time. Greet people in order of age, with the oldest being the first;
2. Shaking hands is a popular business practice. To show respect, two hands are used when shaking hands. Hugging or kissing on the cheeks are only used to greet close friends or relatives.
3. Vietnamese tend to be indirect as they do not want to offend the person they are talking to. Hence, their tones and body languages are two indicators that express their feelings and thoughts. Vietnamese have a tendency not to use very colorful expressions. For example, they may say "like" instead of "love". Furthermore, using very artful words can come across as being too exaggerating and speaking in a raised voice or shouting is generally seen as improper, or discourteous behavior.

\* Based on the information obtained by NESO-Vietnam



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4. Instead of pointing at someone with your index finger which is considered rude, use your open hand.
5. Saying "yes" sometimes indicates that Vietnamese confirm that they understand you, not necessarily a confirmation. It is advised to follow up a 'yes' to ensure that there is an agreement. On the contrary, Vietnamese people may avoid giving a flat 'no' or negative response.
6. To avoid the loss of face, Vietnamese people may seek to resolve issues in the workplace indirectly.
7. Be patient when building relationships:
  - a. It is required to build a relationship and connection before reaching the final deal.
  - b. Everyone is consulted before reaching a decision, which can lead to lengthy negotiations.
  - c. Silence is an important and purposeful tool used in the communication style of most Asian countries. Pausing before giving a response indicates that someone has applied appropriate thought and consideration to the question. It reflects politeness and respect.
  - d. When tension breaks out, Vietnamese usually turn to sitting in silence. This is their way of allowing the conversation to simmer back to harmony or of giving the situation a proper thought.

Other practices when doing business in Vietnam can be found in the following links:

- [Amcham](#)
- [Vietnam Briefing's Introductory 2020](#)
- [Deloitte's Report on doing business in Vietnam 2019](#)

\* This paragraph is based on Mosakowski and Early's research (2004) and Livermore et.al (2010), Nuffic Neso Vietnam adopted the cultural intelligence scale on a basis of:

- Cultural Intelligence - Cognitive (learning about cultural diversity)
- Cultural Intelligence - Motivational (sense of acceptance)
- Cultural Intelligence - Strategy
- Cultural Intelligence - Action

Overall, the results of the survey aim for a better understanding of how Vietnamese PhD's adapt to a foreign culture and how they formulate their own behaviour and strategy to blend into international or Dutch culture.

## Higher education in Vietnam

Since 2016, Vietnamese higher education institutions have been classified as 'Pure Research Oriented University' or 'Applied research-oriented university'. A 'Pure Research Oriented University' is defined as an institution that is closely associated with scientific research activities and has the ability to conduct scientific activities independently. The following standards must be fulfilled in 3 consecutive years:

- At least 15% of the institution revenues must come from activities such as science & technology innovation, and technology transfer & transformation
- At least 100 scientific exploratory research papers must be published by professors and postgraduate candidates in local & international well known academic journals
- At least 20% of the enrollment must be postgraduate candidates and at least 20 PhD candidates must graduate yearly

If the institution is not certified as a 'Pure Research Oriented University', it will be classified as an 'Applied research-oriented university'. Overall, the titles 'Research' and 'Applied' do not directly affect the education program of undergraduate level of study. All Public, Private, International higher education institutions can apply for the qualification process if the institution wants to be certified as 'Pure Research Oriented University'.

## Cultural intelligence

This paragraph is based on a survey set up amongst Vietnamese PhD Alumni\* on how they formulate their own behaviour and strategy to blend into international or Dutch culture.



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From the survey's results, it appears that Vietnamese PhD candidates prefer working in a team. However, they tend to be more reserved than their Dutch colleagues. The most common role for them in a team is the role that "helps the team to become more solid, using their versatility to identify the work required and to complete it on behalf of the team" (Belbin, 2012) rather than the role of team leader.

Nevertheless, all of the survey participants expressed that they gained "flexibility" after working in a multicultural team, which indicates that they are more likely to adapt to foreign culture and different ideologies in the team.

Links, references and additional readings:

- Cultural Etiquette in Vietnam: Ediplomat.com. n.d. *Vietnam - Cultural Etiquette - E Diplomat*. [online] Available at: <[http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/ce\\_vn.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/ce_vn.htm)> [Accessed 1 July 2020].
- Culture of Vietnam: Cultural Atlas. n.d. *Vietnamese Culture - Greetings*. [online] Available at: <<https://culturalatlas.sbs.com.au/vietnamese-culture/vietnamese-culture-greetings>> [Accessed 1 July 2020].
- Vietnam national Education for All 2015 review: Ministry of Education and Training, *Viet Nam National Education For All 2015 Review*. Hanoi: Vietnam Ministry of Education and Training, pp.7-62.

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