

Uncovering Vietnam's Charm

French influences fused with Asian hospitality make Vietnam a great destination



Aruna Gracias Rathod

Vietnam is the new Thailand – very easily accessible, affordable and artistic! The best way to start seeing this beautiful country is from the capital Hanoi.

HANOI

The city is charming and moving around is easy and affordable with the local cabs. Download the local apps for easy mobility. French Architecture is very visible in Vietnam, as it was ruled by the French for almost eight decades. You can begin your trip in Hanoi with the Hanoi Opera House – a yellow and white building that forms a fantastic backdrop for photos.

From there you can walk to the Old Quarter which has some of the most fascinating small shops – handicrafts, silverware, lacquer ware, leather shops and much more. One of the most important spots of the city is the Ba Dinh Square, which houses the mausoleum of the founder of Vietnam – Ho Chi Minh. Situated next door is the Presidential Palace and Uncle Ho's house on stilts in the park-like complex.

The first university in Vietnam is set amidst a beautiful garden and called the Temple of Literature, dedicated to Confucius, built in the 11th century. Next you can walk to the train street which is quite famous. Known as the Hanoi Train Street, it has a train track that runs very close to living quarters.

The street is lined with colourful signs, lanterns, and coffee shops.

DAY TRIPS:

Three to four hours away from Hanoi is Ha Long Bay. It is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, famous for its stunning limestone mountains that rise up from emerald waters, formed thousands of years ago. After leaving the capital, the highways are fantastic and smooth all the way to the lively town of Ha Long. You can book a day tour in boat around the limestone mountains, or book a two-night cruise that allows you to experience some of the activities in the bay and admire the formations from near, in the waters.

Ceramics is also very popular in Vietnam, as it is very close to China. Located on the outskirts of Hanoi by the banks of the Red River, Bat Trang is a traditional handicraft village specializing in ceramics. You can either visit a local potter and see the amazing creations on display or check out some of the day workshops - from preparing the clay to shaping the products, painting them and firing them in the kiln.

Water Puppet shows are famous in Hanoi and mostly held in the evenings.

HO CHI MINH CITY

A short flight of an hour-and-a-half takes you into the bustling city of Ho Chi Minh, also called Saigon in the olden days.

You can start with the Notre-Dame cathedral, but sadly it's undergoing renovation

work, so is entirely covered and open only for service for mass on Sunday. It is closed for tourists and visitors. The Neo-Romanesque Cathedral was built in the late 1800s and is one of the city's major landmarks.

Situated opposite is the Saigon Post Office, a classic French colonial structure, is still a functioning post office today and features huge ceilings, a giant portrait of Uncle Ho, and many beautiful details.

The Bitexco Building is a landmark in the city – the highest building with 68 floors. It has a skydeck that juts out and can be spotted from any part of the city on a clear day. The Bitexco Building rises 262 meters into the sky.

There are many river cruises in the evenings to see the skyline of the city. Choose the one that suits you – from an hour to three hours – including dinner,

VINH NGHIEM PAGODA

Vinh Nghiem Pagoda has a unique architecture and spacious, airy space. The corners of the pagoda's roof are curved in the Northern style. In the middle of the pagoda's roof there is a Dharma wheel and the corners of the pagoda are carved in the shape of a phoenix head. The pagoda also has a community relic tower to store the ashes of the deceased deposited at the pagoda.

drinks and music.

You can shop here for souvenirs, miniatures and many handicrafts in the tiny shops situated inside the front part of the building. It's a great place for photos too.

TEMPLES & PAGODAS

Visiting a temple or pagoda is a common practise in Vietnam and Asian countries.

One of the most beautiful pagodas is the Ba Thien Hau – a Chinese pagoda with the oldest history. It has intricate carvings and preserves embossed paintings of four sacred animals - Dragon, Lan, Quy, Phung and more than 400 other rare antiques. The eaves, roof and walls are decorated with reliefs made of fired ceramic, exuding the majesty and grandeur of the temple.

Vietnam National Temple

Vietnam Quoc Tu has the highest 13-storey tower in the country. Inside the pagoda there are seven towers, a place to offer incense and worship. Currently, Vietnam National Temple has been chosen as the new headquarters of the Vietnam Buddhist Association, attracting many tourists from all over.

DAY TRIPS FROM HO CHI MINH CITY

THE MEKONG DELTA

Situated closer south from Ben Tre, you



FOOD AND DRINK

Try out the cafes in Hanoi, which offer some of the most amazing coffee. Choose from egg coffee, to black coffee to the best one which is the condensed milk Vietnam coffee. Very strong and sweet, it has a taste that grows on you.

The Iced milk coffee is a must - Vietnam's iconic coffee. This classic drink is made by letting ground coffee slowly drip through a filter into a glass filled with sweetened condensed milk and ice.

EGG COFFEE – An innovation during wartime scarcity. It is a rich, golden cream atop a robust coffee base, knitting bitter notes with the smooth richness of eggs, delicately sweetened with honey.

can visit the rich Mekong Delta. A boat takes visitors through the local waterways and there are various stops - a coconut processing unit, a brick making shop where the locals still use centuries-old traditional methods to make the bricks by hand.

You can visit a rice noodles factory to see how 'hu tieu' is made, one of most popular breakfast dishes in the region. Some trips include a visit to a local home making rice paper to chat and taste the crispy rice paper his family makes. If you are keen on fishing, try your

BANH MI – meal on the go or sit and relish. Banh Mi is a Vietnamese sandwich that's made up of crusty bread rolls smeared with pate, mayo, meat, pickled vegetables, green onion, coriander/cilantro, a mighty wack of fresh chillies and drizzle of seasoning.

VIETNAMESE ROLLS – Healthy and light, Vietnamese spring rolls are made with shrimp, vegetables, herbs, and rice noodles wrapped in rice paper, served with dip or peanut sauce.

PHO – Pho is the most popular breakfast or meal in Vietnam. It is a broth/soup with noodles, herbs and meat of your choice. The seasoning is given separately to suit your spice quotient – red chillis, sauces lime wedges, hoisin sauce, and sriracha – a red pepper sauce.



hand at catching fish in the pond and picking vegetables before joining the cooking demonstration.

SHOPPING IN THE LOCAL MARKET

Ben Thanh Market – right from fabrics to t-shirts and bags, this market is good for shopping. Bargaining is a must here if you are looking for a good deal.

Bin Thuy Market – a more traditional market, you can visit this one for bulk buying. Bargaining is not entertained here. Ceramic items, spices, bags, shoes, fabrics – you name it they have it.

State Art Exhibition in the Students Category

The 49th State Art Exhibition of Kala Academy in the Students Category will be held between March 13 to 17 at the Art Gallery, Kala Academy, Panjim. Entry forms along with the rules and regulations are available at the Kala Academy's office & also on Kala Academy's website kalaacademygoa.co.in.

Venue: Art Gallery, Kala Academy, Panjim

Date: The entries along with the exhibits will be accepted on March 10 and 11

Time: 10 am to 1 pm and 2 pm to 4 pm

Literati book Club meet

The Literati Book Club will meet over potluck on Monday to discuss 'Orbital' by Samantha Harvey. To participate please send an e-mail to books@literati-go.com.

Venue: Literati Book Club, Calangute

Date: March 10

Time: 7.30 pm

HOW TO SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY IN BRITAIN IN 2025

There are celebrations galore in Britain in 2025 – and you're invited! Join us to mark the 250th anniversary of Jane Austen's birth, crown Bradford as the UK City of Culture and welcome top talent for the Women's Rugby World Cup.

EMBRACE THE ARTS

Take a bow, Bradford: our new UK City of Culture for 2025, with a 1,000-strong events programme. And welcome back to the city's National Science and Media Museum, which reopens after a once-in-a-generation transformation. You won't need any Persuasion to make a literary pilgrimage to the south of England, as we mark 250 years since the birth of Jane Austen. The great author's life and literature will be remembered in the places she so loved, like Bath and Hampshire

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME

Did you know that it's been 200 years since the modern railway was born – and it happened right here in Britain? Railway 200 marks this milestone with nationwide celebrations: a highlight is County Durham's



Locomotion museum opening its New Hall, where it'll display an extra 47 locomotives from its top-notch collection. The National Railway Museum in York will also reopen its Station Hall after a three-year transformation.

GET STARRY-EYED

Telescopes at the ready: the North York Moors and Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival is celebrating its 10th anniversary in spring with

stargazing talks, night-time fell running and astro-photography. There's more dark skies fun to be had at Welsh Dark Skies Week and the Cumbrian Dark Skies Festival.

It's 20 years since the New Forest became a National Park, so why not experience this rural idyll on a farm stay? And 60 years after the Pennine Way was born, this long-distance trail along England's rocky spine still makes a great getaway for adventure-seekers.

HAVE A BALL

In August, all eyes turn to our rugby pitches as the Women's Rugby World Cup arrives in England. Our proud host cities are Brighton & Hove, Bristol, Exeter, London, Manchester, Northampton, Sunderland and York. Experience the excitement of a football game when the Premier League season kicks off in August. Don't despair if you're not visiting on a match day – there are a range of stadium tours and experiences to enjoy too. And if you binge-watched Welcome to Wrexham, you'll want to make a pilgrimage to The Racecourse to see Phil Parkinson's men in action.

PUT YOUR FEET UP

Recharge your batteries in Britain this year with some sparkling new accommodation options. Hotel Gotham is opening in Bristol

and Newcastle. The PiG on the Farm arrives near Stratford-upon-Avon and The Gullivant pitches up at East Sussex's Littlestone Beach. In Scotland, the 300-room Ruby Hotel gives guests easy access to popular Princes Street, Edinburgh, while in north Wales, the Ty Gwynn Hotel offers luxury accommodation in sea-breezy Abersoch.

BEYOND THE BIG SCREEN

You've seen it on screen – now come and experience the best of Britain for yourself! Britain's landscapes provide the backdrop for some of our best-loved films and TV shows. New releases in 2025 starring Great Britain include Bridget Jones: Mad About The Boy, Mission: Impossible – Dead Reckoning Part II, the Peaky Blinders movie and The Salt Path. Embark on a guided tour of Bridgerton's Bath or Peaky Blinders' Liverpool, or lose yourself in the worlds of Harry Potter or Paddington. You can even follow in the pawprints of Gromit, of Wallace and Gromit fame, in Bristol, where Aardman's Gromit Unleashed sculpture trail will take over the streets.



Herald Gaming Console

Dilbert



Garfield



Wizard of id



crossword 4785

ACROSS

1- Mil. truant; 5- Geometry calculation; 9- Snake eyes; 12- ___ avis; 13- Toned down; 15- Grumble; 16- Is in the red; 17- Five: Prefix; 18- Sea-going eagle; 19- Capital of the Bahamas; 21- Lively; 23- Makes a choice; 25- Pub pints; 26- PC program; 29- Per; 31- Egg yolk; 35- Whopper; 36- Mail unit; 38- Physicist Nikola; 39- Hgt.; 41- ___ Gay; 43- Shaker contents; 44- Fasten again; 46- Ruhr city; 48- Bind; 49- Black Sea port; 51- Beget; 52- Sun. delivery; 53- Archipelago part; 55- Ages and ages; 57- Water bottles; 61- At the rear of; 65- Margarine; 66- Pong maker; 68- Draft classification; 69- The Beatles 'Back in the ___'; 70- Former French currency; 71- Employed; 72- Cooking container; 73- Periods of history; 74- Rug rats;

DOWN

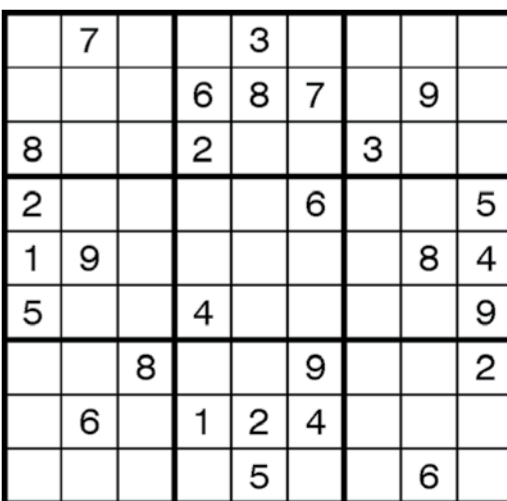
1- Elvis's middle name; 2- Toddler's glassful; 3- Mined materials; 4- Dogie catcher; 5- Cut off; 6- Wish undone; 7- Sicilian peak; 8- Big name in insurance; 9- Civil wrong; 10- Decrease gradually; 11- Like a line, briefly; 14- Every 24 hours; 15- Rubella; 20- Simians; 22- Encounter; 24- Teatime treat; 26- Olds model; 27- Stacked; 28- Golfer Calvin;



solution 4784



sudoku 4785



Instructions for Sudoku

9 x 9 letter: To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every number from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes

solution 4784

