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Welcome to Thailand!



Overview & Country Facts:

Thailand is a unified kingdom in Southeast Asia that has become the region's leading tourist destination and an important center of commercial and industrial development. Officially governed by a constitutional monarch under a framework of parliamentary democracy, in practice, the Thai government has struggled to maintain an effective democratic system.

On 21 August 2014, following a military coup approximately three months earlier, Gen. Payuth Chanocha became the prime minister of Thailand after he received an almost unanimous vote by the military-appointed legislature. On 1 April 2015, junta leaders lifted martial law, but replaced it with rules that make permanent many of martial law's security provisions. Prayuth was the head of the armed forces at the time of the coup, and his new position allows him to oversee political and economic reforms aimed at permanently isolating Yingluck and Thaksin Shinawatra, who were leaders of the Pheu Thai Party (PTP) and had won the last two openly competitive nationwide elections in Thailand. On 7 August 2016, voters in Thailand approved a constitution that many see as limiting the role of democracy in the country.

The 2019 general election was held on 24 March 2019, being the first election since the 2014 coup d'état. Though results were delayed and contested, the leader of the pro-military junta General Prayuth Chan-ocha was eventually reappointed as prime minister on 5 June 2019.

Aside from the tense political conditions, crime and terrorism also represent security concerns in Thailand. Petty theft is the most common type of crime likely to affect travelers. Low-level bombings occur on occasion in Bangkok, and with greater frequency in Thailand's southernmost provinces where militant Islamist groups are active. Thailand is also involved in an ongoing border dispute with neighboring Cambodia that has led to minor military clashes in eastern Sisaket province. Despite Thailand's uneasy political structure and the threats posed by crime and bombings, the country remains an important global travel destination and short-term travelers are normally unaffected by these issues.

Current Analysis:

- A military coup on 22 May 2014 ended months of political conflict in Thailand.
- Deep political and social rifts remain and pose risks for the country's long-term stability.
- Succession concerns also contribute to political uncertainty in Thailand.

Political & Economic Developments:

Country Facts:	
Official Country Name	Kingdom of Thailand
Type of Government	Constitutional Monarchy
Leadership	Prime Minister Prayuth Chanocha
Capital	Bangkok
Official Language	Thai
Population	68.9 million
Ethnic Divisions	Thai 75%, Chinese 14%, Other 11%
Religion	Buddhist (93.6%), Islam (4.9%), Christian (1.2%), other (0.2%)
Growth	3.9%
Inflation	0.11%
Unemployment	0.9%
Currency	Baht
Office Work Week	Monday – Friday
Time Zone Offset	UTC +7
Country Phone Code	66
Capital City Phone Code	2
Nationwide Emergency Number(s)	1699 (tourist police), 191 (police), 123 (medical)
Electricity	220 volts, 50 cycles AC
Plug Styles	Flat Blade Attachment Plug, Round Pin Attachment Plug

Political Issues

On 21 August 2014, Gen. Prayuth Chanocha was elected as prime minister of Thailand by a military-appointed legislature. Just three months before, the Royal Thai Army, under the direction of Prayuth, staged a coup d'état that led to the suspension of the constitution and the arrests of dozens of political leaders. The overthrow of the government followed a nearly year-long political conflict that exposed a basic division in Thai society between the rural and lower-economic classes, represented by the Pheu Thai Party (PTP), and traditional urban elites, who largely support the Democrat Party. The acrimony that exists between these two factions has been the primary driver of political conflict in Thailand for more than a decade.

On 7 August 2016, Thais voted in favor of a new junta-backed constitution. Most observers agree that the constitution reduces the influence of democratically elected institutions while bolstering the power of appointed bodies, such as the National Anti-Corruption Commission (NACC) and the Elections Commission. Because of these features, otherwise oppositional political actors, including the leader of the Democrat Party, Abhisit Vejjajva, and former Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, united in disapproving of the charter. However, those efforts proved unsuccessful, and approximately 60 percent of poll participants voted in favor of the constitution. To many the result was surprising; however, turnout was low only approximately 50 percent and the junta strictly prohibited campaigning against the charter. Additionally, the junta likely benefited from a belief among antijunta sympathizers that a defeated charter would only extend the junta's total control of the country. It is possible that this caused many opponents of the junta to vote to either abstain from voting or vote in favor of the constitution.

The 2019 general election was held on 24 March 2019, being the first election since the 2014 coup d'état. Though results were delayed and contested, the leader of the pro-military junta General Prayuth Chan-ocha was eventually reappointed as prime minister on 5 June 2019. Gatherings of more than five people are still banned, and the military has the discretion to prosecute any person or group suspected of having taken any action that could "destroy peace and order, and national security." Critics from human rights groups and the United Nations contend that such rules are roughly equal to martial law, and in some cases, are even more severe.

Succession Concerns

King Bhumibol, the longest reigning monarch in the world, having held his position for more than 70 years, passed away on 13 October 2016. Although he did not have a significant direct political role in Thailand, the public revered him and many people considered the late king the divine inspiration of the country's cultural identity.

His son, Vajiralongkorn, assumed the throne on 1 December 2016 as Rama X. Before his ascension; however, opinion polls showed that the general population did not support Vajiralongkorn and instead favored the king's daughter, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Prime Minister Prayuth Chanocha the leader of the May 2014 coup appears to support the new monarch. The controversy over the succession has the potential to fracture Thai society and result in instability, even among historically cohesive political coalitions. In view of this tension and uncertainty, visitors and expatriates should avoid all conversation related to the role of the monarchy and Thai politics while in the country. As a precaution, they should avoid all public gatherings, even if they do not have a detectable political tone. During the mourning period, which is scheduled to last until mid-October 2017, individuals who are in Thailand should wear black, white or muted colors, in deference to local sentiment.

Economic Issues

Historically, Thailand's economy has proven adept at withstanding the pressure and uncertainty brought on by several abrupt changes in government and military coups in the last 50 years. Across all countries, military coups typically correspond with at least one year of economic retrenchment, but in Thailand the military has found ways to avoid those pitfalls. This resiliency was tested in 2015. For all of 2015, growth was below 1 percent, this follows a year in which the Thai economy expanded by only 0.7 percent. Tourism sharply declined, as did imports and exports. Consumer confidence fell to historically low levels.

In order to increase short-term growth and signal to the foreign investment community that the country is focused on reviving the economy, the military government spent its first months in office enacting a torrent of new investments. It approved 4 billion U.S. dollars' worth of investment projects that were placed on a backlog due to months of political gridlock followed by a caretaker administration with limited economic powers; an additional 17 billion U.S. dollars' worth of projects are under consideration. The junta also signaled that it is examining a proposed 72 billion U.S. dollar transportation revitalization package that was initially brought up during the administration of ousted Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra. At the time, opposition lawmakers openly ridiculed the policy, deeming the proposal fiscally irresponsible.

Security Issues:

- There is a low threat of terrorism from international groups. There have been a number of low-yield explosions and incidents involving militant groups in January 2019, and through 2018.
- The domestic terrorism threat is high and most acute in the far south of the country. The government maintains a sizable counterterrorism force to investigate and prevent attacks.
- Crime, border instability, drug trafficking and corruption are longstanding security concerns for Thailand.
- Militant rebel attacks, including bombings and other domestic terrorist incidents, occur often in several southern Thai provinces located on or in proximity to the country's shared border with Malaysia.

Crime:

Petty crime is the primary security concern for visitors. It occurs in and around hotels, train stations and other crowded areas, including aboard trains and buses. Scams and other fraudulent activity are prevalent in the country. Credit card fraud is a serious concern in Thailand, and criminal methods of procuring card numbers are sophisticated. Westerners should take precautions to safeguard their credit cards and passports, as thieves are known to specifically target these items for theft. Some criminals often proclaim themselves as "dealers" or "government representatives" in scams that attempt to entice tourists on the street and in hotels to purchase a variety of services and goods, most notably gems.

Criminals will sometimes drug their victims via food or drink before duping, robbing or assaulting them. Motorcycle robberies, in the form of bag snatchings, are common. The most common pattern for this crime is a situation in which two persons on a single motorcycle ride alongside a victim to steal their bag or purse. Some of the more serious assaults have maimed and even killed victims. Travelers are advised to not walk near street curbs, where they are easier targets. They should also tuck purses or bags under the arm facing away from the street, rather than wear them on the shoulder or across the body to avoid being targeted for theft. Sexual harassment and assault are concerns for foreign women, but not necessarily more so than in Western destinations. Organized criminal activity occurs but is not a direct threat to foreigners.

Border Instability:

Overall, security conditions along Thailand's border areas are unstable, particularly along the country's shared borders with Myanmar and Cambodia. Illegal activities, including drugs, people and weapons smuggling, road banditry, unauthorized border crossings, etc., occur often in border areas. Fighting between Thai security forces and criminal or rebel elements occurs occasionally along the Thai-Myanmar border, where battles between Myanmar government forces and Karen rebels will occasionally spill into Thailand. Large and well-organized drug armies operate in the Wa and Shan states of Myanmar, and they are responsible for a large portion of the drug trafficking that occurs along that portion of the border. More than 100,000 mostly ethnic Karen refugees are currently living in camps inside Thailand. Refugees from the fighting leave their camps in the region in search of food and supplies and many end up stealing for them. In general, visitors should avoid the provinces of Mae Hong Son and Tak due to such concerns. Smuggling operations between Thailand and Cambodia also remain a concern for travelers. Gangs of Thai and Cambodian criminals often steal cars and motorcycles in one country and then smuggle them across the border other to be sold. In addition, timber and artifacts such as stone carvings from temples are stolen in Cambodia and smuggled into Thailand.

Drug Trafficking:

Drug trafficking and production are huge industries in Thailand. The country is a major transshipment point for heroin and amphetamines destined for the United States and Europe. Thai authorities seize large volumes of drugs every year, as drug smugglers are believed to be increasingly using Thailand as a route to the world's heroin market. Billions of dollars from drug deals are laundered through the Thai financial system every year, with many politicians, police officers and military officials suspected of being involved. Pervasive corruption among police and government officials, including those specifically directed to deal with the country's drug problems, hinders the government's ability to effectively battle drug traffickers and smugglers. Travelers should not transport packages for people they do not know, especially aboard any aircraft. As many visiting foreigners have learned, lack of knowledge of the contents of a suitcase or package is not a legal defense to a drug trafficking charge in Thailand, which can result in the death penalty.

Corruption:

Corruption is a major problem in the government of Thailand as corruption scandals have ended the careers of numerous politicians and toppled governments. High levels of corruption coupled with Thailand's recovering economic condition have prompted incidents of retaliation against auditors and journalists who seek to expose such criminal activity. Such incidents have affected Westerners, although not as often as Thai citizens.

Country Tips:

- Travelers should observe basic security precautions, including locking all entry points to their rooms, securing their valuables, remaining constantly aware of their surroundings, varying travel times and routes, not flaunting money or valuables, not accepting solicitations from strangers, not walking alone in remote areas or at night and not accepting rides in unofficial taxis or taxis that already have other passengers.
- Travelers should use credit cards with discretion, preferably only in hotels, restaurants and upscale shops. If travelers need to withdraw money from an ATM, it is best to only do so at ATMs located inside reputable Thai banks.
- Foreigners should not wear any clothing or markings that may identify their nationalities.

- Thai people are very sensitive and protective of both their religion (mainly Buddhism) and the country's monarchy. Insulting either in conversation is taboo. Travelers should refrain from discussing politics and from making any comments concerning the monarchy.
- In general, the tap water in Thailand is not considered safe for consumption. Most travelers use only bottled water and hotels often provide it for their guests.

Customs & Immigration:

The Entry Requirements section reflects the most correct and up-to-date information to the best knowledge of UnitedHealthcare Global. Setting requirements for entry into the country is the sole prerogative of each country's government, and requirements may change, sometimes with little or no prior notice. Travelers should always contact the diplomatic representation of the country prior to departure to verify entry requirements.

Passports and Visas:

Passports are usually required upon entry into Thailand and must be valid for six months after arrival.

Restrictions: The government may refuse entry to anyone who maintains a rough appearance and who is dressed offensively. The Thai government does not recognize the Palestinian Authority as an official entity, and therefore does not accept travel documents from it. Nationals of Afghanistan are not permitted to enter the country unless they have obtained special clearance.

Visas for tourists may be required upon arrival, especially if remaining longer than 15 or 30 days; visas are usually required of business travelers. In certain cases, Thai officials require travelers to possess an onward or return ticket at the time of arrival. Any violators are subject to being fined.

Health:

A yellow fever vaccination is required if arriving within 10 days from, or having transited in, an affected area. Any violators will be immediately vaccinated and quarantined or deported.

Entry/Departure Taxes:

To airport tax is levied on passengers upon embarkation at the airport. However, Bangkok airport's levy a tax on transit passengers who decide to leave the transit area if the tax has not been include in the ticket. The tax is 700 Thai Baht and is payable only in Thai Baht.

Imports and Exports:

Travelers holding a passport of their own may import up to 200 cigarettes or 250 grams of tobacco or cigars, 1 liter of alcohol, and either one camera and up to five rolls of film or one video camera and three video tapes. Certain monetary limitations apply to the import of commercial items. The import and/or export of endangered species is illegal. Visitors should confirm that their items may be imported into the country prior to arrival in Thailand. Visitors may export any quantity or tobacco or related items. Certain restrictions and/or prohibitions exist for antiques and other cultural items.

Visitors may import and/or export up to THB50,000 per person, or THB100,000 per family, and an unlimited amount of foreign currencies.

Currency:

The currency in Thailand is the baht (BHT). Notes come in denominations of 1,000, 500, 100, 50 and 20, while coins come in 10, 5 and 1. Travelers can easily exchange foreign currency at banks or currency-exchange houses as well as via ATMs, which are more convenient provided that one's card will work with the bank machine's various networks. ATM fraud, however, is a concern in Thailand. Many establishments accept credit cards; almost all four-star hotels and above accept them. ATMs are widely available, although travelers should confirm through their banks if they will be able to access their accounts in Thailand.

Communications:

Thailand has an adequate telecommunications system, especially in Bangkok, where service is at its best. When paying with coins, red payphones are for local calls only while blue ones are for long-distance calls within the country. Prepaid phone cards, however, may be used at any payphone. Government telephone centers are usually located near post offices, and only the ones in Bangkok and Chiang Mai are open 24 hours a day.

Thailand Country Code: 66

Bangkok City Code: 2

Calling Thai landline from abroad: Country exit code + 66 + city code + phone number

Calling Thai mobile phone from abroad: Country exit code + 66 + 8 or 9 + phone number

Calling Thai landline from within country: 0 + city code + phone number

Calling Thai mobile phone within country: 0 + 8 or 9 + phone number

Making international calls from Thailand: 001 (00760 if calling Malaysia, Cambodia, Laos or Myanmar) + country code + city code + phone number

Cultural Information:

Language:

Thai is the official language. Educated people, especially in Bangkok, often speak at least some English or another Western language. Also, many workers in the tourist industry speak basic English. Most taxi drivers, however, usually do not speak English, let alone languages other than Thai. In general, for day-to-day activities, travelers who do not speak Thai may have difficulty having discussions with local citizens.

Cultural Tips:

- While Thai culture is marketed overseas as a tourist friendly anything-goes destination where normally outlandish behavior is tolerated and even celebrated, most Thais are traditional and conservative family-oriented people. There is also a great cultural divide between the progressive and boisterous Bangkok urban area on one hand, and the more conservative and conventional society that prevails in the rural regions of northern Thailand.
- Thai people are very sensitive and protective of both religious issues (mainly Buddhism) and the Thai monarchy. Insulting either in conversation is considered a major taboo. A handful of foreigners are typically arrested each year for violating Thailand's strict *lese majeste* laws, which classify insulting the monarchy as a serious criminal offense punishable by up to 10 years in jail. Travelers should refrain from discussing politics and making any comments concerning the monarchy.

- Travelers should not wear shorts or sleeveless shirts at temples or religious sites. Visitors must also typically remove their shoes when entering places of worship.
- A majority of the population in Thailand practices Buddhism, although religion is not a strict cultural norm in much of the Bangkok urban area. Many locals still observe some of the defining standard Buddhist cultural protocols, and travelers should be respectful around important Buddhist temples and shrines in the country. Travelers should also avoid touching locals on the head or hair, as the head is the most sacred part of the body in Buddhism.
- While most of Thailand's population is Buddhist, the culture of the three far southern Muslim-majority provinces of Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat is defined by Islam. Travelers to southern Thailand should not wear any clothing that openly displays their religious affiliation due to growing Islamist extremist views on other religions.
- Visitors should never accept handouts, such as candy or food, from street vendors as such "gifts" could be drugged.
- Visitors should avoid wearing any clothing referencing the Thai monarchy, as such items are technically illegal and may draw unwanted attention.
- Tipping is not mandatory; however, small gratuities can be given for excellent service.

Tips for Female Travelers:

Female travelers are often seen by criminals as particularly vulnerable targets. In highly conservative cultures, foreign women may be perceived as promiscuous, inviting unwelcome or violent advances. Female travelers, in turn, are likely to encounter cultural mores that may initially seem startling or offensive. UnitedHealthcare Global encourages female travelers to thoroughly research the areas to which they travel to determine what precautionary measures to take and what to do should they become victims of crime while traveling.

Health & Hospitals:

Medical care in Thailand varies in quality by region, but adequate care can generally be found in private hospitals in larger cities such as Bangkok. The quality of care at public hospitals in Thailand is below international standards and not recommended for travelers. Public hospitals are often overcrowded and understaffed and should only be used in dire emergencies for stabilization. It is easy to transfer most emergencies by ambulance or air to medical centers in Bangkok or Chiang Mai. Private health care is available throughout the entire country, but may be limited in more rural areas. Hospitals in Thailand are designated by signs bearing a large green cross. It is generally recommended that travelers seek care in private facilities in Bangkok.

[Introduction to Bangkok:](#)



City Facts:

City Overview:

Status:	Capital
Population:	7,221,000

Bangkok has been Thailand's dominant city since the eighteenth century. Established as the capital in 1767 after the fall of the ancient city of Ayutthaya, Bangkok is located on one of southeastern Asia's most important rivers, the Chao Phraya. In the 1980s and 1990s, Bangkok underwent rapid modernization, growing to approximately ten million people, making this the only major city in a country of villages and small towns. Bangkok's ancient palaces and Buddhist temples contrast with high rises and traffic jams. Dense air pollution blankets the city. In fact, police directing traffic are required to wear masks. Still, despite modern problems, Bangkok is a major tourist destination, drawing millions of visitors each year.

Transportation:

The Skytrain (BTS) and underground (MRT) rail systems connect the main shopping, entertainment and business areas of the city, while river taxis and express boats can be used to explore many historic sites and attractions at the riverside. Taxis are cheap and appear on virtually every corner at almost any time. Tuk-tuks, once a big Bangkok attraction, are slowly disappearing in favor of more comfortable transport.

Skytrain (BTS) Lines:

Silom Line runs west to south, between the National Stadium in the Siam shopping area and Bang Wa in Thonburi (across the Chao Phraya River).

Sukhumvit Line runs north to east from Mo Chit to Bearing.

The two lines meet at Siam Station and connect at two points with the underground (MRT) – at Sala Daeng Station (Silom Line) and Asok Station (Sukhumvit Line). A new train arrives every 3 - 6 minutes or so between 06:30 and midnight. The last train leaves between 23:30 and 23:50. Fares start at 15 baht for one stop

Note that trains can get full during peak hours (07:00 - 09:00 and 16:00 - 19:00), as the BTS has also become the choice mode of transport for people living and working in Bangkok.

The Underground (MRT):

Fast and efficient, the Mass Rapid Transit network (MRT) serves 18 stations and stretches for 20 km in a horseshoe shape from Hua Lamphong in the South (near Chinatown) to Bang Sue in the north. Trains arrive every 5-7 minutes, and connect to the BTS Skytrain at Sukhumvit and Silom stations.

Busses, Taxis, and Tuk-tuks:

Buses in Bangkok are cheap and convenient, with many routes and frequent stops. For a fare of less than 20 baht (less than 50 cents), riders can take an air-conditioned bus to popular destinations. For less than 20 cents, riders can take the more frequent, non-air-conditioned buses to just about anywhere in the city, though these buses tend to be crowded and very hot. Buses operate from 5:00 am until 11:00 pm. and though the routes are confusing, maps are available from most street-side book vendors.

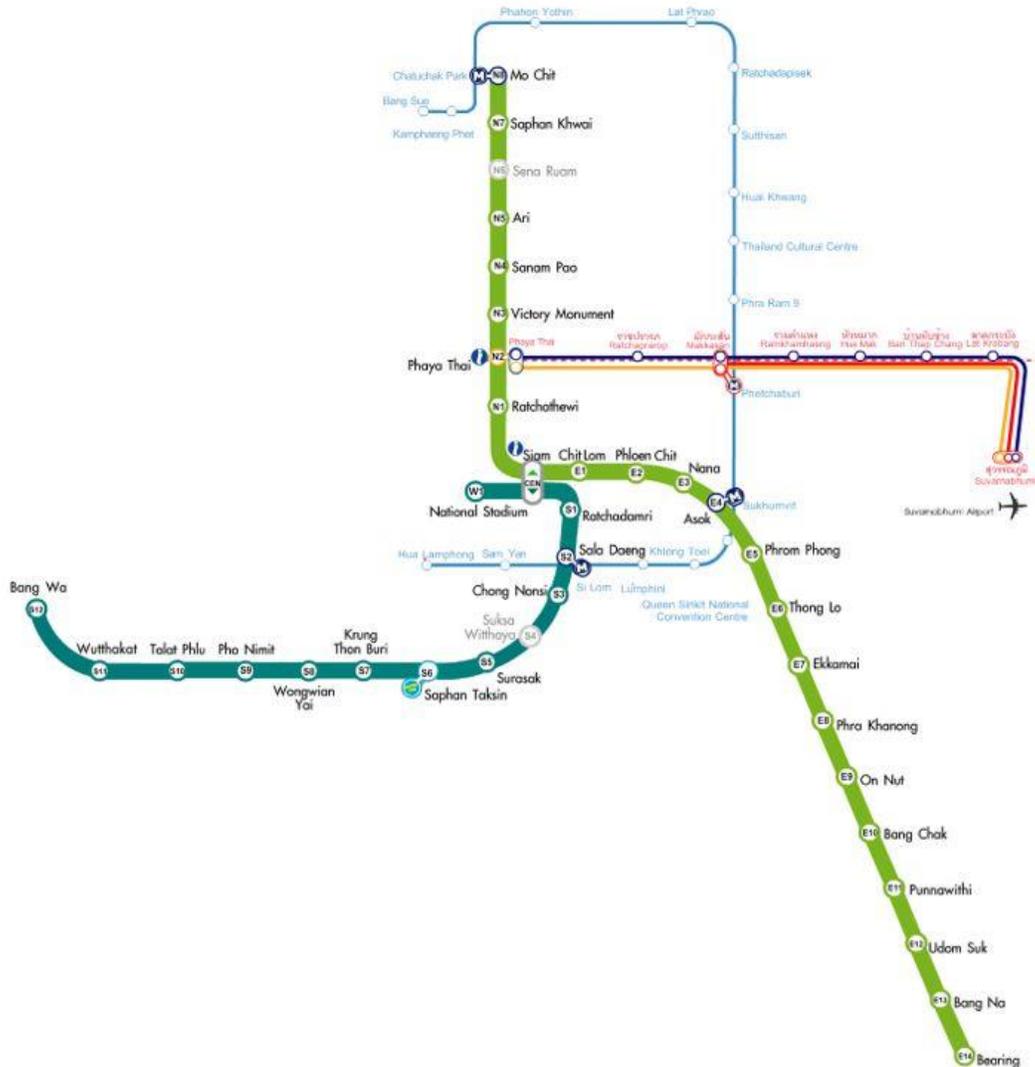
In 1993 meters were installed in all city taxis, although most drivers refuse to use them. Drivers almost always charge much higher fares than the meters would tally, but taxis are relatively cheap by Western standards.

A tuk-tuk is a colorful three-wheeled vehicle. Passengers ride in an open-air compartment that offers little protection in an accident. Tuk-tuks are the cheapest—and most dangerous—way to travel within the city. Tuk-tuk drivers weave in and out of dense traffic. Despite the hazards, a ride in a tuk-tuk may be the most convenient way to travel for a short trip or during rush hour.

Boats:

Water travel was once the main means of transportation in this city of rivers and canals. River taxis and ferries are still one of Bangkok's most popular means of travel. Commuter boats run several routes along and across the Chao Phraya. The main jetty stops are located at the Oriental Hotel, the Royal Orchid Sheraton, the River City Shopping Center, and the Grand Palace.

BTS Map:



Food & Beverage:

As soon as you arrive and start exploring the city, you'll discover that there's an abundance of delicious things to eat everywhere you look. Bangkok is a city where restaurants of all levels, serving both Thai and an extensive range of international cuisine, are flourishing. Bowls of piping hot noodles, stir fried dishes over rice, Thai curry and rice, grilled meats, and green papaya salad, are just a few examples of foods you'll encounter.

Common Thai Dishes:

Tom yum goong – Tom yum goong, Thai shrimp soup, is one of the most essential dishes in Thai cuisine. The soup has countless varieties, but lemongrass, kaffir lime leaves, galangal, chilies, and in this case shrimp, are most common.

Pla pao – A whole fish is stuffed with lemongrass and kaffir lime leaves, rolled in a salt crust, grilled over charcoal, and served with chili garlic sauce.

Pad ka prao – One of the most popular and widely available Thai street food dishes is pad ka prao, a choice of meat stir fried with lots of garlic, chilies, and basil.

Kuay teow reua – Boat noodles as they are commonly known, are a pork based Thai soup noodle, and a favorite in Bangkok.

Boo pad pongari – Pongari is a type of Thai yellow curry thickened with eggs. It's often made with crab, but it can be ordered with squid or even chicken.

Common Thai Beverages:

Cha Yen – Also known as Thai iced tea, Cha Yen is an orange, milky, traditional tea that is very popular in Thailand. Cha Yen can be served cold or hot.

Oliang – Oliang or Thai iced coffee is another traditional drink in Thailand. Oliang is a mix of coffee and other ingredients, depending on the recipe, such as roasted rice and caramel.

Nom Yen – Nom Yen is made of fresh hot milk mixed with green or red syrup, then mixed with ice. This beverage is popular among those who do not consume any kind of caffeine drinks.

City Attractions & Sightseeing:

Wat Arun – The Temple of Dawn: Wat Arun is one of the most striking riverside landmarks of Thailand. This Buddhist temple is an architectural representation of Mount Meru, the center of the world in Buddhist cosmology.



Wat Pho – This is one of the largest temple complexes in the city and famed for its giant reclining Buddha that measures 46 meters long and is covered in gold leaf.

Chatuchak Weekend Market – This weekend market is one of the largest in the world. There are 15,000 stalls offering everything from jewelry and religious icons to animals and delicious street foods. This is a great place to immerse yourself in everyday Thai life.

Grand Palace – Bangkok's Grand Palace is the city's most famous landmark. Built in 1782 and for 150 years was the home of the Thai King, the Royal court, and the administrative seat of government. Today, the complex remains the spiritual heart of the Thai Kingdom.

Damnoen Saduak Floating Market – The popularity of floating markets once earned Bangkok the nickname “Venice of the East.” Now one of the biggest tourist attractions in Bangkok, you can buy fresh and delicious foods by boat.



Khao San Road – This is Bangkok's infamous backpacker district, a neighborhood jam-packed with guesthouses, food vendors, clothing stalls, and travelers from every corner of the globe.

Jim Thompson House – The Jim Thompson House is the home of James H.W. Thompson, a self-made American entrepreneur who was the founder of the world-renowned Jim Thompson Thai Silk Company. Thompson's achievements during his 25 year stay in the Kingdom of Thailand have won him much fame including the “Legendary American of Thailand.” Since his disappearance in 1967, little has changed in the home that was the ‘talk of the town.’ The charming Thai style house continues to be a key stop for visitors to Bangkok.

National Museum & Wang Na Palace – In the former grounds of the 18th century Wang Na Palace, the Bangkok National Museum houses the largest collection of Thai art and artifacts in the country. The old Wang Na Palace stands as a testament to Thai history. Visitors can see religious and ceremonial artifacts, games, weaponry, musical instruments, as well as an impressive collection of Buddha figures arranged according to period.

Wat Traimit – Also known as the Temple of the Golden Buddha, Wat Traimit houses the world's largest gold seated Buddha. In the past, artisans crafted the Buddhas in gold and disguised them from invading armies by covering the figure in stucco and plaster.

Welcome to Vietnam!



Overview & Country Facts:

Vietnam is a densely populated nation in Southeast Asia. The country borders China to the north, Laos to the northwest and Cambodia to the southwest. The South China Sea separates the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia from Vietnam's eastern border. Topography in the country ranges from highlands in the north to coastal lowlands in the south; these natural attractions play a significant role in attracting tourists to various parts of the country. Vietnam continues to maintain a relatively strict adherence to the communist system of governance; however, the government's move in the late 1980's to implement reform and integrate into the world economy has opened the country to international travel and has contributed to its status as one of the fastest growing economies in the region.

As dictated by the one-party communist state system, all aspects of government and politics are determined according to developments within the Communist Party of Vietnam. Nguyen Phu Trong was appointed to the largely ceremonial post of president by parliament in October 2018, a few weeks after President Tran Dai Quang died in office. He also holds the much more powerful post of secretary-general of the ruling Communist Party, which he assumed in January 2011. Vietnam struggles with issues of corruption, high levels of public debt and an overreliance on foreign capital, which will continue to threaten economic resilience and growth in the years to come.

Crime is the primary security concern for travelers to Vietnam. Demonstrations occur occasionally; police officers generally respond to such activities by forcefully dispersing or arresting participants. As previously mentioned, corruption is pervasive throughout Vietnam, and authorities may solicit bribes from travelers.

Government surveillance and corporate espionage are also concerns for foreign travelers. Terrorism poses a general threat in Southeast Asia; however, there have been no recent terror-related developments in the country.

Current Analysis:

- Although stable, Vietnam remains a conservative and politically repressive country.
- Vietnam faces escalating tensions with China over maritime border and territorial issues.
- Economic growth has returned to previously high levels, although significant structural reform is required in order to sustain economic expansion.

City Facts	
Official Country Name	Socialist Republic of Vietnam
Type of Government	Communist State
Leadership	Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc; President Nguyen Phu Trong
Capital	Hanoi
Official Language	Vietnamese
Population	95 million
Ethnic Divisions	Kinh 86.2%, Tay 1.9%, Thai 1.7%, Muong 1.5%, Khome 1.4%, Hoa 1.1%, nun 1.1%, Hmong 1%, Other 4.1%
Religion	Buddhist (7.6%), Catholic (6.6%), Hoa Hao (1.7%), Cao Dai (0.9%), Protestant (0.9%), Muslim (0.1%), none (81.8%)
GDP Growth	6.8%
Inflation	2.24%
Unemployment	1.89%
Currency	Vietnamese Dong
Office Work Week	0730-1630 M-F (Lunch: 1130-1330)
Time Zone Offset	UTC +7
Country Phone Code	84
Capital City Phone Code	4
Nationwide Emergency Number(s)	113 (police), 115 (medical), 833-0028/839-925 (tourist police)
Electricity	127/220 V, 50 cycles AC
Plug Styles	Flat Blade Attachment Plug, Round Pin Attachment Plug, Rectangular Blade Plug

Political & Economic Developments:

Political Situation:

Vietnam is a one-party communist state that has maintained tight political control while providing limited economic reform and liberalization. In January 2016, members of the 12th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam reelected incumbent Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong, and elected Tran Dai Quang and Nguyen Xuan Phuc to the positions of president and prime minister, respectively. Despite the responsibilities awarded to both the presidential and prime ministerial positions, the party secretary maintains the top position within the Politburo, which serves as the body responsible for orienting and implementing government policies. Members of the National Assembly reelected General Secretary Trong, a conservative political theorist, amid Communist Party concerns over the pace of political liberalization under former leadership. The next National Congress is expected to take place in 2021.

The government continues to pursue economic reform amid rising public debt levels and public disenchantment with state-owned enterprises. The Communist Party is working to accelerate the privatization process while encouraging entrepreneurship among Vietnamese citizens. Several obstacles such as rising public debt levels, pervasive corruption, poor infrastructure and unfair access to finances continue to impede government efforts to progress both politically and economically.

Bloggers, journalists and activists who write articles on a broad range of political, social and economic issues in the country continue to face daily police harassment and criminal prosecution for “undermining national unity” and “conducting propaganda against the state.” During the first nine months of 2016, at least 19 activists were put on trial and convicted; this trend has continued into 2017. Beyond the risk of criminal prosecution, dissenters are also subject to arbitrary house arrest, restricted movement and physical assault at the hands of government thugs. In general, freedom of movement and assembly remains highly restricted, and the government bans the creation of independent political parties, human rights groups and labor unions.

International Relations:

The most important relationships for Vietnam are with China and the United States; however, its overall relationship with the various ASEAN member states is also critical. Historically, ties between China and Vietnam have ebbed back and forth between close collaboration and confrontation, including periods of open conflict during the late 1970s and 1980s. The most pressing concern involves their competing claims to both the Spratly and Paracel Islands in the South China Sea. The feud over this dates back to the 1940s and has on at several occasions led to direct confrontation and anti-China protests in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. In the most recent and concerning escalation of conflict, in July 2017 China threatened to attack Vietnamese bases in the Spratly Islands, forcing the latter to order a suspension of oil drilling and exploration.

Ties between the U.S. and Vietnam began to improve in the 1990s, and full diplomatic relations were restored in 1995. The basis of their relationship is primarily economic and security-related. The U.S. and Vietnam normalized their trade relationship in 2001. The U.S. is seen as being broadly supportive of the Vietnamese position on the South China Sea, and has come closer to forming a full strategic partnership with Vietnam by lifting an arms embargo on sales of lethal arms to the country. The U.S. continues to frequently criticize Vietnam’s record on human rights

and cites the country's poor performance in this area as justification for inhibiting even closer ties.

Economic Situation:

After peaking at 7.1% in 2018, real GDP growth in 2019 is projected to slightly decelerate in 2019, led by weaker external demand and continued tightening of credit and fiscal policies. Real GDP growth is projected to remain robust at around 6.5% in 2020 and 2021. Annual headline inflation has been stable for the seven consecutive years – at single digits, trending towards 4% and below in recent years. The external balance remains under control and should continue to be financed by strong FDI inflows which reached almost US\$18 billion in 2018 – accounting for almost 24% of total investment in the economy.

The Vietnamese government is working to implement several measures in order to ensure economic growth remains at its current levels. In general, the government continues to pursue structural economic reforms in order to pave the way for the privatization of the country's economy. To better attract foreign investors, the government is working to remove obstacles to investment by introducing new laws requiring greater transparency within businesses and by eliminating various taxes. Additionally, the State Bank of Vietnam has reduced its lending interest rate by 0.25 percent, and the government plans to exploit more crude oil in order to boost growth.

Security Issues:

- Crime is the primary security concern for travelers to Vietnam.
- Demonstrations and civil unrest occurs occasionally. Security force response to these activities presents a collateral risk to travelers.
- Corruption and drug trafficking affect the security environment in Vietnam.
- Government surveillance and the risk of inadvertently violating the country's strict laws is also a concern for travelers.

Crime:

Vietnamese cities generally have a lower crime rate than other comparably-sized cities in Southeast Asia. Opportunistic theft in the form of pick-pocketing, bag-snatching and theft of unattended items is the type of crime most likely to affect travelers to the city, especially in dense urban or tourist areas. Criminals frequently employ motorcycles to carry out these activities, increasing the risk of serious injury to the victim. To prevent being dragged or knocked down during such thefts, travelers should avoid wrapping bags tightly around their arms or body and try to walk as far from the street as possible. Visitors should also be aware that the use of smart phones has the potential to draw unwanted attention from motorcycle thieves.

Violent crimes against foreigners take place relatively rarely in Vietnam. Nevertheless, incidents of homicide, armed robbery, kidnapping and sexual assault have occurred in the past, and tend to increase prior to major holidays or festivals.

Credit card fraud and other scams are also growing concerns in the country. In one popular phone scam, a caller with an African caller ID calls the victim and immediately hangs up. Upon attempting to return the call, the victim's calling card or associated credit card is depleted. In general, visitors should observe basic security precautions to avoid becoming a victim of crime or scams.

Demonstrations:

Although security forces highly discourage protest activity, such actions occur on occasion in Vietnam, especially in the cities of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. Police officers generally arrest participants at the onset of any public demonstrations; anti-riot police forces may be deployed to forcibly disperse larger crowds. Travelers should avoid demonstrations due to the likelihood that security personnel will respond with force. Travelers should exercise particular caution around Chinese diplomatic buildings in Vietnam when reports of increased tension between China and Vietnam are in the news.

Corruption:

Corruption is rampant in Vietnam and affects both the private and public sectors. Transparency International's 2016 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked 113 out of 176 national entities, indicating only a minor improvement from 2012-2015 rankings. Despite ongoing reform efforts, companies are still likely to encounter corruption in the form of bribery, political interference and money laundering, among other forms. Travelers are most likely to experience the effects of corruption during encounters with customs agents upon arrival and departure, as well as in dealings with traffic police officers.

Drug Trafficking:

Vietnam is a major transit point for drug and human smuggling in the Southeast Asia region. Although these activities do not directly affect foreign travelers, they have the potential to affect the overall security environment in Vietnam, as rival criminal gangs occasionally engage in street violence. Police officers also routinely arrest locals and foreigners for drug offenses as part of an overall effort to reduce drug trafficking and use in the country.

Government Surveillance:

Vietnam has strict laws, and the government is suspected of occasionally placing foreigners under surveillance, such as monitoring conversations and digital transmissions (email and website activity). Authorities may view any documents left behind in hotel rooms, including those in safes, and may access portable computers, smart phones or other electronic devices. Although government officials seldom search hotel rooms in practice, the threat of monitoring makes corporate espionage a concern. Visitors should not transport any documents, electronic files or any other items that the Vietnamese government may deem offensive or inappropriate, or any items that the traveler considers sensitive or confidential.

In the past, the Vietnamese government has detained or expelled foreigners for violations of Vietnamese laws. Travelers should discuss politics and religion to the extent possible. Visitors should keep their travel documents up-to-date at all times and comply with all Vietnamese laws and regulations. Visitors can be arrested for failing to comply with these rules or for engaging in suspicious activities. In addition, Vietnamese authorities may videotape foreign citizens upon their arrival at the airport.

Special Warning to Vietnamese Expatriates

Vietnamese officials often disregard the current citizenship of Vietnamese expatriates, and treat them as if they are still Vietnamese citizens. Such treatment has led to arrests and sentencing according to laws governing the treatment of Vietnamese nationals, without access to foreign consulates or other authorities.

Customs & Immigration:

The Entry Requirements section reflects the most correct and up-to-date information to the best knowledge of UnitedHealthcare Global. Setting requirements for entry into the country is the sole prerogative of each country's government, and requirements may change, sometimes with little or no prior notice. Travelers should always contact the diplomatic representation of the country prior to departure to verify entry requirements.

Passports and Visas:

Passports are required upon entry into Vietnam and must be valid for six months before the date of arrival. Visas are required for all nationalities except those eligible for an exemption; eligible visitors can enter Vietnam with their passport and a return ticket only. Visas must be obtained in advance of arrival to Vietnam. The fee required to obtain a visa ranges significantly depending on the processing facility. Travelers to Vietnam should contact their country's representative embassy or consulate to obtain the latest visa regulations.

Health:

Proof of yellow fever vaccination is required for travelers arriving from countries with risk of yellow fever transmission.

Entry/Departure Taxes:

No airport tax is levied on passengers upon embarkation at airports in Vietnam.

Imports and Exports:

Travelers may import a maximum of 400 cigarettes (100 cigars, or 400 grams of tobacco), 1.5 liters of alcohol at 22 percent volume and above, 2 liters of alcohol below 22 percent volume and a reasonable quantity of perfume. Visitors should confirm that their items may be imported into the country prior to arrival in Vietnam.

There are no currency restrictions on the import of foreign currencies, although declaration is required for sums exceeding USD5,000.

Currency:

The official currency of Vietnam is the dong (VND), which is issued in denominations of 200 D, 500 D, 1,000 D, 2,000 D, 5,000 D, 10,000 D, 20,000 D and 50,000 D. Coins are not widely used. Vietnamese law requires that dong be used for all transactions, but in practice, U.S. currency is accepted for some transactions.

Major credit cards are widely accepted in Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi and other major cities, but are uncommon in rural areas. Visitors should note that credit card duplication and fraud are a concern. Travelers' checks can be exchanged for dong at state banks; many hotels and shops will not accept travelers' checks.

When changing cash, it is best to do so at a bank or at the airport. So-called "moneychangers" do operate on the streets; these individuals frequently rob or cheat their customers after offering

above-average exchange rates. ATMs are widely available and are often located within hotel lobbies.

Communications:

Vietnam has significantly expanded its telecommunication system in recent years. Main lines have increased in availability, and the country has one of the highest numbers of mobile subscribers in the world. Travelers can easily purchase prepaid sim cards at a variety of vendors.

Vietnam Country Code: 84

Hanoi City Code: 4

Ho Chi Minh City Code: 8

Calling Vietnamese landline from abroad: Country exit code + 84+ city code + phone number

Calling Vietnamese mobile phone from abroad: Country exit code + 84 + mobile code* + phone number

Calling Vietnamese landline from within country: 0 + city code + phone number

Calling Vietnamese mobile phone within country: 0 + mobile code* + phone number

Making international calls from Vietnam: 00 + country code + city code + phone number

** Mobile codes vary by operator; codes are either two or three digits in length and start with either 1 or 9.*

Cultural Information:

Language:

Vietnamese is the official language. French, English, Khmer and tribal dialects such as Mon-Khmer and Malayo-Polynesian are also spoken, although not very widely. English is more commonly spoken in the South. Older Vietnamese are more likely to speak or understand French.

Cultural Tips:

- Vietnam is a largely homogeneous country, although there are also minority populations of various rural Asian ethnic groups. Vietnam has also recently become home to a large population of ethnic Han Chinese immigrants.
- Although anti-U.S. sentiment was once very strong in Vietnam in the years following the end of the war, modern-day Vietnam is much more tolerant and accepting of U.S. cultural influence. Travelers from the U.S. typically find that locals are relatively welcoming and hospitable, even to U.S. servicemen returning to visit memorials that honor famous battles from the Vietnam War.
- As is the case for most Southeast Asian countries, respect and pride are central to Vietnamese culture; causing embarrassment can seriously destabilize relationships. Vietnamese put much emphasis on "face," which refers to respect. To "save face" describes the act of trying to get past an embarrassing situation while to "lose face" is to suffer an embarrassment. Public displays of anger and subordinates disagreeing/debating with their superiors in front of others are among some of the situations that can cause serious embarrassment.
- A gentle handshake is considered to be an appropriate manner of greeting; using both hands is a sign of respect. Slightly bowing the head while shaking hands is also a sign of respect. Consequently, when greeting someone of authority, gently grab both of their hands and slightly bow, and always greet persons in descending order of authority. Similar gestures are used when departing someone's company.

- People, even in business dealings, usually address each other with a title (Mr., Miss, Mrs.) followed by the first name, as there are a limited number of last names in Vietnam. However, visitors should note that, in most Asian countries, including in Vietnam, a person's full name is the reverse of what it is in many other countries (i.e. last name followed by the middle name followed by the first name.) For example, Nguyen Thi Binh would be addressed as Mr. Binh.
- When beckoning to someone, travelers should avoid motioning with their palm facing upwards, as this is considered a suggestive motion. Instead, locals will beckon with palms facing down, waving towards the ground. It is considered rude to summon a person with the index finger.
- Punctuality is important when invited to an event; it is impolite to be more than a few minutes late.
- In social settings, particularly at parties, hosts do not usually introduce their guests to others.
- It is considered rude to point the soles of ones feet or shoes at other people or toward sacred monuments, as feet are viewed as the lowest and most unclean part of the body. It is also inappropriate to touch the head of anyone, even a young child, as the head is believed to be an important spiritual point.
- The Vietnamese do not wear shorts in public except when at the beach or at a work site. Foreigners are advised to do the same, especially when visiting more rural areas.
- In most cases, tips are not expected but they are greatly appreciated; a 5 percent to 15 percent tip can sometimes equal a half-day of pay for many workers. Government-run restaurants and hotels that cater to tourists often include a 10 percent service fee to all bills. Taxi drivers generally expect a small gratuity of about 5 percent to 10 percent of the fare.
- Gift-giving is a common practice. When visiting a home, a visitor should always bring a token gift, usually fruit, chocolate or flowers.

Tips for Female Travelers:

Female travelers are often seen by criminals as particularly vulnerable targets. In highly conservative cultures, foreign women may be perceived as promiscuous, inviting unwelcome or violent advances. Female travelers, in turn, are likely to encounter cultural mores that may initially seem startling or offensive. UnitedHealthcare Global encourages female travelers to thoroughly research the areas to which they travel to determine what precautionary measures to take and what to do should they become victims of crime while traveling.

- Foreign businesswomen should appear extremely neat, refined and conservative. Revealing or flashy styles will be viewed as a mark of poor character. Travelers should avoid lowcut or clingy tops and diaphanous materials. Lightweight suits are appropriate year-round. Perfume, makeup and jewelry should be very understated. Women should keep heels low, to avoid towering over Asian colleagues or counterparts.
- Women should bring their own feminine hygiene products, as many items are unavailable in the country.

City Overview:

Ho Chi Minh City (commonly known as Saigon) is a city in southern Vietnam famous for the pivotal role it played in the Vietnam War. It was the capital of the French protectorate of Cochinchina (1862–1954) and of South Vietnam (1954–75). The city lies along the Saigon River to the north of the Mekong River delta, about 50 miles from the South China Sea. Ho Chi Minh City is the most populous city and the important center of economy, culture and education in Vietnam. On the basis of the existing urban area, Ho Chi Minh City is the Vietnam's largest urban.

This area was originally known as Prey Nokor thanks to the exploration of Nguyen Dynasty. In 1698, Nguyen Huu Canh established Gia Dinh, marking the birth of the city. When the French entered Indochina, Saigon City established and quickly became one of the most important urban districts in Vietnam. Saigon was then the capital of Indochinese Federation in 1887-1901 period. In 1949, Saigon became the capital of the Republic of Vietnam. On 30 April 1975, Saigon fell and the war ended with a Communist victory. On 2 July 1976, Vietnam National Assembly officially renamed Saigon into Ho Chi Minh City.

Transportation:

Taxi:

Travelling by taxi is one of the easiest ways to get around Ho Chi Minh City as you can find several vehicles parked outside renowned hotels, landmarks, bars, and restaurants. The standard taxi fare is between VND 10,000 and VND 15,000, with every kilometre priced at VND 6,000.

In District 1, you should be able to get to most places for less than VND 80,000. Do note that taxi scams are quite common in Saigon, so stick with legitimate taxi companies such as Mai Linh Taxi or Vinasun.

Xe Om (Motorcycle Taxi):

A common yet interesting mode of transportation in Vietnam is xe om or motorcycle taxis, where you will be weaving through the bustling traffic with an experienced driver. It's also fairly inexpensive as it's priced between VND 10,000 and VND 15,000 depending on your destination (and haggling skills). A downside to taking an xe om is the language barrier, as most locals can't converse in English.

Bus:

Serving more than 100 routes around Ho Chi Minh City, buses are great for exploring the city on a tight budget. Easily distinguished by its white and green exterior, all buses are fitted with comfortable seats and air-conditioning, with tickets priced as low as VND300. Major bus terminals within the city include Ben Thanh Station (where you can get a free map of the Ho Chi Minh Bus Route), Cholon Station, and Mien Dong Station.

Bicycle & Motorcycle Rentals:

Bicycle and motorcycle rentals are available all over Vietnam, though most travelers decide against renting one in Saigon due to the city's chaotic traffic. Most hotels can help arrange for bicycle and motorcycle rentals, but beware that these come with very inflated prices

Food & Beverage:

Some of the defining traits in Vietnamese cuisine include rice, noodles, seafood, pork and beef, as well as various fresh herbs and spices, all of which result in robust flavors and unique interpretations. Although the city is evolving into a cosmopolitan landscape with sprawling shopping malls, fine-dining restaurants and luxury hotels, you can still find plenty of roadside eateries, vibrant street market, and street food carts to satisfy your appetite for authentic Vietnamese delicacies.

Dining in Ho Chi Minh is not just limited to Vietnamese pho and coffee, as you can also enjoy fresh seafood, noodles, rice, spring rolls, and meats prepared with an array of cooking methods. Also great for travelers on a tight budget, some of these top must-try foods in Ho Chi Minh City are not only hearty and filling, but also cost less than VND 40,000 (approx. \$1.75) per dish.

Common Vietnamese Dishes:

Banh Mi - Available almost everywhere in Ho Chi Minh City, this baguette sandwich is served with pickled vegetables, pate, butter, soy sauce, cilantro, chilies, and hot peppers. Quick and tasty, you can also choose from a variety of meat fillings for your banh mi, including heo quay (roasted pork belly), cha ca (fried fish with turmeric and dill), cha lua (boiled sausages), xiu mai (meatballs), thit ga (boiled chicken), trung op la (fried egg), thit nuong (grilled pork loin), and xa xiu (Chinese barbecued pork).

Pho - Pho is rice noodles that's served in a flavorful soup with beef (or other meat), bean sprouts, lime wedges, and greens such as basil, mint, cilantro, and onions with a side of chili sauce for added spice.

Bun bo Hue - Bun bo Hue is beef based, and in Vietnam it's known for being spicy and flavorful. The broth, which if made to specification, should be full of beef bone flavor, and fragrant with lemongrass, has a wonderful taste, like a citrusy beef soup.

Bun Thit Nuong - A hearty dish in Ho Chi Minh City, bun thit nuong features vermicelli rice noodles with freshly chopped lettuce, sliced cucumber, bean sprouts, pickled daikon and carrot, basil, chopped peanuts, and mint, topped with grilled yet tender pork shoulder.

Common Vietnamese Beverages:

Coconut Water - Coconut water may have just shown up on your grocery store shelves a few years ago, but it's been a popular drink in Vietnam for centuries. You won't see the packaged stuff, though: here, it's drunk straight out of the coconut.

Nước Sâm – Also known as herbal tea, is a sweet and nutty herbal tea and is usually served over ice. According to Chinese medicine, this tea is believed to have “cooling” properties.

Nước Mía (Sugar Cane Juice) – This beverage is usually sold by street vendors, who use electric squashing machines to squeeze the juice from stalks of sugar cane. It's usually then mixed with juice from the calamansi, a tiny sour citrus fruit that smells like a mandarin.

Rượu Nếp Cẩm (Sticky Rice Wine) - Rice wine, which clocks in at around 29.5% alcohol, is the traditional masculine tippie and drinking it is a social activity in Vietnam.

City Attractions & Sightseeing:

War Remnants Museum - Once known as the 'Museum of American War Crimes', The War Remnants Museum first opened to the public in 1975. It offers a shocking reminder of the long and brutal Vietnam War, with many graphic photographs and American military equipment on display, including a helicopter with rocket launchers, a tank, a fighter plane, a single-seater attack aircraft and a 6,800kg conventional bomb.

Jade Emperor Pagoda – Jade Emperor Pagoda is one of the five most important shrines in Ho Chi Minh City. Built at the turn of the 20th Century by a community of Cantonese who migrated from Guangzhou province in Southwest China, this pagoda is a fine representation of Mahayanist branch of Buddhism that is practiced widely in Vietnam.



Cu Chi Tunnels - Chu Chi Tunnels are part of a massive war museum that offers a sneak-peek at the underground life of Vietnamese soldiers back in 1948. The historical site comprises more than 120km of underground tunnels with several trapdoors, living areas, kitchens, storage facilities, armory, hospitals, and command centers.

Reunification Palace - The Reunification Palace made its name in global history when in 1975 a tank belonging to the North Vietnamese Army crashed through its main gate – signifying the end of the Vietnam War. The palace is like a time capsule frozen in 1975 with two of the original tanks used in the capture of the palace parked in the grounds

Cao Dai Temple - Cao Dai Temple is the center of the Cao Dai faith, a religion that has taken bits of Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Taoism and Confucianism. Tourists are welcome to visit the temple and learn more about this faith that is practiced by a few dedicated followers. Each Cao Dai practitioner wears a white robe to enter the temple with an additional sash to signify their previous religion.



Binh Tay Market - Binh Tay Market is located in the center of Vietnam's largest Chinatown district and mainly serves the local population with its extensive range of fresh fruits, vegetables, poultry, meat and seafood from regions across Vietnam.

Mariamman Hindu Temple - Mariamman Hindu Temple is a sacred Hindu Temple dedicated to the goddess of the Rain 'Mariamman'. This temple was built in the late 19th century by traders coming from India and has been well preserved. This complex is the only Hindu temple in Saigon and is believed to have miraculous powers giving luck and wealth to its visitors.

Notre Dame Cathedral - Saigon Notre Dame Cathedral, built in the late 1880s by French colonists, is one of the few remaining strongholds of Catholicism in the largely Buddhist Vietnam. Located in Paris Square, the name Notre Dame was given after the installation of the statue 'Peaceful Notre Dame' in 1959.

Map of Southeast Asia:

