

Tips for Travellers

HO CHI MINH CITY

Accommodation

New Zealand Trade & Enterprise HCMC has special rates with several city hotels and can organise a range of accommodation depending on your budget. For further information about current rates or for any recommendations, please contact To Pham Thuy Linh at (84 8) 822 6907 or linh.to@nzte.govt.nz

All hotel rates attract a 5% Service charge and additional 10% Government Tax.

Caravelle Hotel

19 Lam Son Square, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Viet Nam
Phone: (84 8) 823 4999
Fax: (84 8) 824 3999
Rate: From US\$228.00

Park Hyatt Hotel

2 Lam Son Square, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Viet Nam
Phone: (84 8) 824 1234
Fax: (84 8) 823 7569
Rate: From US\$190.00

Sheraton Hotel

88 Dong Khoi, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Viet Nam
Phone: (84 8) 827 2828
Fax: (84 8) 822 0865
Rate: From US\$215.00

Duxton Hotel

63 Nguyen Hue, District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Viet Nam
Phone: (84 8) 822 2999
Fax: (84 8) 824 1888
Rate: From US\$170.00

Renaissance Riverside Hotel Saigon

8-15 Ton Duc Thang
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Viet Nam
Phone: (84 8) 822 0033
Fax: (84 8) 822 2900
Rate: From US\$180.00

Legend Hotel Saigon

2A-4A Ton Duc Thang
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam
Phone: (84 8) 823 3333
Fax: (84 8) 823 2333
Rate: From US\$150.00

New World Hotel

76 Le Lai
District 1
Ho Chi Minh City
Vietnam
Phone: (84 8) 822 8888
Fax: (84 8) 823 0710
Rate: From US\$204.05

Transport

Visa

- Foreigners visiting Viet Nam require a visa.
- Single entry visas are valid for one month.
- Multiple entry visas can be acquired if you have a company in Viet Nam to sponsor you.

Airports

Tan Son Nhat International Airport is the only airport into HCMC.

- It is 7 km from Ho Chi Minh City.
- Approx. 25 minutes from the airport to recommended hotels – this may extend to 45 minutes in rush hours.
- Onward tickets should be re-confirmed by ringing the relevant airline company in order to avoid having the reservations cancelled. This particularly applies to Viet Nam Airlines.
- Contact numbers include:

Cathay Pacific	Phone: (84 8) 822 3203
Qantas	Phone: (84 8) 930 2944
Singapore Airlines	Phone: (84 8) 823 1588
Thai Airways	Phone: (84 8) 829 2809
Viet Nam Airlines	Phone: (84 8) 832 0320

Transport to/from airport

Taxis are metered. A fare should cost approximately US\$6.00 from airport to District 1.



Taxis

Main taxi companies:

- Vina Taxi
Phone: 8111 111
- Airport Taxi
Phone: 844 6666
- Mai Linh Taxi
Phone: 822 2666
- Saigon Taxi
Phone: 842 4242
- Vina Sun Taxi
Phone: 827 2727

Taking a Taxi

- Some drivers understand simple English instructions; otherwise show the driver the written address of your destination. Do not take taxis that are not metered.
- The average rate: Flagfall in HCMC is VND 12,000 (less than one US dollar) and this is the simplest way of travel for newcomers. For car travel outside the city: New Zealand Trade & Enterprise HCMC can help with travel arrangements.
- Taxis drivers often say they do not have small change so check before getting in the taxi if you have some small currency.
- Other transport in HCMC is by cyclo or motorbike taxis known as Honda Om. Always negotiate a price in advance for these.

Car Hire

Car hire can be arranged by New Zealand Trade & Enterprise HCMC. Driving oneself in HCMC is not recommended.

Health

Health Insurance

Ensure you have adequate medical insurance before departing New Zealand. This should include repatriation insurance.

Health Tips

- Drink at least eight glasses of water per day to avoid dehydration. Tap water is NOT safe to drink. Use bottled water only.
- Antibiotics and prescription medicines can be bought over pharmacy counters or at medical clinics. Note that many pharmacists are untrained and over the counter medicines may be fakes. Care should be taken to check the use-by date on medications. International clinics can provide a supply of authentic imported drugs.

Money

Banks

- Most banks open from 8.30am - 4.00pm on weekdays.
- The currency unit is the dong. The following denominations are in circulation: VND 200, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 5,000, 10,000, 20,000, 50,000, 100,000, and 500,000.
- There is roughly VND 16,100 to one US\$. (April 2008)
- Bring foreign currency in US\$.
- It is important to take your passport when doing any banking.
- Money can be changed in airports (if the bank is open), banks and hotels.
- Traveller cheques must be changed at a bank.

Automatic Teller Machines

- You can get money from ATM cards showing the Plus or Cirrus signs, using your credit card with your own PIN. Both ANZ and HSBC in HCMC have ATMs.
- ANZ Bank is located at 11 Me Linh Square, District 1.
- HSBC is located at The Metropolitan, 235 Dong Khoi Street, District 1.

Others

- Any money changing should be done by licensed changers and not on the street as tricksters abound in HCMC.
- Beware of counterfeit cash.

Credit Cards

- Credit cards are now accepted at most of the main hotels, up-market restaurants and shops. Visa, MasterCard, American Express and JCB are the most commonly accepted. Cash can be drawn on credit cards from certain banks e.g. ANZ, HSBC and Vietcombank.

Tipping

- Tipping is not traditional in HCMC. A small gift or tip is however much appreciated by interpreters, drivers and hotel staff. Cigarettes are a popular gift item.

Airport Tax

- International departure tax is US\$12. This may be paid in US\$ or VND equivalent.

Telephone numbers and codes

- International calls can be made direct.
- Foreigners can only made international collect calls from the Central Post Office.
- New VoIP services offer a cheaper international rate if you dial 171 (or 178) 00 + country code + area code + phone number. However, this does not always work and the quality of the connection can sometimes be poor.
- The 171/178 service can also be used when dialling from HCMC to other parts of Viet Nam.
- New Zealand cell phones with global roaming usually function in Viet Nam. Alternatively, buy a prepaid SIM card that is compatible with GSM 900 Mhz mobile phones.
- A mobile phone can be rented from Nokia shops.
- International telephone operators all speak English.

Emergency Service	Phone Number
Police	113
Fire	114
Ambulance	115
Domestic long distance operator	101
International operator	110
Police Hotline	(84 8) 839 9250
Flight Information	(84 8) 845 6654
Saigon Tourist	(84 8) 829 8914
Local Directory enquiries/tourist information in English	1080

Internet and Electronics

- Good local wifi Internet cafés are available all around town and rates are not expensive.
- Major hotels have facilities for laptops but downloading is a costly, lengthy and frustrating process. Business visitors should not count on efficient connections.
- Prepaid Internet Cards are also available in Internet cafes and bookstores.
- Voltage in HCMC is mostly 220V AC, 50 Hertz. In HCMC most sockets are the two flat pin US-Type carrying 220V but you will also see Russian inspired round pins.
- For plugging the laptop into a local jack point you will need a round two-pin adapter plug. A universal adapter may be borrowed from your hotel.
- The video system is PAL.

Weather

- Temperature range: 28° to 34°C in the day and 23° to 27°C in the evenings.
- Humidity: Average humidity is 80%. Late February through May are the hottest months when it is also very humid as it builds up to the rainy season.
- Rainfall: the rainy season is from May to November in HCMC.

Tips for Business

- Vietnamese names, like Chinese, have the family name first and the given name last. In Viet Nam, people are usually addressed as Mr or Mrs followed by their given name. For example, Ngo Chi Hung – here the family name is Ngo but he is addressed as Mr Hung (his first or given name).
- During introductions in Viet Nam, the older or most respected person's name is mentioned first.
- Vietnamese respect authority and age.
- Shoes should be removed before visiting a Buddhist temple or entering a Vietnamese home.



- The normal form of greeting nowadays is a handshake although women do not normally shake hands. It is better for men to wait until a woman's hand is offered.
- Children should not be patted on the head as this is considered the most important part of the body.
- When receiving an item **especially a business card**, two hands should always be used. The card is handed over so that the recipient can read it as it is given to him. Ensure that you read the business card when it is passed to you and give yours with two hands.
- Eye contact with superiors is avoided as a mark of respect and does not denote shiftiness.
- If you receive a present express thanks but do not open it in front of the giver.
- The preference is for face-to-face dealings.
- Pricing is flexible – negotiate!
- Establish your bona fides by explaining who you are or represent, how you came to be visiting, and what contacts you have in common.
- Try not to be late.
- Be polite and humble and appreciate things Vietnamese.
- Do not try to hurry or hurry others, and do not issue ultimatums.
- Do not cause loss of face or criticise anyone publicly. Instead practise giving 'face' i.e. praise, acknowledgement, and status. Do not be directly confrontational in a group.
- The wrong tone/words can spoil a deal or relationship.
- A shirt and tie is adequate for men for most meetings, but a jacket might be worn for meetings with prominent business people or senior bureaucrats.
- Women should dress conservatively.
- Men should not wear shorts to business meetings; long sleeved shirts are preferred.
- The Vietnamese enjoy an excuse for a banquet with plenty of alcohol. Take time to socialise and get to know your potential customers or partners.

Tips from the industry

If you have any tips that you can share with your fellow industry members, please email them to educationnz@educationnz.org.nz

Information correct as at 14 April 2008

HANOI

Accommodation

New Zealand Trade & Enterprise HCMC has special rates with several city hotels and can organise a range of accommodation depending on your budget. For further information about current rates or for any recommendations, please contact To Pham Thuy Linh at (84 8) 822 6907 or linh.to@nzte.govt.nz

All hotel rates attract a 5% Service charge and additional 10% Government Tax.

■ Daewoo Hotel

360 Kim Ma Street, Ba Dinh District
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 831 5000
Fax: (84 4) 831 5010
Rate: From US\$260.00

■ Hilton Hanoi Opera

1 Le Thanh Tong Street
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 933 0500/0550
Fax: (84 4) 933 0626
Rate: From US\$195.00

■ Melia Hanoi

44B Ly Thuong Kiet Street
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 934 3343
Fax: (84 4) 934 3344
Rate: From US\$170.00

■ Guoman Hanoi Hotel

83A Ly Thuong Kiet
Hoan Kiem District
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 845 2270
Fax: (84 4) 845 9209
Rate: From US\$170.00

■ Sofitel Metropole Hanoi

15 Ngo Quyen
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 826 6919
Fax: (84 4) 826 6920
Rate: From US\$260.00

■ Sheraton Hanoi Hotel

K 5 Nghi Tam
11 Xuan Dieu Road
Tay Ho District
Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 719 9000
Fax: (84 4) 719 9001
Rate: From US\$240

■ Hanoi Horison Hotel

40 Cat Linh Street



Ha Noi
Ph: (84 4) 733 2438
Fax: (84 4) 733 0888
Rate: From US\$140.00

Transport

Airport

To Noi Bai Airport

- Approximately 45 minutes (35kms) from the airport to recommended hotels in the central city.
- Onward tickets should be re-confirmed by ringing the relevant airline company in order to avoid having the reservations cancelled. This particularly applies to Viet Nam Airlines.

- Contact numbers include:

Aeroflot Airways	Phone: (84 4) 7718742
All Nippon Airways	Phone: (84 4) 934 7237
Air France	Phone: (84 4) 825 3484
British Airways	Phone: (84 4) 9347239
China Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 8242688
Czech Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 5141852
Japan Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 826 6693
Lao Aviation	Phone: (84 4) 8229951
Malaysia Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 826 8820
Pacific Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 512 1503
Pacific Airways	Phone: (84 4) 826 7298
Singapore Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 826 8888
Scandinavian Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 934 2626
Cathay Pacific	Phone: (84 4) 826 7298
Qantas	Phone: (84 4) 933 3026
Singapore Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 826 8888
Thai Airways	Phone: (84 4) 826 7921
Viet Nam Airlines	Phone: (84 4) 823 0320

Transport to / from airport

Taxis are metered. A fare should cost approximately US\$15.00 from airport to the city.

Taxis

Main taxi companies are:

- City Taxi
Phone: (84 4) 822 2222
- Mai Linh Taxi
Phone: (84 4) 8222666
- Airport Taxi
Phone: (84 4) 873 3333
- Taxi 25
Phone: (84 4) 825 2525
- Hanoi Taxi
Phone: (84 4) 853 3171



- A Taxi
Phone: (84 4) 832 7327

Taking a Taxi

- Some drivers understand simple English instructions; otherwise show the driver the written address of your destination. Do not take taxis that are not metered.
- The average rate: Flagfall in Ha Noi is VND 12,000 (less than one US dollar) and this is the simplest way of travel for newcomers. For car travel outside the city: New Zealand Trade & Enterprise HCMC can help with travel arrangements.
- Taxis drivers often say they do not have small change so check before getting in the taxi if you have some small currency.
- Other transport in Ha Noi is by cyclo or motorbike taxis known as Honda Om. Always negotiate a price in advance for these.

Car Hire

Many of the tourist hotels, tourist cafes and tour agencies hire cars and mini buses. They are usually hired with a driver and cost around US\$25 to \$40 per day for use within the Ha Noi area. The rates increase for vehicles to be used outside the city area.

Telephone numbers and codes

- International calls can be made direct.
- Foreigners can only make international reverse charge calls from the Central Post Office.
- New VoIP services offer a cheaper international rate if you dial 171 (or 178) 00 + country code + area code + phone number. This does not always work and quality of the connection is sometimes poor.
- The 171 (or 178) service can also be used when dialling from Ha Noi to other parts of Viet Nam.
- New Zealand cell phones with global roaming usually function in Viet Nam. Alternatively, buy a prepaid SIM card that is compatible with GSM 900 Mhz mobile phones.
- A mobile phone can be rented from Nokia shops.
- International telephone operators understand English.

General Information Service (Viet Nam and Country Codes)	1080
Directory Enquiries (Ha Noi only)	116
International Telephone Service Enquiries	142 / 143
VMS Mobifone Enquiry Service	145

Weather

Temperatures range from 30° to 36°C (May - September) and 10~15°C in November and December. From January through March the average temperature is 15~20°C. May through September are also very humid months. The rainy season is from May to September.

Tips for Business

- Vietnamese names, like Chinese, have the family name first and the given name last. In Viet Nam, people are usually addressed as Mr or Mrs followed by their given name. For example, Ngo Chi Hung – here the family name is Ngo but he is addressed as Mr Hung (his first or given name).
- During introductions in Viet Nam, the older or most respected person's name is mentioned first.
- Vietnamese respect authority and age.
- Shoes should be removed before visiting a Buddhist temple or entering a Vietnamese home.
- The normal form of greeting nowadays is a handshake although women do not normally shake hands. It is better for men to wait until a woman's hand is offered.
- Children should not be patted on the head as this is considered the most important part of the body.
- When receiving an item **especially a business card**, two hands should always be used. The card is handed over so that the recipient can read it as it is given to him. Ensure that you read the business card when it is passed to you and give yours with two hands.
- Eye contact with superiors is avoided as a mark of respect and does not denote shiftiness.
- If you receive a present express thanks but do not open it in front of the giver.
- The preference is for face-to-face dealings.
- Pricing is flexible – negotiate!
- Establish your bona fides by explaining who you are or represent, how you came to be visiting, and what contacts you have in common.
- Try not to be late.
- Be polite and humble and appreciate things Vietnamese.
- Do not try to hurry or hurry others, and do not issue ultimatums.
- Do not cause loss of face or criticise anyone publicly. Instead practise giving 'face' i.e. praise, acknowledgement, and status. Do not be directly confrontational in a group.
- The wrong tone/words can spoil a deal or relationship.
- A shirt and tie is adequate for men for most meetings, but a jacket might be worn for meetings with prominent business people or senior bureaucrats.
- Women should dress conservatively.
- Men should not wear shorts to business meetings; long sleeved shirts are preferred.
- The Vietnamese enjoy an excuse for a banquet with plenty of alcohol. Take time to socialise and get to know your potential customers or partners.

Tips from the industry

If you have any tips that you can share with your fellow industry members, please email them to educationnz@educationnz.org.nz

Information correct as at 14 April 2008
